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Daily life explorers, social networks and landscape policies¹

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Abstract

The article sheds light on the virtual networks' capability of driving landscape changes, both at epistemological level and at geographical level. “Living in” the landscape brings out the main drivers of change at individual level, while the ICT are offering complementary places, with respect to those ones already existing, for increasing people's role in sharing values and meanings. Then, common visions might emerge and “inform” landscape policies, indirectly influencing the meaning of wellbeing. Specifically, the socioeconomic theory might constitute a missing link between regulatory issues and technological achievements, enhancing and combining the new opportunities for participation offered by the European Landscape Convention, and by the widespread diffusion of social networks on the web. Indeed, “living in” the landscape inspires a plurality of visions that people are able to describe and share on the web or send directly to the interested institutions. Geographers might collect these issues and explore the landscape by living in it in order to produce “ethic visions”. Integrated with political and economic issues using the Regulation Impact Analysis (RIA), their contents might contribute to inform landscape transformation policies. Landscape policies might be participated also in the implementation phase, involving people in the fund raising activities and delegating the realization of some interventions to the spontaneous action of the interested citizens and firms. More participation at political and at social level might strengthen the sense of community reinforcing the narratives that connect the human and natural elements of landscape, integrating equity and sustainability in the traditional meaning of wellbeing.

Key words: European Landscape Convention, participation, crowdfunding, crowdsourcing.

¹ I thank Vanja Bozic for comments. Errors remain on my own.

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1. Introduction

The economic theory might constitute a missing link between regulatory issues and technological achievements, enhancing and combining the new opportunities for participation offered by the European Landscape Convention, and by the widespread diffusion of social networks on the web.

If “living in” the landscape is the *leit motiv* for participation, cooperation and development, we can be all daily life explorers, and technology might help in collecting feelings, perspectives, ideas, projects, that, using the main economic tools of analysis, can be integrated in order to obtain “ethic visions”. The ethic visions might complement the regulatory issues emerging from more traditional landscape planning and cost-benefit analyses in order to “inform” projects of landscape transformation.

Landscape changes might be participated: i) at theoretical level integrating the results of local consultations in the process of institutional cooperation that involves State, Regions and local Administrations, ii) at economic level integrating public-private partnerships with crowdfunding activities, and iii) assigning people a complementary role, with respect to the public-private interventions, in the implementation phase of landscape transformation policies (crowdsourcing).

In the following paragraphs, these statements are explained using more analytical arguments. Specifically, Paragraph 2 briefly summarizes the regulatory framework that defines landscape policies in Italy, from the global to the regional scale. Furthermore, Paragraph 3 illustrates how the economic accountability can be used to introduce a multidimensional asset as landscape is, specifying also issues related to the implementation of Geographical Information Systems (GIS). In Paragraph 4 it is explained how the implementation of e-democracy processes might contribute to the formation of social networks, and under which conditions social networks can increase the endowment of social capital at both territorial and sectorial level. In Paragraph 5, a collection of territorial best practices in the development and implementation of participated processes at different geographical scales is presented, in order to highlight some relevant issues regarding the methodologies and the tools needed to enable people’s participation. In Paragraph 6, the role of the daily life’s explorers, of the geographers and of the local institutions is briefly explained. Finally, in Paragraph 7, a narrow selection of complementary tools with respect to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is presented.

2. The regulatory framework

The European Landscape Convention aims at “*promoting landscape protection, management and planning*” of all landscapes, through cooperative processes that should increase the awareness of the living landscapes (Council of Europe, 2000). According to the Convention, every landscape

should satisfy people's attitude to enjoy high quality landscapes and "*to play an active part*" in their development (Council of Europe, 2000). In doing so, landscape studies "*contribute to the formation of local cultures*", increasing "*people's quality of life*" (Council of Europe, 2000). The definition of landscape adopted by the European Landscape Convention is wider than that one of cultural landscape provided by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, as the latter refers only to the sites of outstanding universal value (World Heritage Sites). Instead, the Convention applies to the entire territory, as it covers "*natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas*", "*land, inland water and marine areas*", "*landscapes that might be considered outstanding as well as daily or degraded*" (Council of Europe, 2000).

The European Landscape Convention has not an equivalent counterpart in the European Union's legislative framework. At EU level, indeed, landscape has been regulated only indirectly, and legal protection has been accorded only to specific features regarding the environment and the sustainable use of the exhaustible stocks of natural resources. The European law refers explicitly to the concept of landscape in the wider context of the agricultural policies, protecting the diversity of rural landscapes. Specifically, in the EU Directive 85/337 on the Environmental Impact Assessment landscape is included among the topics of interest, while the EU Directives 75/442 and 2006/12 include landscape among the elements that must be preserved in the waste disposal process (EPA, 2006). As regards the rural landscape, the EU Regulation n. 795/85 on the improvement of the efficiency of the agricultural structures allows to implement different national policies, mainly concerning aids, in the areas of environmental and cultural interest. The Decision of the Council 2006/1144, that defines the EU strategic issues on rural development, in the Preamble highlights the importance of agriculture in determining the abundance and the diversity of the EU landscapes, as part of the cultural and natural heritage of the local communities.

