

EUROPEAN PARKS AND LANDSCAPES

A territorial research programme

Roberto Gambino, 8/10/2009

The future has no other reality than as present hope (Borges 1984)

Foreword

The following paper is the written report of the Lectio Magistralis delivered by Prof. Roberto Gambino on the 8th of October 2009, at the Polytechnic of Turin.

1. Convergences

1.1. The growing pressure of the demand for nature and for landscape

Parks and landscapes have assumed increasing political, social and cultural weight in debates, practices and in rhetorical constructions concerning the quality of life and the future hopes of contemporary society. Rather than being ensconced in the aesthetic and hedonistic anxieties of slender minorities, the demand for nature, symbolically expressed in nature parks, and the demand for landscape are the joint offshoot of the typical concerns, fears, disillusionings and questings of “that breadth of change that has occurred in the structure of feeling” (Harvey 1993) of the post-modern condition. The nightmare of environment collapse, dramatically aggravated by global changes (especially but not only climate change) is interwoven with a growing, albeit still inadequate, awareness of the processes of degeneration that gradually erode the resources available to build our future. On the other hand, the search for an identity and sense of place, expressed by the demand for landscape, highlights a deeper malaise associated with the globalisation process, its standardising effects on the one hand and new inequalities on the other: and more generally, by the epochal shift from a “society of places to the society of flows”, vehicled by new communication technologies.

1.2. The celebration of diversity in nature and landscape

In measuring up to similar changes, the question of the landscape and the question of the environment (in a broader meaning) are associated ever more frequently. On both fronts, man's relationships with the earth, with water and nature are involved. Many of the challenges inherent in the question of the environment - huge masses of population without access to water, the energy crisis, the structural distortions of agriculture, the apparently inexorable spread of “post-urban” urbanisation that detracts land and vital resources from the rural environment, the constant broadening of the city's “ecological footprint” on the territory, etc. - concern both nature and landscape conservation. The crusade against loss of bio-diversity, launched at international level in Rio de Janeiro (UNCED 1992) has continued to broaden its horizons to embrace the cultural and, therefore, landscape implications of development trends, focussing attention on bio-cultural diversity and the changes wrought by globalisation (ten years ago, the August 1999 edition of the National Geographic was entitled “Goods move, people move, ideas move and cultures change”). Many factors confirmed empirically by, for example, research carried out in Asia or Africa which has demonstrated a positive correlation between biological and cultural diversification (measured in terms of variety of languages, religions and ethnic groups: IUCN-CEESP, 2004). Faced with the contradictory effects of globalisation, the celebration of diversity in all its forms (IUCN 2002) now seems to have become an effective point of encounter of nature and landscape conservation – in the

recently-assumed seminal significance of these terms. This is true in particular of Europe, if it is true that diversity is the distinctive trait of the “European dream” as opposed to the “American dream” (Rifkin 2004).

1.3. Convergences between nature and landscape policies

This convergence of interests and concern is evident at several levels. At global level, bodies such as the IUCN continue to call attention to the role that landscape policies are required to play in order to improve the effectiveness of nature conservation policies, in particular as regards “protected areas” and their relationships with the surrounding territory. In 2003, the Durban World Congress approved a final Recommendation specifically intended to encourage the adoption of landscape policies as a key instrument in broadening the scope and impact of nature protection policies (IUCN 2003: Recommendation CGR3 RES050). More recently, the 2008 Barcelona Congress dedicated a specific Workshop to the “landscape dynamic mosaic” embracing diversity, equity and change (Borrini Feyerabend, Phillips 2009) also stressing that “considering a broader landscape is extremely important in pursuing the IUCN’s vision of a just world that values and conserves nature”. Symmetrical approaches, aimed at promoting landscape policies with solid ecological underpinnings such as those offered by Landscape Ecology, have also been mooted; approaches worth due consideration also within a completely renewed legal framework such as that of the European Landscape Convention (EC 2000). Various regional and local experiences have identified, in the landscape dimension, specific opportunities for protection and valorisation of natural-cultural assets in order to offset the standardising pressures of globalisation processes and also to relocate cities and territories in supra-local competitive arenas. These experiences – various level urban and territorial plans, exploratory programmes such as those of Atlases, plans and projects for parks and “protected areas”, the setting up of Landscape Observatories and Ecomuseums, etc. – have confirmed the role of the landscape as an essential key to the interpretation and planning of the territories involved. And, conversely, the protected natural areas are configured as privileged areas in which to experiment and apply landscape policies. It is interesting to note that this reciprocal interest is evident not only in Europe (where protected natural areas are characterised by a broad mix of nature and landscape values: CED PPN 2008) but also in other countries, such as the American National Park Service’s attention to “cultural landscapes”.

1.4. Separation of nature and landscape policies

Despite these convergences, an evident separation still exists between landscape and nature conservation policies, especially in Italy. Different legal sources and frameworks favour the separation of institutional competencies and responsibilities. In Italy, the two basic laws – Law 394/1991 for nature, the 2004 Code for the landscape – seem to ignore each other; the same can be said of the control and guidance activities of the respective Ministries, for the Environment on the one hand and for cultural assets the other. An equally broad scission can also be observed at European level where the competencies of the Europe Union do not embrace the landscape that is addressed independently by the Council of Europe with the 2000 Convention. Therefore, the question is whether and to what extent these separations are caused by traditional scientific and cultural barriers, by the continuing disciplinary divisions of knowledge and the lack of a unitary theoretical reference framework or whether, vice versa, they are the specific cause of the delays and shortcomings encountered at scientific and cultural level.

