

Scale Dissonances between Local and World Heritage The Rural Landscape of the Palladian Villa

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Abstract

This research critically analyses the visual representation of the Palladian villa landscape as UNESCO World Heritage. I bring to light certain dissonances around the understanding of this landscape as heritage between global and local perspective. I have explored the ways in which the rural landscape of the Palladian villas is produced by ICOMOS experts, local institution and inhabitants in the contemporary context of the suburban areas of the Veneto region in Italy. Dissonances are arising when the landscape transforms and the visual integrity, or the iconic image of the landscape get lost. I observed that, the loss of the visual integrity, considered as negative by ICOMOS experts, gives space to peculiar heritage social practices from below. I am problematizing two main aspects of the conservation scheme of this site: the selective visual representation of history and the musealization of agriculture for touristic proposes. I am exploring the potential of reframing and renaming the conservation scheme of the World Heritage Site. I suggest using inhabitant's visual representation to reframe the UNESCO management plan and considering the peculiar local agricultural practice as a "continuing cultural landscape". I interpret my empirical and theoretical contribution as a semantic shift in the way the Palladian rural landscape is understood as World Heritage toward an inclusive and situated heritage conservation that extend beyond expert's conservation philosophies. The research contributes to the deconstruction of modern notions of rural landscape and heritage in the field of heritage studies and landscape conservation especially within the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

keywords: *rural landscape, scale dissonances, World Heritage Convention, visual integrity, cultural tourism, agricultural practice*

Zusammenfassung

Diese Forschungsarbeit analysiert kritisch die visuelle Darstellung der Palladianischen Villen-Landschaft als UNESCO-Weltkulturerbe. Ich bringe gewisse Dissonanzen bezüglich des Verständnisses dieser Landschaft als Erbe zwischen globaler und lokaler Perspektive ans Licht. Ich habe untersucht die Art und Weise, wie die Palladianische Villen-Landschaft von ICOMOS-Experten, lokalen Institutionen und Einwohnern im zeitgenössischen Kontext der Region Venetien in Italien erzeugt wird. Dissonanzen entstehen, wenn sich die Landschaft verändert und die visuelle Integrität oder das „ikonische Bild“ der Landschaft verloren geht. Dabei stellte ich fest, dass der Verlust der visuellen Integrität, der von ICOMOS-Experten als negativ eingestuft wird, Raum für besondere soziale Praktiken des lokalen Erbes bietet. Ich problematisiere zwei Hauptaspekte des Managementplans dieses Weltkulturerbes: die selektive visuelle Darstellung der Geschichte und die Musealisierung der Landwirtschaft für touristische Nutzung. Schlussfolgernd empfehle ich eine Neuformulierung und Umbenennung des Schutzschemas des Weltkulturerbes und schlage vor, die visuelle Darstellung der Bewohner im UNESCO-Managementplan zu verwenden und die besondere lokale landwirtschaftliche Praxis als „continuing cultural landscape“ zu berücksichtigen. Ich interpretiere meinen empirischen und theoretischen Beitrag als eine semantische Verschiebung in der Art und Weise, wie die Palladianische Villen-Landschaft als Welterbe verstanden wird, hin zu einer integrativen Erhaltung des kulturellen Erbes im sozio-historischen Kontext die über die *Conservation Philosophies* von Experten hinausgeht. Die Forschung trägt zur Dekonstruktion moderner Vorstellungen von Landschaft und Kulturerbe im Bereich *Heritage Studies* und des Landschaftsschutzes, insbesondere im Rahmen der Umsetzung der Welterbekonvention, bei.

Keywords: Landschaft, Maßstabsdissonanzen, Welterbekonvention, visuelle Integrität, Kulturtourismus, landwirtschaftliche Praxis

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List of abbreviations

WHS World Heritage Site

ICOMOS International Council on Monuments and Sites

UNESCO United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

OUV Outstanding Universal Value

AHD Authorized Heritage Discourse



Villa Caldogno-Pagello (Quaderni Calidonesi, 2015)

1. Introduction

To explain how I approached the research interest, it is first necessary to clarify several steps I have taken in the last four years, while changing the aims and objectives of this work. In my master's thesis, I considered the impact of World Heritage Conservation on the peripheral areas of the historic city of Valparaíso in Chile, and I became interested in the way that World Heritage Conservation can create a divide between the "precious" and "generic" parts of a city, through the definition of the conservation areas' boundaries. As my background is in neither anthropology nor art history, but urban planning, I was mainly concerned with the development of a conservation scheme that could "avoid negative impacts" of development projects on social life in historic, public spaces. I wanted to become a specialist in the field of urban conservation through the study of World Heritage Site conservation methodologies.