A regulation focusing directly on landscape has been instead developed at national level by the EU member States. As regards Italy, the new regulation (D. Lgs n.42/2004, so called "Code of Landscape") implementing the European Convention on Landscape radically changes the meaning of landscape, even if some differences with the meaning expressed in the Convention persist. Specifically, in the Italian regulation landscape is considered mainly as a spatial asset, while the concept of landscape that can be inferred by the Convention is strictly related to the quality of the milieu. Nevertheless, also in the Italian law (art. 131 of the Code of Landscape) the concept of landscape is the result of all the natural and cultural elements observed, assessed in their individuality and in their organization. Landscape should be protected as a piece of territory identified by the interrelations among the human beings and nature, but also as the image of a collective identity, that should be recognized and endorsed (Di Bene, 2007).

The art. 132 of the Code attributes to the Central Government, Regions and Local Administrations the aim of protecting and valuing the Italian landscapes through a process of loyal cooperation, inspired by the principles of sustainable development (Di Bene, 2007). The art. 135, 146 and 156 identify in the Landscape Plan the tool designated to promote the dialogue among all the institutions involved in the process of conservation of valuable landscapes, of management of all landscapes in a sustainable development framework, and of landscape transformation, specifically when interventions are needed for improving the quality of deteriorated landscapes and to create new valuable landscapes (Di Bene, 2007). Even if the Landscape plan should be drawn up by the Regions, the participation of the MIBAC is compulsory in the elaboration of those parts of the Plan that involve protected elements of landscape identified in the art.142 of the Code. Landscape planning regulation is binding for the urban planning tools written by Municipalities, Metropolitan Cities and Provinces, and it immediately prevails against the conflicting norms that might be deduced by their text (Di Bene, 2007).

It is worth noticing how the Italian law restricts the cooperative process of landscape transformation to the action of the public institutions (specifically, the MIBAC, the Regions and the local institutions), while civil participation is not empowered in the system of public governance. The issue that people can take an active part in landscape transformation contributing to the formation of local cultures, is, then, addressed through the mediation of the public sector. Moreover, the wide meaning of landscape stated in the European Landscape Convention is restricted to the idea of an asset, that is cultural, but it is an asset, and not a living experience contributing to the establishment of a common identity. However, considering landscape as an asset recalls the intervention of the economic theory and of the accounting methodologies. The idea is that an *ad hoc* system of accounts might help in widening the narrow definition of landscape provided by the Italian law. This exercise might also be useful to the economists to turn the mainstream economic perspective from a short-run profit-oriented to a mid-term value oriented, and finally to a long-run culture-oriented pattern. Finally, the adoption of a long-run system of accounts might enable people's active participation in landscape planning, management and transformation activities, increasing their quality of life, contributing to the endorsement of local cultures, and creating a bridge between cultural and socioeconomic networks.

3. Theoretical economic analysis

Accountability is deeply rooted in the economic history. In the early Middle-Ages, economic facts were collected using a simple notebook, in which every new operation was registered in chronological order. However, it was impossible to study the connections among two or more

records, or to control and cross-check the accuracy of the data entries. These activities were made possible by the design and the implementation of a system of accounts, and consequently by the adoption of a double-entry bookkeeping system.

A system of accounts allows for the registration of the monetary value of a set of activities regarding a social entity or an individual. Every account records all the monetary entries referred to a certain object, corresponding to negative and positive changes generated by the activities implying its involvement. Every account is made of two sections, one that accounts for the positive changes (credit) and one for the negative ones (debit). By examining an account it is possible to compute a balance, a value that defines the economic relevance at time t of the object to which it refers. In the organization of a system of accounts it is possible to choose arbitrarily both the number of accounts and the objects to which they refer.

The accounts are classified according to their being part of the balance sheet or of the economic sheet, or according to their nature (numeraire, monetary, economic). The structure of a system of accounts is instead based on two categories: the analytic accountability that includes the most detailed accounts, and the general accountability that summarizes the analytical evidence in homogeneous objects.