1.5. A research programme for a common ground

Answering these questions, it is possible, perhaps, to delineate a “research programme” able to construct a “common ground” on which to try and develop analyses and projects that overstep traditional disciplinary pickets and correlate different visions. The bases already exist. Reconsidering research and projects addressing the issues symbolically evoked by the parks/landscapes duo in the last three or four decades, it is possible, perhaps, to identify an

“implicit” itinerary that is firmly anchored to the territory but not insensitive to suggestions furnished by other variously pertinent topics. However, looking back is not sufficient; the prompting of “imaginative anticipation” (Zerbi 2008) is essential. We can formulate the hypothesis that the key stages of the path travelled can be identified looking towards the future.

2. Principles and values

2.1. New potentially conflicting values

Conservation of nature and of landscape implies assertion of a set of values; but the set of values tends to differ in the two cases. Understanding these differences may contribute to coordinating the respective policies. In the first case, the values are those acknowledged and governed by the “hard sciences” (such as geology or biology) in terms that practically eliminate any possibility of choice regarding the measures of protection to be adopted. There is a rigorous, almost deterministic relationship between objective, scientifically irrefutable recognition of the value and selection of the related protection measures. In the second case, i.e. landscape conservation, determination of the values is much more arbitrary, leaving ample scope for subjective interpretation and valuation despite the weighty contribution of the social sciences, first and foremost history. The resulting variability and subjectivity of the related protection and management measures have been explicitly acknowledged by the European Landscape Convention according to which each party must assess the landscapes identified taking into account “the particular values assigned to them by the interested parties and the population concerned” (art. 5). This is not, however, a rigid distinction. A more socially-aware view of the values involved has gained ground also in the field of nature conservation, while doubt is cast ever more frequently on the scientific objectivity of the assessments (reflected, for example, in the fierce dispute triggered in the scientific world when required to decide on the best strategy to deal with the terrible fire that devastated Yellowstone Park some years ago). Conversely, ecological determinism (starting from the turnaround in the 1960s: McHarg 1966) has become a byword of culture of the landscape, under the banners of Landscape Ecology. Rather than suggesting divergence between different sets of values, experience would seem to confirm the intrinsic difficulty of identifying the values involved both in the field of nature and landscape conservation.

2.2. New rights

Acknowledgement of natural and cultural values, in particular of those ignored or contrasted by the market, has triggered long battles for “the right to the city” (Lefebvre 1970) and to construct the “social state” (Mazza 2009), now further exacerbated by emerging immigration phenomena and new social injustices. However, recognition of these values also promotes the assertion of new rights and new duties such as those set forth in art. 9 of the Italian Constitution. International agreements and treaties have ratified gradual extension of “environmental rights” including those – typically the “rights to existence” of inalienable environmental assets – that reflect trans-generational collective interests. The compass of “rights of citizenship” has also been extended and now embraces “intangible” aspects such as aesthetic or literary values. It may seem ironic that a country such as Italy, where most of the coasts, agrarian landscapes, mountains and old city centres have fallen prey to unrestrained property speculation (and which still continues to comply with its pressures in the name of economic development) demands compliance with the “rights to beauty”: a luxury many think we cannot afford. However, it cannot be denied that consistent, fiercely-passionate lobbies are tending to gather under this flag.

2.3. Reasoning by principles

Accepting the idea that nature and landscape policies must recognise new citizenship rights, the question arises of how to guarantee these in view of the plurality and contrasting nature of the interests and values involved. A conflict certainly not restricted to the clash between public and

private interests but which increasingly involves opposed public interests. Why and at what conditions must recognition of a historic urban landscape of incomparable value or an exquisite agrarian landscape impede construction of a skyscraper of public offices or a logistics platform or a large hospital complex? Acceptance of hierarchies of values is advocated in order to avoid the pitfalls of relativism and to react to the "retreat of universal values" (Touraine 2008). However, the debate regarding absolute values would not seem to lend itself to an approach based on open, participatory democratic confrontation. If each party clings tenaciously to its own set of values, the conflict will inevitably result in more or less violent imposition usually, as confirmed by experience, to the detriment of weaker public interests such as those of the landscape and the environment. Hence the advisability, in the spirit of the Constitution, of "reasoning by principles", resorting to persuasion rather than coercion (Zagrebelsky 2009). It is on these grounds rather than on an abstract confrontation of values that conservation of nature can be conjoined with that of the landscape, also reinforcing this.

2.4. Conservation and innovation, an indivisible relationship

Shifting attention to principles, confrontation of the two policies can be concentrated on some of these, those which are more problematic, in particular the *principle of conservation*. In recent decades, there has been a disconcerting amplification of the scope of application of this principle and of its very meaning, which is not without ambiguities and contradictions. Conservation of both nature and cultural heritage has gradually moved away from concepts such as "preservation", safeguarding, passive protection, which imply acknowledgement of a non-perfectible non-modifiable condition, towards more or less complex forms of transformability, dynamic management, attentive administration (Passmore 1986), care and innovation. While recovering important lessons of the past such as the conservationism of Marsh (1864) or Leopold (1933), this new approach is also fuelled by current considerations. On the one hand, the conclusion that, more than in the past, authentic, long-lasting conservation always implies innovative transformation ("you cannot separate things from what they will become": Tiezzi 1999; "change is an indissoluble part of the biosphere": Botkin 1990). Any intervention on cultural heritage implies innovative tension, at least as regards imbuing things with new meaning; on the other hand, it is impossible to measure up effectively to the risks and threats of global changes without innovative "adaptations" (Adams 1996). On the other hand and symmetrically, acknowledging that every authentic innovation in the contemporary world implies confrontation with a cumbersome natural and cultural legacy, with complex sets of "origins" (Petz 2004) and memories (Schama 1997), that oblivion cannot exist without memories and that innovative management of current eco-systems must take into account their previous history (Botkin 1990). Briefly, conservation is increasingly configured as a "privileged place of innovation" (ANCSA, "Carta di Gubbio", 1960-1990). Rather than representing a weakness of protection options, innovative conservation implies greater commitment to caring for the heritage of the territory and transmission of this to future generations (Gambino 1997).