In order to better understand how the World Heritage Conservation works, I decided to locate my Ph.D. research in a country and a region where I was familiar with the legal framework, the planning structure, and the heritage conservation system's policies. I also wanted to do fieldwork in a context in which I was an "insider," so that I would have easier access to people and feel like a part of the group I was studying. I spent my childhood and teenage years in the Veneto region, in the peripheries of the city of Padova. In that sense I am insider, but I am also an outsider because I later moved with my family to another region in Italy, and I have now been living in Berlin for many years.

In 2016, I became interested in a series of discussions involving citizens and local and regional authorities in the city of Vicenza, regarding the potential visual impacts of several new development projects on the "World Heritage Site of the City of Vicenza and the Palladian villas of the Veneto". My Ph.D. proposal at that time, concerned the implementation of a conservation methodology called Heritage Impact Assessment, HIA, which was used by heritage experts to understand the impacts of several development projects in the outskirts of the city of Vicenza. A team of ICOMOS experts conducted the assessment on Vicenza's outskirts between December 2016 and February 2017. As is generally the case in Europe, the evaluation was mainly based on visual impact issues and an aesthetic assessment of the new developments. Closely following this issue would have allowed me to collect information about "World Heritage conservation at work."

I had a very practical approach right from the beginning, which lasted throughout almost my entire first year. While becoming acquainted with and observing the realm of conservationists engaged in World Heritage Sites, I started collecting some reflections and defining possible lines of thought. I discovered that the conservation methodologies and experts' discourses were precious material for critical inquiry. I then began to change my mind and began to tackle questions and problems about the ideologies of heritage underlying the conservation schemes produced by ICOMOS. My aim became to better understand how these conservation schemes—which are implemented all over the world—organize the relationships between people and their environments.

1.1 Research interest

This study engages with *dissonances*. The idea of dissonance, which comes from the heritage studies field, is a concept introduced by Ashworth and Tunbridge. Dissonance is a conflict which can be related to different kinds of issues, from cultural differences, postcolonial issues, religious conflicts, or between scales. In this research, the dissonance addressed is between local and global understandings of heritage (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1996).

I am interested in rural landscapes because this heritage typology easily leads to dissonance between the scales of World Heritage conservation and local issues of land use or urban development. The dissonance between the landscape conservator and inhabitant's understanding of landscape, was also perceived as problematic by Cosgrove:

“The inability to contain within the landscape idea a collective sense of the meaning of their land and place to those actively engaged in and experiencing them, lies at the root of our contemporary dilemmas over planning and conserving landscapes” (Cosgrove, 2004, p.60).

The regional landscape I have chosen has a high degree of dissonance. The heritage landscape of the Palladian villas is listed as a World Heritage site and located in the lowlands of the Po Valley in the Northeast of Italy. The site is an ensemble of twenty-four villas, their gardens, and settings. Its “outstanding universal value” is attributed to the work of the renaissance architect Palladio, and his influence on European and North American villa architecture. Palladio has served as a reference for landowners' humanist narratives, a source of inspiration for architects, and as an object of study for art historians over the

centuries (Ackermann, 1966; Benevolo, 2008; Steenbbergen and Reh, 1996; Rogers, 2001; Moriani, 2008; Holberton, 2000; Battillotti, 2011). The geographer Denis Cosgrove, describes what he defines as the *Palladian Landscape* as follows:

[It is] more than simply the architectural and artistic monuments; the term serves to locate those distinctive architectural elements within a complex cultural geography that developed within a distinctive physical, economic and political milieu during two centuries of political control and economic investment by the Venetian Republic (Cosgrove, 2007).

For centuries, the landscape has been considered to be “a regional showcase of European heritage” (Cosgrove, 2006, p.69) but, from the 1970s onwards, heritage conservationist has perceived it as a “lost heritage” because of its aesthetic transformation following its suburbanization. Here, the concern about this loss are expressed in Vallerani’ s words:

“The prestigious polarities of the Palladian and non-Palladian villas, of the rural villages, of water courses, of farming houses, of the tiny pattern of traditional agronomies are under the constant threat of continuous quality erosion and suffocation by buildings” (Vallerani, 2012, p.135).