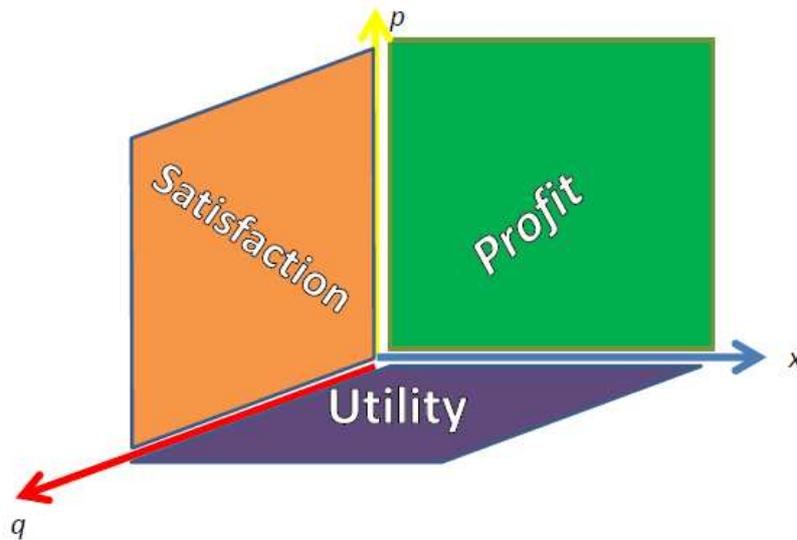
A system of accounts allows to keep a record of the relevant facts for the entity of interest, that subsequently will be registered using the double-entry bookkeeping system in the “ledger”, that collects systematic entries, and in the “daybook”, that collects chronological entries, as the transaction occurs. The “ledger” provides detailed information in every moment about the economic, financial and patrimonial status of the individual or group accounted, while the “daybook” documents transactions’ chronological history. Therefore, a system of accounts is a tool that allows to construct a historical and geographical narrative of the entity accounted. The peculiar characteristics of the social entity accounted allows to define properly the headers of the accounts, and their opening and closing dates.

On the other hand, it is well known that the economic analysis of the accounted values is usually represented in the price-quantity space, as the focus is on monetary values: assets and liabilities, revenues and costs, cash inflows and outflows. The economic analysis, then, does not assign a value to the information provided by the headers, or at least “translates” the biases in terms of quantitative changes of the data registered in the “debit/credit” sections. An example of this inefficiency is the phenomenon of the public funds diversion: public funds are allocated for a certain objective, but are used for the achievement of other goals, even if in a way that is efficient in economic terms.

An efficient economic analysis (meaning with “efficient” that is able to use all the available information) should be instead conducted in the price-quantity-quality space, and should refer to the

concept of value, rather than to the concept of profit. Indeed, profit is only one of the determinants of value, as the value of an economic activity depends also on its the level of utility and its level of satisfaction. The level of utility is measured on the quality-quantity plan, while the level of satisfaction is measured on the quality-price plan (see Graph 1).

Graph 1 – A “coloured” economics

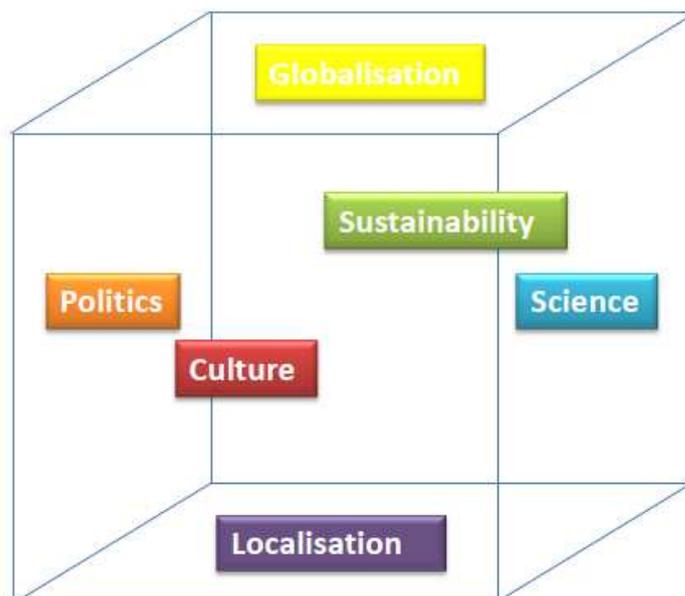


Then, an effective, efficient and fair analysis space is made of six elements: three orthogonal axes measuring the level of price, the level of quantity and the level of quality, and three orthogonal plans measuring the level of utility, the level of satisfaction, and the level of profit. According to their geometric nature (axes, plans), these elements can be classified in two groups: dynamic elements (quality, quantity, price) and structural elements (utility, satisfaction, profit). Other two useful classifications of these six elements are the ones based on their nature (cognitive or behavioural), and their relevance (systemic or individual). Specifically, the “unobservability” of quality, and the lack of an objective measure of it, determines its cognitive nature. Also utility and satisfaction have a cognitive nature, as quality participates in their definition. Similarly, as prices and quantities are observable, and measurable, they might be classified as behavioural variables, as well as profit, as they contribute to its definition. This classification is useful to distinguish the elements can be accounted directly, without necessarily committing significant measurement errors, from the elements that can be accounted only indirectly, using “revelation” mechanisms at a cost of making significant errors of measurement.

On the other hand, the concept of price has a conventional nature, and is one of the determinants of the level of satisfaction and of the level of profit. Consequently, price, satisfaction and profit can be considered to be of systemic relevance, as they imply the existence of a relation between at least two entities. Similarly, the individual nature of the level of utility, quality and quantity, depends on the fact that they have an intrinsic relevance for the entity to which they refer, without the need to assume the existence of any relation with other entities.