2.5. Dilatation of the conservation option

However, this change of direction of the principle of conservation is even more significant insofar as it is accompanied by explosive extension of its field of application to nature and landscape and cultural heritage. In the field of nature conservation, perhaps the most emblematic change concerns "protected natural areas" and their relationships with the surrounding territories. The search for forms of protection and valorisation of these territories (according to the slogan of the Durban 2003 IUCN Congress: "Benefits beyond Boundaries"), for "landscape scale" conservation policies, for eco-system planning according to eco-regions, the networking of broad systems of variously-characterised protected areas, is also inspired by a new interpretation of the principle of conservation. A similar dilatation has also occurred in the field of cultural heritage with a shifting of attention (effectively embodied in the evolution of the thought of ANCSA: Gabrielli 1997) from

“monuments” to historic centres and settlements, to the entire historic territory. This shift in focus, from monument to legacy, is strictly linked – in the discourses developed over the years by scholars such as Françoise Choay (2008) – to “globalisation of the safeguarding of historical heritage”, i.e. international recognition that “we can no longer afford the luxury of letting it go to waste”. It is also worth recalling that the shift concerning the landscape is even more explicit, as expressed in the European Landscape Convention which establishes the obligation of recognising the landscape values of the entire territory, adopting diversified protection, management and planning measures. From all these viewpoints – and, clearly, in contrast with most traditional control and protection systems and practices – it is recognised that the principle of conservation cannot be applied only to single “pieces” of natural-cultural heritage detached from the context; in other words, territorial assets cannot be divided into parts to be conserved and parts to be left at the mercy of transformation pressures.

2.6. The principles of limit, diversification and integration

Obviously, the broader the scope of the conservation option in the territory, the more complex and diversified its relationship with development processes. The opposition between conservation and development, which played an important role in combating the more aggressive and threatening policies in the 1960s and 1970s, leaves space for more fully-articulated concepts that reconfigure the conservation option within the major issue of sustainable development. A new viewpoint, undeniably fraught with ambiguities and contradictions due to the high level conflictuality that still persists between protection requirements and major political and economic decisions. Therefore, this new way of interpreting the principle of conservation has repercussions on other correlated principles concerning nature, landscape and cultural heritage, such as:

- *the principle of limit*, which recognizes the relative scarcity of resources available for each innovative project but which today (almost 40 years from recognition of the “limit to growth”: Meadows et al, 1972) seems to represent a challenge more than a restriction or insuperable barrier;
- *the principle of diversification*, stemming from awareness of the irreplaceable role of diversity in activating vital eco-system, economic, cultural and territorial relations in, however, highly conflictual contexts that weigh heavily on local and regional identities;
- *the principle of integration*, which recognizes the need for consistent public measures for effective protection and valorisation of natural-cultural assets, in particular as regards the cumulative effects of the various territorial, general and sector policies.

3. New paradigms

3.1. New paradigms for protected natural areas

To promote effective integration between nature, landscape and cultural heritage policies, due consideration must be given to how the above principles are applied in the various contexts. Management perspectives and approaches, matrixes of ideas and reference methodological frameworks have changed much more than is normally thought. In 2003, on the occasion of the V World Parks Congress, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature introduced “new paradigms” for parks and protected areas, the offshoot of a complex process affected by various clashes that was further developed in subsequent years. While moving along the lines traced by the IUCN, these new paradigms propose various major innovations, significant for this paper (Phillips 2003). First of all, strong opposition to the “insularisation” of protected areas, i.e. to the still dominant vision of these as “islands” to be protected, immersed in environmentally hostile contexts or, in any case, separated from an ecological, landscape and cultural point of view. A configuration

of this type not only increases their vulnerability (no park, even the huge North American, Asian or African parks, is large enough to be effectively protected only on the inside) but also impairs “beyond boundaries” deployment of the benefits generated in terms of sustainable development. This “insular” approach is clearly opposed to the “reticular” model represented by ecological connection networks. Secondly, the new paradigms cast doubt on the very mission of the parks and protected areas, postulating broadening of their objectives, from strictly ecological to social and cultural goals. Thirdly, they explicitly introduce the rapport with local populations and communities, acknowledging their active and also potentially priority role in managing protected areas (their development demands tend to take priority over visitors’ interests). The network metaphor evoked by Chatwin (1988) which, rather than species-specific ecological networks (such as the paths of wolves or bears), proposes the Songlines or the Dream Trails of the Australian aborigines, which transform the country into “networks of paths of mobile populations” (Gambino 2007).

3.2. *The world of protected areas*

Although the new paradigms more or less explicitly embrace all aspects of nature conservation and more precisely the protection of biodiversity, they must be interpreted taking into account the complex, multi-various reality of the protected areas whose main characteristics are (CED PPN 2008):

- *high level territorial incidence*: although this varies by countries and regions (the surface of the “protected areas” set up and recognised by the IUCN covers 13% of total territorial surface at global level, 18% at European level; the surface protected by supra-national institutions, such as the wetlands of the Ramsar agreements or the Sites of the European “Natura 2000” Directive, which also partially overlap these, must be added);
- *the continuing, ever more impetuous increase* in the number and surface of the protected areas (with a 23% growth in protected surface in the last ten years) and, more generally, in their territorial, economic, political, social and cultural impact; a rate of growth that confirms continuing social consensus but which also hides the poor management efficiency of a large swathe of the protected areas and their as yet unsolved relationships with the local communities;
- *the extreme, ever more evident diversification* of the protected areas, to be ascribed only partially to the classifications proposed by the IUCN (1994 and 2008) and which, generally speaking, reveals a marked shift from “nature sanctuaries” and “wilderness” towards rural areas and those englobed in more densely urbanised contexts; this is true especially in Europe where, significantly, more than half of the protected areas are classified as “protected landscapes”;
- *more marked ecological and landscape fragmentation* both inside the protected areas and in their contexts, due to dispersion of settlements, the proliferation of infrastructures, “engineering “ of the territory.