Cosgrove describes the suburbanization of the regional landscape as a loss of the agrarian and ecological structure, together with the spread of a feeling of *placelessness* and the removal of the boundaries between rural and urban (Cosgrove, 2004). The effect of the urban sprawl on the countryside, is understood as the “loss of a monumental heritage, unique in the world” (Vallerani and Varotto, 2004, pg.14). In the last decade, ICOMOS experts have written in their assessments of the World Heritage Site, that suburbanization has been “messy and destructive,” “a risk, threat, and pressure” affecting the “original relationship between city and countryside” (Basili, *et al.*, 2016 pg.2,29) and reducing the “spatial and visual relationship with the agricultural context” and leading to a “progressive loss of identity in the Veneto landscape” (Basili, *et al.*, 2016 pg.29,71).

The idea of a loss of heritage, as used by geographers, architects, and intellectuals, derives from an interpretation of heritage as canonical art historical information. Until today, the academicians who have dealt with these heritage landscapes, have rarely analyzed this phenomenon without aesthetic judgment.

But how has this rural landscape been transformed, what has been lost? What values should be preserved? Whose heritage is it? In this research, I want to consider the

suburbanization of the Palladian villas' landscape without aesthetic judgement. This can be challenged by a closer observation of the local heritage practices, behaviors, and performances of its inhabitants.

I understand heritage studies as a field of social inquiry, and that "heritage" is a complex phenomenon. I do not consider heritage landscapes as objects, but as things which have been actively produced by different actors, such as individuals, communities, and institutions. I use social inquiry to inform a different understanding of rural heritage landscapes in the purview of World Heritage conservation.

During the late modernity period in Europe, non-governmental organizations like UNESCO's advisory body, ICOMOS, took a leading role in the construction of heritage values and the modalities of heritage conservation, as new forms of authority (Harrison, 2015). The international heritage conservation practice concretized certain heritage discourses through technical management standards, which globally influence our currently understanding and experience of the past and how we shape our future (Elliott & Schmutz, 2012; Smith, 2006; Tramontana, 2012; MacDonald, 2013).

In addition to the rise of new supranational forms of heritage governance, there is, especially in Italy, a progressive decentralization of the power of the nation state (Donato and Gilli, 2011; Brenner, 2000; Harrison, 2015). Since the 1980s, private institutions have played an increasing role in heritage management related to the use of heritage as an economic resource for local priorities, goals, and identities, notably through heritage tourism (Harrison, 2013; Smith, 2006; Watson & Waterton, 2010). In line with this trend, heritage, once primarily a national invention, is slowly becoming a more local matter (Hewison, 1987; Graham *et al.*, 2000).

I therefore consider the interplay between these two scales of local and global.

The dissonance I have examined, is embedded in the inhabitants' everyday life practices and ICOMOS experts' discourse. It regards the conflict between the way the inhabitants and local administrations understood and transformed the landscape through their daily practices, during the second half of the last century, and how the ICOMOS experts have judged the aesthetics of this process.

1.2 Research question and aims

I have worked on the setting and surrounding landscape of two villas; according to experts, the first is still “valuable” and the second “lost its value” (Basili *et al.*, 2016). I defined the process of heritage production prevailing at the first villa, as harmonic and at the second villa, as dissonant. Harmony is the opposite of dissonance, harmony is about hegemony with regard to the heritage experts’ attempts to impose one interpretation of the past, while avoiding negotiation with the inhabitants. The way in which the rural heritage landscape of the Palladian villa is produced, is made of materiality and experience.

I use the term *materiality*, to refer to the attributes which form the landscape, such as the villa itself, a certain design and agricultural pattern of its surrounding, and the qualities of the physical elements, such as colors, forms, pattern, topography. With the term *experience*, I imply the embodiment of narratives of the past that shape people’s behavior in certain ways in familiar places, as well as in the places they visit. The World Heritage Conservation practice selects and maintains certain attributes and removes others because they are “inappropriate”, moreover, defining the use at the sites, tends to also shape the heritage experience. The materiality of attributes and the experience in the two considered landscapes, are radically different. I compare and analyze them through these research questions:

- *How is the landscape visually represented and through what attributes?*
- *How is agriculture experienced as heritage?*

1.3 Expected contributions to the field of studies

The aim of the work is to inform change in international conservation practice. It suggests a possible shift in the World Heritage conservation practice. By using the idea that rural heritage landscape might be different from what is presumed in the context I have studied as the starting point, I will explore the options for different ways of conserving agricultural landscape in a shared and common way, situated in a socio-historical contextualization and not limited to the rigorous ideas of traditional heritage conservation philosophies.