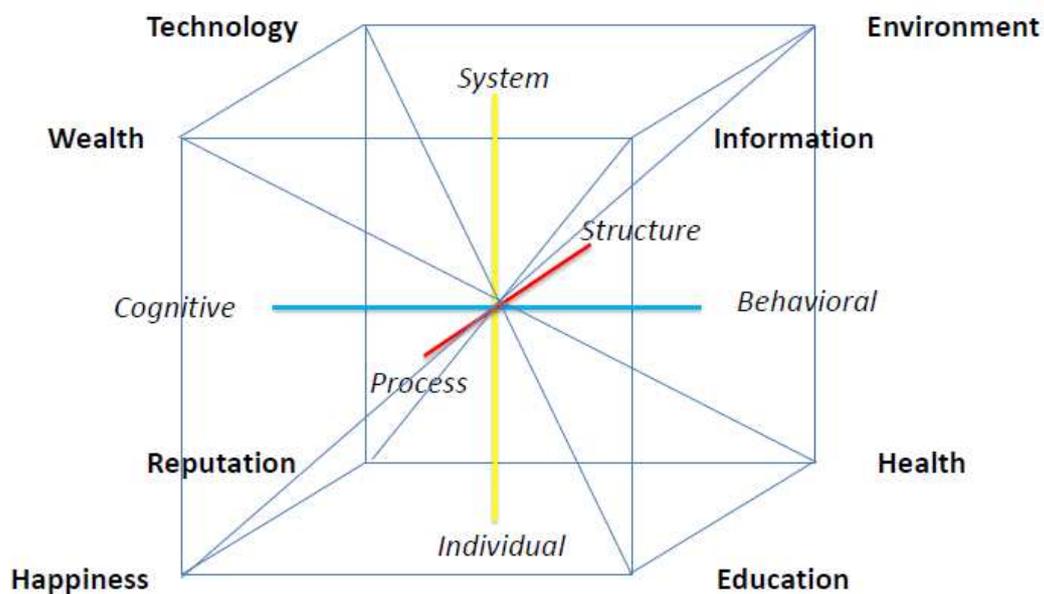
It is worth noticing how the six elements identified so far refer to a flow analysis. An additional step ahead in the design of a system of accounts for a cultural asset as landscape is might be that of linking the flow variables to the associated stock variables. Specifically, the following connections are proposed: price/system, quantity/science, quality/politics, utility/individual, satisfaction/culture, profit/nature. While the associations between price and system and between utility and individuals have been at least partially explained, the other connections require further qualification. The link between quantity and science depends on the fact that quantity is measurable, and it allows for scientific analyses regarding the behavioural response of seemingly unrelated facts. The relation between quality and politics depends on the fact that quality is unmeasurable, at least directly, then it must be fixed using ad hoc regulative tools, that are the main output of a political system. The association of satisfaction with culture depends on the fact that the collective identity that characterizes culture does not allow to define precise patterns of development, but only satisfactory levels of existence. Finally, the association between profit and nature depends on the human attitude to explore nature in order to draw resources for reaching a better quality of life.

Graph 2 – Connecting flows to stocks



It can be noticed how the identified stock variables, geometrically represented as the faces of a cube (see Graph 2), can be analyzed both in isolation and in their interaction. Then, at theoretical level, the connections among these mutually exclusive variables acquire important meanings. Specifically, they are three orthogonal axes (structure/process, perception/behaviour, system/individual), four diagonals (households, firms, government, international institutions), eight edges (wealth, justice, environment, technology, happiness, reputation, education, health) and twelve sides defining the cube used as a logical framework (notice how they are intersections of faces and edges).

Graph 3 – Connecting stock variables through bridging analytical issues



All the proposed sets of criteria are complete, that is, every vector in the analysis space can be decomposed in a linear combination of them. By using a more sophisticated (numerous) set of tools, the accuracy of the analysis can be improved, but its complexity will increase proportionally. The concepts introduced so far can be considered as the main references for a general system of accounts for landscape assets, but the analytical accountability can be more sophisticated. Specifically, the value or score attributed to each concept of general interest can be obtained as the aggregate value of a “cloud” of analytic accounts that measure the changes in selected objects of interest.

In brief, the framework proposed provides a logical classification of concepts with high epistemological value, that are currently used in the analytical economic activities. This general framework can be used to aggregate the issues reported by the daily life explorers in “ethic visions”,

where “ethic” means that they belong to and are coherent with the heritage of the community that “lives in” the landscape, changing and evolving with it in the daily life.