3.3. *The landscape paradigm according to the ELC*

Generally speaking, the new nature conservation paradigms seem to reflect current trends towards a necessary, increasingly broad aperture to the landscape and territory. This is reflected symmetrically in the “landscape paradigm” developed within the framework of the European Landscape Convention which seems to definitively eliminate the social notion of the landscape from sectorial interpretations, demanding a holistic interpretation that gives joint consideration to different dimensions, from the ecological (reflected in the interactions between natural and anthropic factors), to the social (component of the context in which the populations live), to the semiological, aesthetic and cultural dimension (expression of a common heritage and the foundation of identity). As configured in the Convention, the landscape paradigm does not seem to eliminate the basic ambiguity of the landscape (Gambino 1994b), the way in which it alludes both to the image of

reality and to reality itself, the way in which it proposes an open and never concluded bi-sociation between facts and representations (that identified by Koestler, 1964 in the emblematic figure of Don Quijote, poised between reality and imagination). However, the Convention rejects scientific objectivism, imbued with the typical determinism and certainties of Landscape Ecology, and also the subjectivism encountered in a large swathe of the aesthetising literature cultivated by the Italian tradition. Certainly, it leaves space for semiological interpretation (the landscape is a powerful communication tool) but with an important implication: the system of signs of the landscape cannot be translated into a “given” set of meanings, landscape semiosis is a continuing process (Dematteis 1998). The dynamics of things – the ecosphere – cannot be separated from the dynamics of meanings – the semiosphere – and therefore from the social processes in which this is produced (ibidem). Consequently, the landscape, as a space of open-ended semiosis, cannot correspond to that cognitively perfect space (Socco 1998) studied by the “hard sciences”. Its symbolic and metaphorical, aesthetic and narrative functions and its sediments of myths and memories are located in this dynamic aperture. Certainly, the landscape is a theatre (Turri 1997) but it is not a “given” theatre with its scenes fixed on immobile backdrops, where only the actors and spectators can change.

3.4. *A bridge between nature and culture*

It is from this complex point of view that the landscape establishes a bridge *between nature and culture*, overstepping the “Western” representation of the relationship between man and nature and questioning Cartesian dualism of mind and body, of spirit and matter (Cini 2000). Although it paves the way towards the definition of new universal values (Giddens 1997 quoted by Cini), dissolution of the “naturalness of nature” validates the thesis of Bateson and others that deny at source the possibility of distinguishing between human sciences and natural sciences. From this point of view, the landscape paradigm moves towards nature not so much to broaden its field of attention but, rather, because nature is an integral and essential part of the landscape device. It could be said that this was already implicit in Simmel’s “*stimmung*” (1912) and also in von Humboldt’s fundamental discoveries (1860). But, more than by the millennial processes of “domestication” of the natural world, the new geometries of anthropic action have been imposed on natural dynamics by current all-pervading processes of “simulation” (Raffestin 1998), demanding a unitary interpretation of these. This is also the reason why extension of landscape values to the entire territory (required by the Convention) must not be considered simply as a spatial dilatation of protection requirements, but implies a different vision of the nature/landscape duo, in accordance with the above-mentioned principle of conservation.

3.5. *A new relationship between nature and city*

Bipolarisation between nature and culture – in particular between parks and cities – splendidly represented in Renaissance perspective and echoed in 19th century visions, such as that of F.L. Olmsted (who, almost concurrently, designed Central Park in the heart of New York and the first great American State Nature Park of Yosemite) and still adopted – has been heavily affected by the great economic-territorial changes that have occurred. Changes whose most emblematic aspect is, precisely, “urbanisation” of the natural world, reflected in spatial contamination that cancels all recognisable borders, constant broadening of the city’s “ecological footprint”, the increasing impact of urban culture that influences citizens’ behaviour and their views of spaces and natural resources. At this point, the classic paradigm of the relationship between nature and city must be completely reconsidered according to the new meanings attributed by contemporary society to “naturalness” and “urbanity”, both offshoots of culture and history. “The central places of community life, the places of identity and of the common perception of space are no longer only inside the compact city inherited from the past; similarly, contact with nature cannot be relegated to the margins of

inhabited space but must be re-acquired inside the contemporary city, rejecting the misleading seductions of “zoning” [...]. Growing interest in regeneration programmes such as “greening the city”, in projects to recover and requalify the riversides of historically-consolidated watercourses, in the re-utilisation of “urban voids” and large decommissioned areas not simply for real estate purposes, reflects a new awareness of the deficit to be removed [...]. Therefore, the relationship between parks and city becomes a facet of the much broader issue of networks and spaces of social relationship in the contemporary territory: the squares and roads, the places and their connections, the riverbeds that cross this and the urban green that allows it to breathe. Not simply context architecture but a ramified, complex connective tissue that links inside and outside, historical legacies and environmental dynamics”(Gambino 2007b).

3.6. Cultural landscapes or culture of the landscapes?

These conclusions also tend to question a concept of major international interest in the last ten years: that of “cultural landscape”. A concept that has not only promoted identification of a plurality of specific fields of application of landscape policies, but which is also reflected in the criteria according to which Unesco constructs its list of World Heritage Sites (starting from 1992, various cultural landscapes of exceptional value have been inserted in the list, integrating the 1972 Convention). At this point, the question is: while acknowledging the undeniable cultural significance of landscapes in general (all, including ordinary and downgraded landscapes), is there any sense in considering their cultural worth as a distinctive criterion for selecting the “exceptional” sites to be inserted in the list? A similar question can be asked regarding all “protected natural areas” insofar as they are generally acknowledged as being of special environmental value.