From a theoretical point of view, the research brings the critique of political economy rooted in the field of spatial sociology and landscape planning theory, into the domain of heritage

studies. The domain of heritage studies is mainly based on the idea that heritage is a discursively constructed meaning-making practice, while, in contrast, the theory of space production looks at the materiality of space. This research therefore aims to connect these two dimensions by exploring how different actors are producing the rural heritage landscape in material, as well as discursive, terms.

I am using the “heritage approach” to look at conservation, which is based on the implicit idea that heritage conservation should be a public democratic domain, open to negotiation of different meanings and interpretations, and that the World Heritage Convention should be an area of free discussion between authorities and inhabitants (De Cesari, 2012).

Paradoxically, if we consider recent developments, this seems to be the aim of the Convention itself. With the 2002 Budapest Declaration on World Heritage, the World Heritage Committee actually defined four main goals, the so-called *Four Cs*: strengthening the credibility of the World Heritage List, the effective conservation of World Heritage Sites, the development of effective capacity-building and communication (Jokilehto, 2017).

As Jokilehto points out, the World Heritage Committee adopted the *Fifth C for Communities* at the 2007 meeting in Christchurch, New Zealand, by stressing the need for “enhancing the role of the Communities in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention” (Jokilehto, 2017). This research can make a contribution to the development of recent UNESCO policies concerning community engagement.

1.4 Structure of the work

First Part: Introduction and State of the Art

2. The rural landscape of the Palladian Villa as heritage

In this part of the work, I will describe the World Heritage Site in the case study's journey through its "world-heritagization" process. I will describe the Palladian villa's landscape as a farm, its history, and its agrarian attributes and the transformation the landscape has been undergoing since the 1950s. Thereafter, a literature review is used to examine the relationship between heritage and rural landscapes, and the visual representation of the rural landscape within the European context, in Italy and the Veneto region.

Second Part: Theoretical position and methodology

The research's interdisciplinary position is framed in this part of the work. In Chapter 3, I will explain my epistemological and theoretical positions and how they lead to my methodology and selection of methods. My methodology and my main research question will be framed in Chapter 4.

3. A theory of the production of rural heritage landscapes

Here, I will first describe my position in relation to the many disciplines dealing with heritage studies. I will then move to an explanation of the "heritage scale" concept in relation to World Heritage conservation. I will explain my interpretation of Lefebvre's theory of space, in order to understand the production of the rural landscape as heritage, in the context of two Palladian villas in Veneto. My reasons for choosing this theory, this author and his scholars, which epistemological and theoretical positions I take, and how I apply Lefebvre's theory to the domain of the rural heritage landscape, will all be clarified. This will be followed by an explanation of what I mean by dissonance and harmony in this process. In the following sub-chapters, I will explain the three dimensions of the rural heritage landscape: visual representation, materiality of attributes, and experience.

4. Methodology: Sampling the local scale

This chapter explains how the selected theory led to the methodology, and how I implemented the methodologies, ethnography, visual and content analysis, and coding, to answer my research questions. The loss of visual integrity in relation to the suburbanization

of the region, will be addressed by emphasizing its relationship to sampling the two sub-cases. This chapter is about the sampling: how I chose the setting of the two Villas and the kind of heritage production processes they represent.

Third Part: Interpreting the case study through the theory

In this part, I will examine the production of the rural heritage landscape in the two chosen contexts by looking at the data I have collected through my research question and theoretical concepts. I will compare the visual representation and materiality, and the way in which agriculture is experienced as heritage in the two contexts.

5. The harmonic landscape of Villa Saraceno

My aim in this chapter is to understand how the visually conserved landscape is represented and materially produced as heritage. I will describe the two criteria for inscription in the World Heritage List and look at how these ideas have been materialized by the conservation project, by considering what agricultural experiences have been created at the heritage site by visual marketing and conservation schemes suggested by ICOMOS.

6. The dissonant landscape of Villa Caldogno

In the second case, I will describe the dissonance with expert's visual representation, as well as the inhabitant's way of representing the landscape. In this Chapter, I use my research question to visualize my interpretation of the way in which the inhabitants produce and experience agriculture in the context of the villa. I will attempt to understand how agriculture is practiced by the inhabitants today and so illuminate their agricultural practice's relationship to the suburbanization of the villa's context. I reflect on the Palladian villa's complex social group and relate it to the change of generation in terms of the approach to heritage landscape and agriculture.