4. E-democracy, social networks and social capital

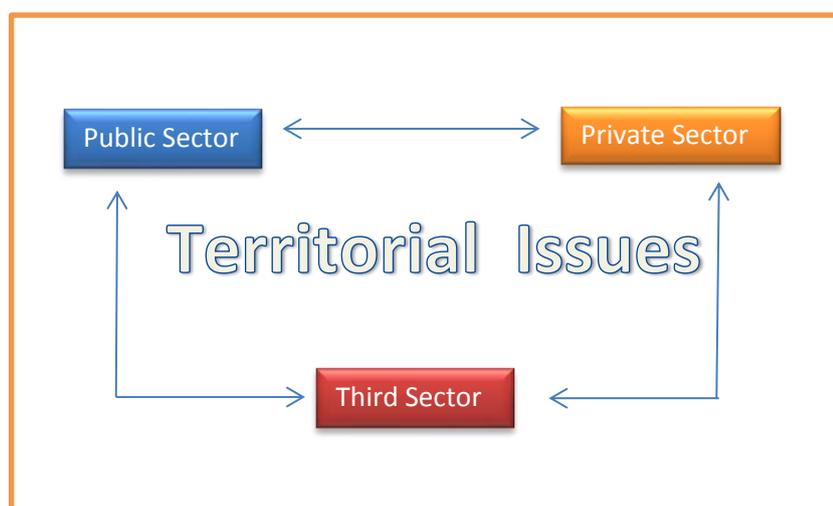
Political participation has ancient origins, but it has been only recently linked to the studies on social capital and to the wave of the new economy. Specifically, in the new economic framework, participation means digital democracy, or e-democracy. Potentially, the e-democracy can endorse people at every geographical scale, from the local level (a condominium, a consortium, an association, etc.), to the planning level (a neighbourhood, a natural area, a city, etc.) to the programmatic level (a region, a nation or the entire world). People’s endorsement allows for the development of processes of local, civil and international cooperation, both at decisional level and in the subsequent implementation and monitoring activities. Participation and e-democracy can be implemented also at sectorial level, allowing people to share ideas and common interests, and to implement joint projects in the same fields or bridging seemingly unrelated activities.

Participation is the political process that allows for the establishment and the development at structural level of social networks. According to the social network approach, social structures should be primarily investigated at relational level, that is by analyzing the relations between and within the units involved. Specifically, at structural level society can be decomposed in a multitude of connections organized in clusters, characterized by heterogeneous levels of information, that instead within each cluster tend to be homogeneous and redundant. Then, every contact between two or more clusters determines an exchange of non-redundant information, filling the structural holes between them (Borgatti, 1997). Thus, a network that bridges structural holes provides additional benefits to the clusters involved, and gains an advantage in terms of higher capability of detecting rewarding opportunities. Such a network can activate social capital by sharing the information owned by two or more clusters that otherwise would have kept it tacit, disseminating new perspectives, ideas, and projects. This framework provides a theoretical link between the concepts of social network and social capital.

In this perspective, social capital refers to the value of the social interactions and of the level of cooperation reached by a social network. Social capital, then, can only be generated collectively, and it is not a rival good, as all the individuals and groups involved can use it without limiting its use to the other members of the network. At socioeconomic level, social capital is often addressed as the deep cause of the heterogeneity in the level of welfare measured in different geographical areas. Specifically, Robert Putnam (2002) associated the concept of social capital to the so called “intangibles” that affect the social, political and economic activities.

At geographical level, social capital is a heterogeneous variable, as people are influenced in their connections by the level of accessibility and by the different natural and cultural conditions of the areas in which they live. At socioeconomic level, social capital is influenced by the number and the organization of the volunteers that participate in the activities of the public and of the private sector. Specifically, a simultaneous relation links the activities of the public sector, of the private sector and of the so called “third sector”, and this relation is affected by and might affect the geographical context in which it takes place.

Graph 4 – Synergies among the third sector, the private sector and third sector.



5. A collection of best practices at different geographical scales

Public debates can have an open area dedicated to the involvement of people in the process of identification and resolution of issues of public interest. However, an open debate achieves the expected results only when the discussion aims at realizing the interests of the citizens involved. Moreover, the participants should comprehend the arguments presented by the others, and eventually change their mind in favour of the best arguments presented. Finally, a correct use of the information should be guaranteed, and everyone should have the right to intervene. An open debate, instead, does not provide optimal results when the number of participants is low with respect to the number of stakeholders, when the level of information is heterogenous and when the conditions of access to the debate vary across the participants³.

It is worth noticing how on-line consultations are a consolidated praxis all over the world. A consultation is different from a simple collection of opinions, as it represents a structured process implemented using a transparent and scientific methodology. An on-line consultation adds to the

³ This information has been collected on the following website: <http://partecipazione.regione.emilia-romagna.it/entra-in-regione/progetti/altri-progetti/partecipanet> .

well-known challenges of inclusion, the threats due to the digital divide and more in general to the inequalities in the access to the digital technologies. Moreover, the on-line consultation contributes to fill the gap of the so called “voluntary digital divide” linked to the perception of the scarce utility of the web. Indeed, on-line consultations represent an important occasion for contributing to the formation of acknowledged citizens and for reducing the gap that divides the citizens from the institutions⁴.

Table 1 summarizes the main features of a selection of best practices of participated processes at territorial level. By observing the promoters, it emerges the public nature (Territorial Cohesion Ministry, Emilia-Romagna Region and Municipality of Rome) and the non-profit nature (RCM Foundation and Italian Geographical Society) of the institutions involved. Clearly, participating processes constitute a form of social capital, that can produce non-monetary positive externalities for the activities of public institutions and non-profit organizations. While firms already use this kind of consultations to acquire more information regarding the customer satisfaction, participated processes regarding firms’ logistics are not diffused, yet.