4. Relationships and networks

4.1. From objects to their relationships

In various ways and for different reasons, the landscape paradigm and the new naturalist paradigms impose the need to look beyond the individual “objects” deposited in the territory in order to perceive their dynamic and co-evolutionary relationships. This is not a problem of scale but, on the contrary, a problem encountered at all scales, from the house to the city, to the region, as already highlighted by the critique of the the Correalism of Kiesler’s architecture, 1939. But in complex systems such as contemporary territorial systems, due consideration must be given to various types of connection networks, characterised by many redundancies and reciprocal interactions and also increasingly mutilated or interrupted by barriers or gaps generated by territorial transformation processes. This need is also reflected in the above-mentioned “new paradigms”, in particular with regard to the already highlighted processes of eco-system fragmentation (Bennett 1999); however, its much more general scope is readily perceived. The production of places that characterises the “production of territory” must be accompanied by the construction of networks able to guarantee or re-establish vital connections: in space (between facts variously located in the territory), in time (between facts that have occurred at various times in the history of the territory) and in society (between different subjects and social groups) (IUCN 2005). From this point of view, the territory can be considered a “network of networks”. However, this also means that all the relationships that in some way influence the connectivity of the systems, in the threefold dimension indicated above, must also be taken into account. In other words, the “reticular paradigm” must necessarily be of a strongly multidimensional character. Its utility lies in understanding and highlighting the interactions determined between the various connection networks that cross the territory, linking apparently separate facts and actions.

4.2. The search for a transversal reticular paradigm

Research carried out in this direction from the early 1990s, comprising both empirical analysis and theoretical elaborations, has not apparently resulted in the definition of a real transversal paradigm

able to “put together” different networks of an ecological, cultural and urban, economic or infrastructural type. Although various interesting hypotheses have been mooted regarding the existence of significant relationships between these, such as “the ecological relationships activated by (or in any case connected with) infrastructural and social interaction networks” (Dematteis 1993). Critical reflection and experiments on ecological networks have demonstrated the difficulty and inadvisability of separating their biological and cultural roles in the broadest meaning (therefore stressing the concept of bio-cultural connection). The experience of the parks has highlighted the close relationships between the systems of protected areas, as territorial resources, and the networks of the related management authorities, insofar as supra-local entities of territorial governance able to cooperate also at a distance (such as for example in the Network of Alpine Parks). Scientific literature abounds with studies addressing hierarchical urban networks (Camagni 1990) and, in particular, of the synergic relations between de-hierarchised, depolarised and self-organised urban networks and the equipotential transportation networks that serve these. There are many other examples which highlight not only convergences and interactions but also the possibility of identifying certain common “properties” in these different types of networks: such as relationships not based on spatial contiguity (and parallel weakening of the bonds of proximity), or relationships of multi-lateral interdependence or of redundancies that pave the way to alternatives, or of dichotomic relations (being or not being in the network).

4.3. Self-organised meshworks and hierarchies

In an attempt to develop a unitary interpretation of the different networks, the combination of two key concepts, i.e. “self-organised meshworks” and “orderly hierarchy of uniform elements” (De Landa, 2003) has been proposed: concepts able to traverse the physical-geological, biological and linguistic-cultural world. Three worlds not conceived as three separate spheres at different levels of progress but as three co-existing and interactive flows of material, energy and information. In this vision, variable combination of the two key concepts would seem to permit connection of different reticular interpretations, conceived and developed in very diverse theoretical contexts such as the networks of central places mooted by Chistaller and others (Dematteis 1993), ecological and social communication networks. An important and ambitious goal in new globalisation scenario: “understand whether and at which conditions the networks are configured as self-organized meshworks that, stemming from local realities, may dialectically oppose hierarchical orders or, on the contrary, as projections of a higher order that link local realities in systems of exogenous and hetero-directed relations”(Gambino 2009). This is a question that goes to the heart of “urbanity”, dilating and complicating the meaning and role of “centrality”, going well beyond the “diagonal” interpretations that attracted attention in the 1970s, in particular of geographers (Bird 1977, Gambino 1983).

4.4. A territorialist response

However, the answer to this question lies outside the scope of the reticular paradigm regardless of how this is or can be dilated. In fact, the role that each node can play in the networks of which it is part depends essentially on its specific characteristics, on the resources mobilised, on self-organizational capacity and on the available operating *milieux*. The role of specificity in the new supra-local competitive scenarios cannot be separated from “internal” reasons of sustainability and cohesion, cannot be interpreted only in terms of nodality. Because the territory consists not only of networks of various types and level that intersect and interact, but also of places, each with its own individuality, own – more or less recognisable and recognised – identity and, therefore, its own greater or lower ability to withstand the pressures of global changes and defend its values and demands. Places and networks have been already considered a double metaphor of interpretation of contemporary territoriality (Gambino 1994a). The ecological and landscape paradigms outlined assume consistency in the concrete places of territorial reality, not in that mental construction we call space (Raffestin, 2009). We can speak of identity and try to trace its evolution, local differences