7. Visual representation and agriculture as heritage experience

I will shed light on the selectivity of the visual representation and the many "missing attributes" which are identified by the inhabitants, as well as suggesting some ways in which the approach to conservation in the World Heritage Site could be changed, by integrating the way in which the inhabitants visually represent the landscape and its visual

attributes. I will discuss the musealization of agriculture for touristic purposes and emphasize the problems of commodification and super-production and the relevance of instead conserving agriculture as a practice, particularly in respect of that specific World Heritage Site. In conclusion the possibility of changing this landscape's classification within the UNESCO's conservation categories, will be evaluated.

Fourth Part: Theoretical and practical outcomes, discussion

8. Theoretical and methodological contributions

In this last part of the work, I will return to my epistemological, theoretical, methodological positions and reflect on the research's contribution to the fields of rural sociology and heritage studies. Finally, some perspectives will be given for further research.

2. The rural landscape of the Palladian Villa as heritage

In this part of the work, the case study subject will be described through its “world-heritagization” process. The landscape of the Palladian villas of the Veneto will be introduced in the broader context of the gardens of Italian villas, this landscape will be introduced as a farm, together with its history, and its agrarian attributes. I will examine the transformation the landscape has undergone since the 1950s. This will be followed by a literature review to examine the relationship between heritage and rural landscapes and the visual representation of the rural landscape within the European context, in Italy and the Veneto region.

2.1 The Veneto Region

The Veneto region extends from the slopes of the Alps to the north-eastern part of the Po Valley and reaches the Adriatic coast. Its population is about five million and the region's capital is Venice. Nevertheless, the region can be defined as polycentric as it is composed of several “historic urban centres whose dependent cities range in size from agglomerations of over 200,000 inhabitants down to small cities of less than 30,000” (Cosgrove D., 2007, pg.1-2), such as Padua, Treviso, Verona and Vicenza.

There are many agricultural Villa settlements in the central part of the region, especially where Vicenza is located. Around three thousand Venetian Villas dating back to the XVI - XVIII centuries, have been recognized as national heritage (Tempesta, 2014). The villa settlement was “more than simply the architectural and artistic monument” (Cosgrove,2007), it was a micro agricultural system and the collection of historic routes and watercourses is part of our historic and artistic heritage (Antionori & Mavian, 2006).

After the Second World War and especially during the 1980s, these areas were affected by unregulated urbanization, and floods began to cause uncontrolled damage. The contemporary urbanization of this region can be described as “a product of Italy’s successful post-industrial, late-twentieth-century economy” (Cosgrove D., 2007, pg.1-2) in which the sprawl caused “the loss of the agrarian and ecological structure of the rural

landscape and the cancellation of the boundaries between rural and urban” (Cosgrove, 2004). In Fig. 1 the historic villas settlement in the Veneto Region are represented.