It is worth noticing how participated processes can be developed at the geographical scale of interest, without incurring in any technological limitation. Specifically, the Emilia-Romagna Region developed a kit that is adaptable to every policy and every context, and that has been implemented at different local scales.

The best practices collected mainly refer to the territorial activities of the public sector (regulation, management, planning), but this fact should not be viewed as a limitation. Participated processes, as already pointed out, have been developed also at sectorial level (customer satisfaction analyses, participative reports, corporate social responsibility), but this form of participation usually has a minor impact on landscape transformation at least at environmental and territorial level. A major impact, instead, might be produced by participated processes involving the choices of localization of the international firms, or the territorial social responsibility in terms of impact and contribution to the formation of social capital. Finally, the main outputs of the best practices collected stress the relevance of the participated processes in stimulating institutional reforms, producing and disseminating innovations, and augmenting the availability of e-learning activities.

By summarizing the main issues collected, a participated process at territorial level might require an *ad hoc* regulation that enables the process, a set of tools and methodologies able to manage the complexity of the information collected and of the relations activated by the promoters, a website or a portal developed using *ad hoc* tools to promote e-democracy in terms of e-learning activities, on-line consultations and open debates, a set of statistical tools of analyses in order to summarize the

⁴ This information has been collected at the following address: <http://www.partecipa.gov.it/index.html> .

information collected in a report available to all the participants, and in papers of academic relevance on the topics of interests for research activities and further implementation. It is worth noticing how, in terms of social network analysis, the creation of a network of researchers and practitioners might constitute a meso-level that might facilitate the interaction between the institutions operating at macroeconomic level and people's participation at microeconomic level. In other words, as it is already been done by the Italian Geographical Society, researchers and practitioners might contribute to facilitate the connections between the creation of social capital in terms of a collective identity and the activity of the public institutions interested in developing participated processes of decision making at every geographical scale and sector of economic activity. Their contribution might be twofold: by one side, they might contribute to integrate the traditional economic accountability with a GIS structured using the principles discussed in [3]. On the other hand, they might explore the landscape at local level identifying issues of collective relevance and stimulating people's involvement in landscape transformation processes, both at decisional level, as daily life explorers, and in the implementation phase.

Table 1 – Main features of the best practices collected of participating processes.

| Name | Promoter | Geographical scale | Topic of interest | Main output |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---|---|
| Partecipa.gov | Territorial Cohesion Ministry | National | Constitutional Reforms | Statistical analysis and Report for the PCM, available on-line for the public |
| Partecipa.net | Emilia Romagna Region | Regional and local | Territorial planning | Implementation and dissemination of the Kit of e-democracy |
| Partecipa.MI | RCM Foundation | Urban | City Management | Website on openDCN platform |
| Participated planning | Municipality of Rome | Urban | Urban Planning | Regulation on participated processes |
| Itinerant seminars | Italian Geographical Society | National | Disaster management and impact on the cultural heritage | Papers of academic relevance |

6. Enhancing people's involvement: the role of daily life explorers and geographers

Once the macro-level of the public institutions and the meso-level of non-profit organizations and other associations of people interested in contributing to the endorsement of collective identities have activated the main tools for the enhancement of processes of participation, people living in the landscape can act as explorers at every geographical scale, contributing to revive the narratives that animate the daily life.

Geographical scales and elements of scarce interest at institutional level (as an example, a neighborhood, a square, a park, a street or even a block of flats) might emerge as the most relevant in many individual and small groups narratives. These narratives might be documented by collecting information using very simple devices as a camera and a mobile phone, or simply sketching the main objects of interests and writing a short note using a pencil and a piece of paper. The information collected can be posted by people interested in sharing it on *ad hoc* websites, blogs or personal pages, that can be easily created using the free software available on the web, or it can be also sent directly to the interested institutions in order to inform them of the most significant stories, themes and objects collected. On the other hand, at meso-level, geographers might explore the web to collect elements of interest to represent the cultural heritage of a community, or might simply explore the landscape living in it, interacting with the individuals, the collectivities and the institutions that animate the places, and recognizing landscapes' role of mediators among the plurality of stories and facts that have shaped and shape their human and natural components.

By using an analytical structure like the one described in [3], all the information collected can be integrated at macro level obtaining as output an ethic vision of the landscape of interest, meaning with "ethic" the fact that the issues and the narratives collected express the view of the community that lives in it, and contribute to reinforce its identity. The issues that emerge from these narratives can be integrated with those one coming from quantitative analyses and from regulation analyses with the aim of composing complete sets of information available for the policy makers. A tool of analysis at political level that has been developed according to this integrated framework is the Regulation Impact Analysis.