and intrinsic conflictuality in relation to the diversity of places. Because the territory is the real arena of clashes between the interests that determine the risks and downgrading that threaten nature, the landscape and cultural heritage. Therefore, the territory is the common ground on which to try to integrate nature and landscape policies, encouraging interaction between these and other policies of the various sectors involved, starting from urban planning policies. Hence, the “new centrality” of the territory, against the backdrop of the post-Fordist transition of the global economy, that restores the importance of local diversities and specificities and, at the same time, triggers environmental incompatibilities in all dimensions, including economic and social dimensions. Beyond the frontiers of neo-functionalism, restoring the importance of the “Territorialist Manifest” (Magnaghi, 1990, 1998) that focuses attention on “inhabiting” the territory, in the broadest meaning of the term. A position certainly not without worthy forerunners: for example, the concept, in Cattaneo (1845), of the “built landscape” that reflects the history of men’s territorial designs; or Heidegger’s equation between living and building. But direct confrontation with local problems and expectations arouses many questions. It imposes redefinition of the concept of identity, taking into account its variability in time and potential conflictuality: the “armed” or “warlike” identities that “can be transformed into an extremely powerful weapon of violence”(Amartya Sen 2006). The concept of sustainability must also be defined, accepting its inevitable multi-dimensional nature, over and above the limits and myths of militant environmentalism (Scandurra 1998). In a general reconsideration of the concept of development, the theory of local development, which tends to offer a unitary and “projectual” interpretation of territorial capital, i.e. the set of tangible and intangible, natural and cultural factors underlying the development prospects of “local territorial systems”, SloT (Dematteis, Governa 2005) is of particular interest. These are the perspectives that can make sense of recovering the relationship between people and places, between social and territorial features, for an intrinsically “deraciné” contemporary society, pervaded by violent processes of deterritorialisation, by nomadism and a continuous search for elsewhere.

5. Interpretations and territorial projects

5.1. The interpretative role of representations

The territorialist perspective lends itself to a wide spectrum of interpretations in which the different representations are self-seeding (Raffestin 2009). A new idea of the territory – that incorporates a new concept of the relationship between man and nature, that proposed by the above-motivated new paradigms – necessarily implies new representations. A pivotal problem for geographical reflection that, for some time now, has focussed on the circular nature of the relationship between observation of reality and the reality observed. In the words of Olsson (1975) “anything I say must serve as a language that in turn reflects both the world and the vision I have of this [...] there is no clear distinction between reality and the specific language through which we conceive, discuss and change this”. This calls to mind two important considerations. The first concerns the role of representation in the circular relationship between knowledge and observed reality. According to Raffestin (2009), “representation is the space of transformation through which, adopting a language, a natural or formal logic and a certain scale, not only cartographic but even informative, the “unique reality” is understood, having or returning one of more images of this...”. Consequently, “no representation is without deformations (atrophies and hypertrophies)” as already highlighted by the history of cartography. The “art” of representation must inevitably abstain from any claim of objectivity and scientific neutrality and seek to justify its “deformations” in open, inclusive processes of social certification. Furthermore, the contribution that can be provided by different disciplines and different spheres of knowledge to understanding territorial reality is inevitably partial and different from that of others (as each language involves different “deformations”): therefore, the different contributions cannot be integrated in synthetic holistic visions simply by combining these, but requires a critical comparison and what may be called a “negotiated” and transverse composition.

5.2. *The flesh and bones of the world*

Through the “hermeneutic circle” theorised by Gadamer (1986), representations and knowledge of reality play an active role in territorial transformation projects. Even when these projects are not guided or influenced by explicit planning hypotheses or goals, it has been demonstrated (Dematteis 1995, Magnaghi 2009) that expert knowledge has an ineluctable responsibility in suggesting, supporting or contrasting these. Rendering implicit projects explicit (illustrating the problems, risks and rewards involved) can be considered a necessary requisite of transparency. However, this imposes careful sifting of available information also in view of the huge bulk of information that can be generated by ICT technologies. It is a question of intervening, to use a favourite metaphor of geographers, on the “bond between the flesh, i.e. everything that is perishable and tends to change quickly, and the bones of the world which, in this case, represent the biological history and long times of co-evolution of our species with the terrestrial environment” (Quaini 2009). Certainly, the landscape plays a crucial role in this task, as a “silent terrain of encounter between hard sciences and human sciences”, where technical-scientific knowledge encounters common knowledge, the implicit knowledge of local inhabitants and communities. But how can this collective task be reconciled with the intrinsic subjectivity of the landscape experience, further accentuated by the increasing mobility and nomadism of contemporary society which tend to configure the landscape as a “hypertext” (Cassatella 2001). Is there a “common perception” of the landscape to which reference can be made in the interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary interpretation of the territory? In replying affirmatively to these questions, Dematteis (also recalling Castelnovi 1998) identifies the common perception of the landscape as a projectual resource that can be applied not so much in specific regulatory measures but rather as a strategic resource for development and amelioration of the quality of life. It is in this broad, complex planning perspective that a synthetic joint consideration of the ecosphere, semiophere and sociosphere must be attempted.

5.3. *Relationships with time and life*

In an attempt to identify the discriminant “between the flesh and bones of the world”, considerable efforts have been directed recently, especially in environmental and landscape planning, towards laying the critical bases of a *structural interpretation of the territory*. The relationship with time, as “measure of the world” (Zumthor, 1995) is a decisive factor in working in this direction. Basically, as already mooted by Levy Strauss (1966) “structures are simply the intersections in time and space of changing processes”. Another point of departure could be Braudel’s (1982) well-known image: three separate, co-present flows (daily material life, market and anti-market activities) that, moving at different speeds, are integrated in the much slower movements of geology and which are suddenly traversed by the syncopated rhythms of financial decisions. In particular, “for modern technical-scientific culture, engaged in pursuing change, in keeping step with the speed of transformation processes [...] the landscape paradigm is an invitation to consider the longer times of the earth, the stability and permanence of the signs of history, what remains rather than what changes” (Gambino 2004). It is no coincidence that various structural interpretations refer to a definition of the concept of structure taken from biology. According to Maturana and Varela (1987), structure must “be interpreted as the set of components and relationships that are the manifest, concrete and adaptive expression of the organization of a system”. The operational meaning of this definition has been further clarified, in certain applications, resorting to a matrix that intersects the type of factors (geomorphologic, biological, settlement, semiological and perceptive, historical-cultural...: the list is open as the relative importance of the various factors may vary in different contexts) with their structural relevance which is declined distinguishing, from specifically *structuring*, factors, the *characterising* factors (that make it possible to adjectivise the characteristics of the single local systems so that these can be distinguished from others that are structurally similar), *qualifying* factors (which imbue each local system with particular additional qualities or values without determining their structure or basic characteristics); and lastly those that

denote criticalities or downgrading, regardless of structure and characterisation. In other experiences based on “tales of identity” (as in Liguria) or on the identification of “structural invariants” (Emilia) or on “statutes of the places” (Toscana), interpretative space seems to dilate even further, accentuating interdependence with the project.