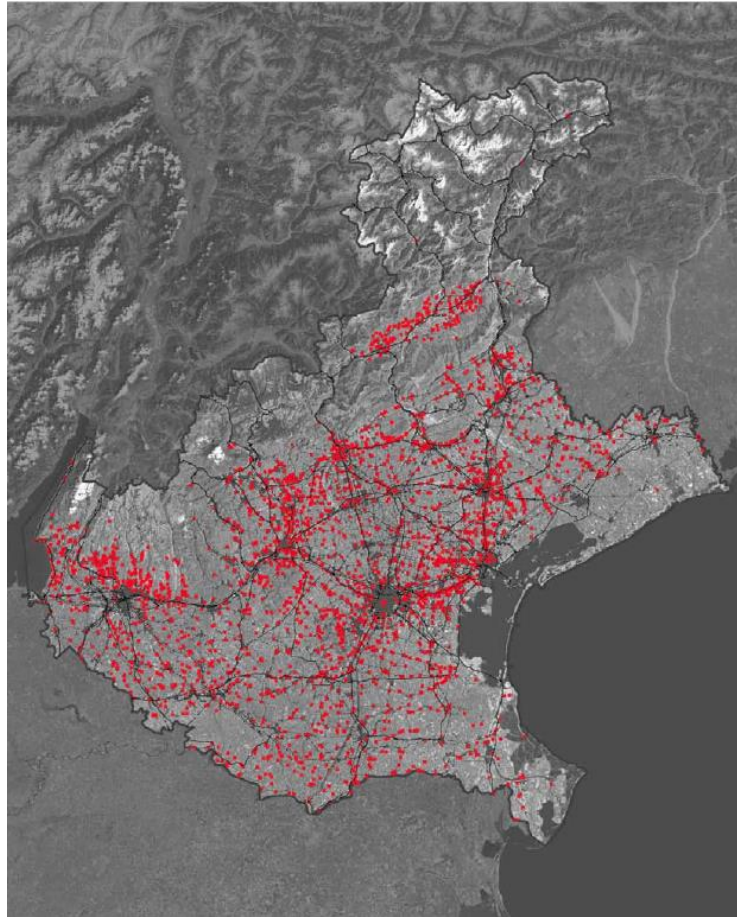


Figure 1 Historic villas settlement in the Veneto Region (PTRC, 2009)

2.2 The World Heritage Site of the “City of Vicenza and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto”

In this section, some basic information about the Palladian Villas’ World Heritage Site will be introduced, such as its heritagization process and the organization of its governance today. The designation of the landscape as World Heritage, implies the definition of protective measures, a management plan and a steering committee, which will be presented later. In Fig. 2 represents the location of the 24 Villas.

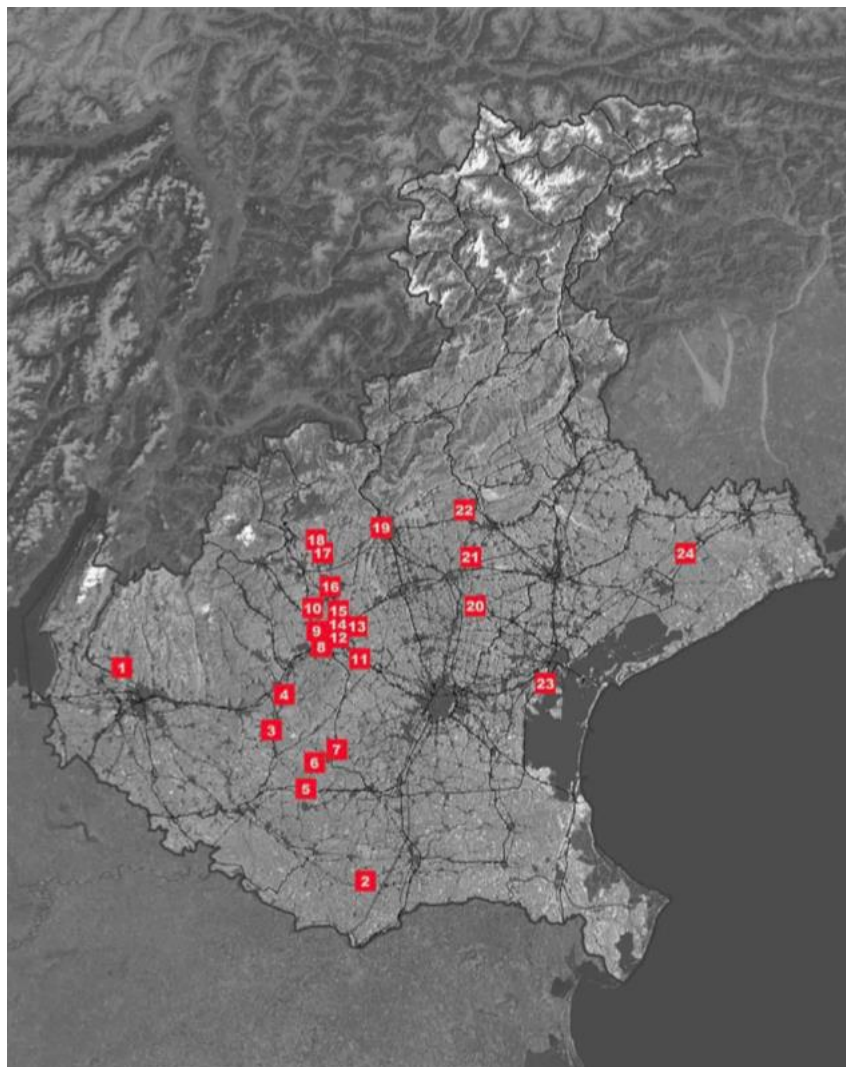


Figure 2 Location of the 24 Palladian Villas in Veneto (PTRC, 2009)