7. A selection of tools for enhancing people's participation in landscape transformation policies

In this paragraph several tools that might facilitate the participation of the interested citizens in the development and implementation of landscape transformation policies are briefly surveyed. They might be considered as the equivalent of the EIA at political and at economic (financial and real)

level, and as important complements to it in order to develop territorial and urban planning activities in coherence with the principle of fair and sustainable welfare.

The Regulation Impact Analysis (RIA): a brief overview

The RIA has been introduced for the first time at the beginning of Seventies in the USA as a monitoring tool of the quality and quantity of the regulation approved by the Regulatory Agencies (Formez, 2003). During Eighties, the RIA is adopted also in Australia and in the United Kingdom, innovating the partial analyses of the impact of regulation into general equilibrium analyses performed on the society as a whole. (Formez, 2003). During Nineties, the OECD, through the Public Management Committee (PUMA), promotes the widespreading of the RIA in the European Union and in its Member States (Greco, 2003).

At EU level, the issues of simplification and of better regulation acquire a strategic relevance during the European Council of Edinburg (1992) and with the White Paper on “Growth, Competitiveness and Employment” (1993). In 2000, the European Council of Lisbon asks to the European Commission, to the Council and to the Member States to develop within 2001 a coordinated strategy to simplify the regulatory framework and the public administration procedures at European and national level. Few years later, the European Council of Bruxelles (2003) asks the Commission to assess how the regulatory reform might contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Lisbon Strategy, and supports the implementation of the Action Plan “Simplifying and improving the regulatory environment”, presented by the European Commission in 2002, enforcing the proposal of the Commission to support all the most relevant regulatory proposals with a consultation of all the interested people and institutions, and with an overall assessment of the expected impacts (Greco, 2003).

In Italy, the RIA is introduced by the Article 5 of the Law n. 50/1999, by which the Parliament delegates the Government to define an experimental assessment of the impacts of regulation on the organization of the public administration and on the activities of citizens and firms. The same Law attributes to the Parliamentary Commissions the faculty to require a RIA of the normative drafts and of the proposals of law of their competence. The Directive of the President of the Council of Ministries of March 27th 2000 finally introduces the RIA in the Italian legislative system as an experimental activity (Greco, 2003). In 2001, the Italian Government publishes the “Guida alla sperimentazione dell'analisi di impatto della regolamentazione (AIR) [A guide to the experimental use of the Regulation Impact analysis]”, that illustrates the RIA procedure and highlights logical frameworks and methodological issues that might be used in the assessment activities. Finally, the Article 2 of the Law n. 229/2003 delegates the Government to adopt a Legislative Decree for the

reform of the norms regarding the production, the simplification and the quality of regulation. In the same years, the Italian Independent Authorities develop autonomous procedures of regulation impact analysis, and enforce their diffusion among the other public administrations, central and local, in order to facilitate the coordination mechanisms.

Two important activities promoted by the Independent authorities are the RIA on Competition developed by the Antitrust Authority and the on line consultations instituted by the CONSOB on regulatory projects related to the market of capitals. The first one aims at avoiding unjustified restrictions to competition imposed through *ad hoc* regulatory frameworks approved to protect national and local firms by the activities of potential competitors. The second one aims at increasing the level of participation of all the stakeholders interested in a regulative proposal regarding the market of capitals, allowing for their direct involvement in the decisional process.

Some applications of interest for the participation in landscape transformation policies are the Antitrust reports concerning the quality of regulation in the Toscana Region (AGCM, 2007) and the effects of competition of the regulation of the retail sector (AGCM, 2007), and the CONSOB online consultation concerning the adoption of a new regulation of the equity-based crowdfunding (CONSOB, 2013). More detailed information on the state-of-the-art of RIA in Italy are provided by the “Osservatorio AIR”⁵.

Participation in the implementation of landscape transformation policies

Living in the landscape can contribute to increase the quality of regulation, but implies also a right to an active participation in the implementation of processes of landscape preservation, management and planning. Participation in the implementation phase means taking part both at financial and at economic level. Specifically, at financial level people interested in participating might be involved in the fund raising activities through the implementation of crowdfunding processes. As it has been pointed out by Ordanini, Miceli, Pizzetti and Parasuraman (OMPP), crowdfunding is “*a collective effort of people who network and pool their money together [...] to invest in and support efforts initiated by other people or organizations*” (OMPP, 2011). Indeed, “*the idea that some people may decide to pay for producing and promoting a product (instead of buying it), and bear the risk associated with that decision, represents a step ahead in the evolution of consumers’ roles, that involves a mix of entrepreneurship and social network participation*” (OMPP, 2011). Following the authors, three kinds of players are involved in crowdfunding models. First, “*there are the actors that propose the ideas and the projects that need to be financed*” (OMPP, 2011). Second, “*there is a crowd of people that decide to invest in these projects*”,

⁵ <http://www.osservatorioair.it> .

participating also in selecting and developing, the goods or services they consider “*to be most promising or interesting*” (OMPP, 2011). Finally, a crowdfunding institution connects investors and producers (OMPP, 2011).