5.4. Structural interpretation and planning strategies

The criticism aimed at structural interpretations mainly refers to the relationship with the project that may range from effective regulatory determinism (where the indications provided by the structural interpretation assume direct compelling value in relation to each project hypothesis) to flexible conditioning in cases in which the indications are clearly without regulatory value, leaving room for autonomous project decisions. In any case, the relationship with the project is fraught with political and cultural implications. It must be established if and to what point the structural interpretation is able to take into account the basic project options without losing its essential link with current reality and its systems of values, without betraying its identity characteristics. The fact that the interpretation must be of a dynamic and evolutionary character and consider not so much “factors” as relationships and processes is not questioned. It is not a question of using the “structural invariant” binomial which, according to the definitions mentioned, would seem rather to configure a misleading oxymoron. It is rather a question of the possibility that the interpretation does not simply explore the territory concerned but incorporates or anticipates evolutionary trajectories of structural relevance becoming, de facto, a “structural plan”. This is the preferred approach adopted in Italy by various regional legislative bodies and by the main legislative decrees for territorial government currently under discussion, which have identified structural planning as a radically innovative planning configuration that, from many points of view, recalls the Structure plans or the *Schéma directeur* of past seasons. But the question does not concern only the territorial project at municipal, provincial or regional level. It concerns the territorial project on all scales insofar as it attempts to avoid confusion between respect and conservation of existing values and their evolution potential with supine acceptance of transformation decisions that could, potentially, undermine such values (such as for example major decisions involving infrastructures).

6. Planning and governance policies

6. The territorial project as a social process

The aim of this paper is to put forward suggestions for a research programme able to promote effective integration between nature and landscape policies and between these and other territorial policies. According to the new paradigms mentioned, the *territorial project* is a privileged arena for this integration effort. As such, the territorial project cannot, in any way, be considered as an incoherent summa of single technical-administrative deeds that characterise the current lack of collective planning of the city (Mazza 2009). On the contrary, it represents a fully-articulated, complex spectrum of activities that involve a large swathe of institutions, stakeholders and representatives of civil society. The European Landscape Convention has already taken steps in this direction, stressing the importance of measures to raise collective awareness of the values and issues involved, of education and training, in addition to protection and planning and, therefore, imposing the obligation of taking into account the perceptions and values assigned by the actors and populations involved. Although this obligation is expressed in intentionally vague terms (and is more or less ignored in our Code on cultural assets and the landscape), it seems obvious that, here, reference must be made not only to local communities and powers in the strictest meaning of the term but also to other resulting social entities responsible for the “care” of local landscapes (caretaker) and their valorisation in supra-local networks. In the light of the aforementioned new paradigms, identification of the social reference for nature conservation policies appears to be even more uncertain and problematic. Apart from reinforcing reference to local communities for the management of protected areas (in particular, Managed Resource Protected Areas: category VI of

IUCN classification, 1994, 2008), the need to broaden protection and valorisation measures to encompass the respective eco-territorial contexts and connection networks is stressed; a line of action that requires alliances and cooperation with a plurality of - not only institutional - actors, to be identified in itinere during the process. If we consider the other components of the territorial project such as those relating to urban planning, rural development or infrastructural networks, the reference framework is even more complicated. Other, further complications stem from the role the landscape is expected to play in current territorial processes. "As the cornerstone of local identities, the landscape does not merely establish a network of facts and natural and cultural processes that denote environmental milieu, but stages, exhibits and spectacularises these. And it is this spectacularisation (the landscape as a theatre where the actors become spectators of themselves: Turri 1998) that perhaps explains the great success that surrounds events that create or re-propose urban or great territorial landscapes" (Gambino 2007b).

6.2. Governance and social sustainability

In view of the complexity of the actions and actors involved, traditional forms of public intervention are clearly inadequate. In this as in other fields of public action, the government measures that can be adopted independently by the individual institutional authorities constitute only part of "governance" if, by this, we mean a complex suite of actors who interact, of diversified resources and procedures that guide the decision-making process of a social group (Le Galés 2002, Bagnasco 2009). This is even more true of the territorial project, directed towards integrating different policies defined by different institutional actors and which touch upon different interests, in order to ensure their social sustainability "Deliberative democracy techniques [...], based on the assumption that political preferences are not fixed but can be modified by an open and inclusive political discourse" (Baber, 2009) also move in this direction. Therefore, the role of planning as a fundamental instrument of governance of the territory is defined in a dynamic and multi-faceted ambient; a role that was redefined in Italy in 2001 with the reform of Title V of the Constitution. A reform – whose full scope is not yet fully understood – that should make it possible to bundle public programming, planning and integrated territory, environment and landscape management measures in units, thus overcoming the difficulties deriving from a plethora of separate or in any case incoherent plans and programmes (Peano, 2008, 2009). In this framework, the specific role of planning is reflected in three main missions, already the topic of international debate (IUCN 1996).