Together with many others in Italy, the Palladian villa landscape was listed as a World Heritage Site in the 1990s, when several states and local authorities realized the potential of heritage as an economic re-generator. The Palladian villa landscape was listed as a World Heritage Site twice, once in 1993 and again in 1996. The first listing included the city of Vicenza and only a limited number of villas, and the second listing was of all the twenty-four villas designed by Palladio in the region. An acknowledgement of a property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is required for every site's inclusion on the list. Every nomination report includes a statement in which this value is described, or "a summary of the World Heritage Committee's belief that the property has OUV" (Von Droste, 2011, p.28). The OUV concept has been discussed by several authors (Jokilehto, 2006, Von Droste 2011; Roders & Van Oers, 2012). Here is the site's description:

"Basing his works on intimate study of classical Roman architecture, Palladio became the inspiration for a movement without parallel in architectural history. The property extends the recognition of the Outstanding Universal Value of the work of Andrea Palladio to the other manifestations of his creative genius in the Veneto region" (ICOMOS,1996)

Every site inscribed must also meet at least one of the "criteria for selection". The chosen landscape relates to the following criteria:

criterion (i) "a masterpiece of human creative genius"

criterion (ii) "exhibits an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design" (ICOMOS,1996)

Nevertheless, in Italy, a site must be first be recognized at the national level for it to become World Heritage. Therefore, it is important to understand how this occurred for the Palladian villas' landscape. The "heritagization" of the Palladian villa and its landscape, can be placed at the end of the second World War. Around a decade after the end of the second World War, there was an increasing interest in rescuing the mostly abandoned villas. Intellectuals of the time organized themselves into groups and started pressuring the state to conserve these disregarded works of art better.

Concerns about the conservation of the Palladian villas were first raised by Giuseppe Mazzotti, an important intellectual of the time. He started a campaign to save the

abandoned buildings that had been used as storage for weapons, henhouses, and stables during the war, or left abandoned to decay. In his work *Le Vie d' Italia e le Ville Venete, tempo di Rinascita* (1957), Mazzotti describes the buildings' state of conservation: mostly without signals, the fresco-filled halls had been used as stables, and the owners had transformed the villas without any knowledge of the artifacts, in Fig.4 an example of an abandoned villa (Naim, 2013).

This indicates how the Palladian landscape played a significant role in constructing the identity of an emerging rural middle class during the urbanization process that was occurring in Veneto. Before the economic boom, the lower classes and peasants often identified the villa as a place of power, or as the enemy, and therefore were not concerned about the upkeep of its structure (Vallerani in Cosgrove, 1991).

Mazzotti organized exhibitions in Italy and throughout Europe to attract attention to the state of these works of art and eventually received a response from the responsible regional authorities. In 1958, the Ente per le Ville Venete was established for the protection of the Villas, on the basis of a collaboration between all the provinces in the region. The institution was economically supported by the State and implemented heritage conservation strategies and expropriation processes. Later, in 1979, the Region of Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia also created a regional association, the IRVV or 'Regional Institute for the Venetian Villas', which was responsible for cataloguing the villas' typology, describing their state of conservation, and organizing activities for enhancing their value.

The regional institute has catalogued 4,243 Venetian villas, the majority of which are in the Veneto region (3,807). 15% of the villas are either public property or owned by the church, and 85% are privately owned (IRVV, 2019). Therefore, the villas are mainly in private ownership. The exceptions are the Villa Caldogno, Villa Forni cerato, and Villa Thiene which are owned by their respective local municipalities, as well as the Villa Pojana, which is owned by IRVV, Thiene, and Villa Badoer, which is owned by its province. As represented in Fig.3 several actors are involved in the World Heritage Site, such as the Veneto region's Department of Culture, the International Center of Study on Andrea Palladio, the IRVV, and the regional association of Venetian villas, its provinces, and municipalities.

Investment in this World Heritage Site is happening on different scales: the local, the provincial, the regional, the national, and the international. I want to emphasize the important role of the local scale of governance in the management, and planning of the conservation of this World Heritage Site. At the regional level, several regional institutions are responsible for heritage conservation of the World Heritage Sites and are drafting Landscape Plans. However, at the provincial level, measures to conserve the Palladian villa landscape are roughly defined in this way:

“to maintain the memory of the rural origin of this settlement as well as enable a unitary perception of the architectural contribution of Andrea Palladio. The definition of the boundaries of each villa is related to its visual integrity as well as the relation with the water courses”. (PTRC, 2013)

The different municipalities involved must be articulate these prescriptions in relation to the specific landscapes within the figurative context. The municipality is responsible for defining the use of landscape plans. A municipality generally needs regional authorization for new construction in a landscape conservation area. In some cases, an independent commission will evaluate planned construction in the heritage conservation area.