“*Crowdfunding has been boosted by the new achievements of the Web 2.0*”, allowing consumers to participate actively in the development and creation of the projects itself through social networks (OMPP, 2011). Even if crowdfunding has some features in common with charity and social cooperation, it is also true that “*money is invested by consumers to obtain a return, mostly financial, but sometimes intangible*”, in terms of “*status, social esteem, identification, etc.*” (OMPP, 2011).

Crowdsourcing and landscape transformation policies

Crowdfunding models include elements of crowdsourcing, “*a procedure that enables the members of a community to share ideas and efforts to solve a problem or to create favorable conditions for the community itself*” (OMPP, 2011). Crowdsourcing might enable people’s participation in the implementation of public projects. Specifically, people’s participation in landscape transformation interventions might be enabled by fractioning a project, or a part of it, into elementary activities that might be devolved to the free, or regulated, implementation of the interested people and firms on a voluntary basis. As an example, in the management of a park several areas might be dedicated to the free use of people, that might decide to plant new trees, vegetation or flowers, or simply use it to relax and talk with other people. Similar processes might be planned also in the implementation of decorative structures in selected parts of a city or of a village.

Clearly, crowdsourcing should not refer only to landscape planning in a narrow sense, but to all those activities that might be of interest for the community that lives in the landscape (social and recreational activities, welfare services and immaterial infrastructures, economic activities, etc.). The promotion of crowdsourcing activities on a large scale might contribute to increase people’s sense of community, augmenting also the number and the quality of the dimensions involved in the definition of people’s well-being. Specifically, the concept of individual well-being might be complemented by topics usually referring to a collective idea of well-being, legitimating also at individual level the choice of promoting social capital as a bridging value among private and public narratives, and landscape as an important determinant of people’s quality of life.

Finally, at economic level, the process of people’s permanent involvement in landscape transformation activities might constitute an alternative to the widespread diffusion of the illegal economy during the period of economic crises. Specifically, during recessions the criminal economy constitutes a sort of buffer for the legal activities, and the main deterrent to avoid the diffusion of criminal activities seems that of reviving growth even when it implies paying high

social costs. Recently a team of World Bank practitioners has proposed, instead, as an anticorruption measure, the empowerment of the local communities, highlighting also how they suffer the major negative consequences from the increment of illegal activities (Recanatini, 2011). Then, living in the landscape and participating to the development of a collective identity might also have an economic value, in terms of lower levels of corruption and crime, and of redirection of the productive structure towards sectors of higher added value.

8. Concluding remarks

According to the European Landscape Convention, landscape studies should contribute to the formation of local cultures, increasing people's quality of life, and allowing people to play an active part in landscape transformation. The European Landscape Convention has not an equivalent counterpart in the EU legislative framework, as landscape has been regulated indirectly, and legal protection has been accorded only to the environment and to the sustainable use of the exhaustible stocks of natural resources. A regulation focusing directly on landscape has been instead developed at national level by the EU member States.

As regards Italy, landscape is considered mainly as a cultural asset. Nevertheless, also in the Italian law the concept of landscape is the result of all the natural and cultural elements observed, assessed in their individuality and in their interaction. It is worth noticing how the Italian law restricts the cooperative process of landscape transformation to the action of the public institutions (specifically, the MIBAC, the Regions and the local institutions). Then the issue that people can take an active part in landscape transformation contributing to the establishment of local cultures is realized only through the intermediation of the public sector.

But considering landscape as an asset recalls the intervention of the economic theory and of the accounting methodologies. In Paragraph 3 it has been discussed how the adoption of a long-run system of accounts might enable people's active participation in landscape planning, management and transformation activities, contributing to the endorsement of local cultures. Indeed, an efficient economic analysis should be conducted in the price-quantity-quality space, and should refer to the concept of value, rather than to the concept of profit. An additional step further has been that of linking the flow variables identified to positive and negative changes in the associated stock variables. Specifically, the following connections have been proposed: price and system, quantity and science, quality and politics, utility and individual, satisfaction and culture, profit and nature. At theoretical level, the connections among these mutually exclusive variables disclose important meanings. The logical framework proposed can be considered as the main reference for a general system of accounts for landscape, but the analytical accountability can be more sophisticated, as a

score for each concept of general interest can be obtained by aggregating the value of a “cloud” of analytic accounts measuring the changes in selected objects of interest.

The framework proposed can be used to aggregate the issues reported by the daily life explorers in “ethic visions”, where “ethic” means that they belong to and are coherent with the heritage of the community that lives in the landscape, changing and evolving with it in the daily life. Researchers and practitioners might contribute to facilitate the connections among the formation of social capital in terms of a collective identity and the activity of the public institutions interested in developing participated processes of decision.

All the information collected can be integrated at macro level in an ethic vision of the landscape of interest. The issues that emerge from the narratives collected can be integrated with the one coming from quantitative analyses and from regulation analyses with the aim of composing a complete set of information available to the policy makers. A tool of analysis at political level that has been developed according to this integrated framework is the Regulation Impact Analysis. Crowdfunding and crowdsourcing, instead, are tools that might facilitate the participation of the interested citizens at the implementation phase.

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