6.3. The regulatory mission of planning

The first mission traditionally assigned to planning is to offer instruments for *regulation* of territorial transformation processes by public institutions. Due, in particular, to the growing complexity of economic and territorial systems, regulation appears to be even more essential today than in the past and must be applied in contexts characterised by fast, unforeseeable changes, by a plurality of decision-makers, major "network effects" and trans-scalar interdependencies. In these contexts, the search for more efficient forms of regulation, in particular those oriented towards "deliberative democracy", has undermined the effectiveness of the traditional regulatory configurations based on rigid "cascade" of constraints and provisions. However, the severity of environment and landscape downgrading processes, of the losses and risks that threaten cultural heritage has abruptly tabled the need for adequate protection of the integrity of territorial heritage, subordinating any hypothesis of transformation to this priority need. This need has been and is perceived in different ways in the various contexts. For example, although in a climate of increasing aperture to flexible and cooperative forms of managing natural assets, the IUCN once again stressed in 2008 the absolute priority of defending biodiversity in each category of protected area. Similarly, although in not so precise terms, the European Landscape Convention establishes the obligation of integrating landscape protection measures in all sector policies that affect the landscape. In Italy, under providential art. 9 of the Constitution, the 2004 Code frequently stresses the adoption of binding prescriptions, granting a sort of (much debated) priority to landscape planning in relation to

any other type of plan, including those of the parks. The risk of reproposing a constraint-based approach, no longer feasible in view of the considerations set forth above, is obvious.

6.4. The cognitive mission of planning

Planning's second mission is *cognitive*. A mission also carried out traditionally by plans, at least in implicit, ancillary or simply bureaucratic terms and often without any organic relationship with planning results. Today, it seems that this mission must necessarily acquire more penetrating contents and importance. Drawing up a plan is also and first and foremost a collective "learning process" "that establishes a multilateral collective form of communication that is particularly effective in promoting sensitisation, self-awareness and empowerment of local government. It also meets the growing need for "regulatory knowledge"(as Raffestin says, we need knowledge that guides and supports the regulatory action). This is the case of the protective measures imposed by the Code for landscape that presume adequate and specific acknowledgments of value; and it is also the case of the close relationship that is created between the structural interpretations mentioned above and the "interpretative" activities that have now become extremely important in park management and planning activities.

6.5. The strategic mission of planning

The production of targeted knowledge plays essential role in planning's third mission, that of *strategic guidance* of territorial governance. Here, reference is not made to those activities (definition of basic objectives and options, examination of general alternatives, proposals regarding governance guidelines) that form part, in more or less recognisable and distinct forms, of the traditional planning process but rather to the explicit production of guiding visions and strategic outlines able to define a shared reference framework for relatively autonomous decision-making by a plurality of public and private actors operating at different levels and in different sectors. Apart from the often divergent indications provided by strategic planning experiences, which have emerged at international level (Curti, Gibelli 1996), reference is made to the crucial role that this form of planning is required to play following integration of nature and landscape policies in general territorial planning processes. Integration that must come to grips with the complex tangle of conflicts, trade-offs and competitive pressures, whose composition requires transparent confrontation and negotiation based on explicit assessments of what is involved and of the possible long-term effects of the various strategies. In this perspective, the cognitive activity, especially the above-mentioned structural interpretations, must define negotiable elements and the scope of negotiability or, in other words, the boundaries within which strategic decisions can be flexibly developed.

6.6. Structural rooting and "concrete utopias" of change

From this point of view, the structural and strategic dimension are both distinct and complementary. Confusion of the two elements, clearly evident also in various regional laws, does not only impair the clarity of the related instruments and administrative procedures. It obscures the necessary complementarity and consistence between the search to root these in the specific reality of the territory and attempts to anticipate the future, intercepting its trajectories of evolution and maintaining a distance from the past. It is this difficult and problematic relationship that underlies the challenge of territorialisation of protection policies and authentic "integrated" valorisation of natural-cultural heritage. In this integrated perspective, critical analysis of current reality and of the processes of de-structuring and de-territorialisation that have produced this, demolishing with a concentric manoeuvre cities, territories and landscapes, leaves no doubt as regards the need to launch new strategies of real, effective re-territorialisation. However, it is necessary to choose between strategies aimed at preserving "excellencies" (concentrating resources and care on natural beauties, exceptional landscapes, famous monuments, artistic treasures and Unesco Sites according to an approach still stressed by the 2004 Code) and strategies directed more towards safeguarding

and improving territorial capital and the diffused systems of values that structure the territory, reconstructing its image and identity. It is interesting to note that criticism of “excellence” strategies, in the name of an articulated conservation option for all assets, has been reflected recently in contestation of the policy of “major restoration works” which offer sponsors high return in terms of image but which divert resources from diffused demands (Ginzburg, Settis, 2009). As seen, it is a necessary choice at all levels but which tends increasingly to impact that “third space” between local and global (Sassen, 2009) left uncovered by denationalisation processes. It is, in particular, in this space that the challenge facing Europe and its institutions, engaged in seeking a new “European identity” based on diversity, is configured. Taking up this challenge is also an essential condition for attempting to recover, in concrete experiences, the utopian objectives of the project.

1. Convergences

The growing pressure of the demand for nature and for landscape

The celebration of diversity in nature and landscape

Convergences between nature and landscape policies

Separation of nature and landscape policies

A research programme for a common ground

2. Principles and values

New potentially conflicting values

New rights

Reasoning by principles

Conservation and innovation, an indivisible relationship

Dilatation of the conservation option

The principles of limit, diversification and integration

3. New paradigms

New paradigms for protected natural areas

The world of protected areas

The landscape paradigm according to the ELC

A bridge between nature and culture

A new relationship between nature and city

Cultural landscapes or culture of the landscapes?

4. Relationships and networks.

From objects to their relationships

The search for a transversal reticular paradigm

Self-organised meshworks and hierarchies

A territorialist response

5. Interpretations and territorial projects

The interpretative role of representations

The flesh and bones of the world

Relationships with time and life

Structural interpretation and planning strategies

6. Planning and governance policies

The territorial project as a social process

Governance and social sustainability

The regulatory mission of planning

The cognitive mission of planning

The strategic mission of planning

Structural rooting and “concrete utopias” of change

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