This means that the municipal level can determine the decision-making process regarding transformations of World Heritage Sites—even though each World Heritage Site is supposed to have a “commission responsible for the Management Plan of the site as well as for the related local touristic system” (MIBACT, 2010). The local scale, as shown in the diagram above, encompasses the municipalities and private owners.

As most of the villas are privately owned, the families’ heirs are often responsible for their management. In some cases, the families are unable to afford the costs of maintenance, even with state support, and the Villas fall into disrepair. In other cases, the families have created a business from the villa and its setting and have thus been able to turn heritage into an economic resource through tourism. This establishes the decentralization of heritage governance and management at these sites. The development of the Palladian villa in the Serenissima Republic of the late Renaissance, will be contextualized in the next chapter.

Figure 3 Actors of different scales of heritage governance involved in the site (Torelli)

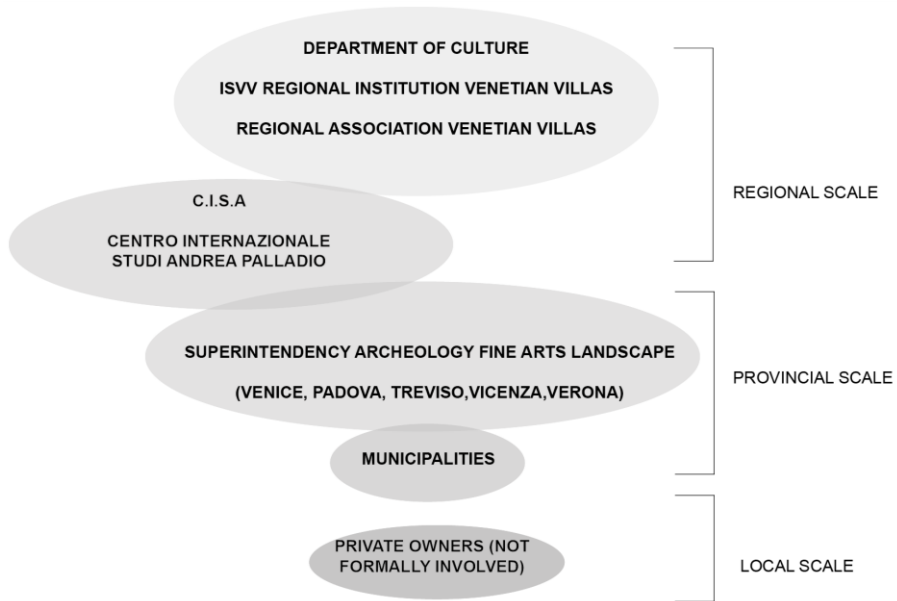


Figure 4 Villa Capra Barbaran (Giampaolo Vajenti in Naim, 2013)

2.3 The Italian villa in the Renaissance

The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to summarize the basic information about the Italian villa of the late Renaissance, its historic gardens, setting and landscape, and the conservation of natural elements, on the basis of several scholars' work (Benevolo, 2008; Burns, 2012; Schulz, 1980; Rogers, 2001; Luzzi, 1996; Steenbbergen & Rech, 1996).

We can locate the Italian villa's typological development in the period from the 15th century until the Counter-Reformation in the 17th century, in Italy. During this period, a progressive change can be observed, from the self-contained, early Renaissance, garden of the Villa Medici in Fiesole (1458-1462), depicted in Fig.5, to the scenography of the early baroque Villa Giulia in Rome (1551-1553), that legitimized the ideas of the Counter-Reformation.

The term *Renaissance* was coined by Vasari in the 16th century, to emphasize changes from the previous, "obscure" Medieval age. In the 19th century, Burkhardt identified this historic period as the time when several "universal men", intellectuals capable in various disciplines, used the classical ancient language to legitimize a new enlightenment (as cited in Johnson, 2005, p.6). Renaissance architecture can be recognized by its "elementary geometrical relationships and spatial centralization" (Schulz, 1980, p.113).

According to Benevolo, Renaissance architecture was a movement which took place between the XV and the XVIII century. In the case of Italy, it began in the XV century and expanded into other European countries and their colonial territories all over the world, in the following centuries (Benevolo, 2008). Classicism can thus be defined as "rationality, rigorous composition of elements, use of drawing rules and harmonic proportions" (Shulz, 1980 p.113) and as the "simplicity of form, harmonious proportions, and ornaments drawing attention to significant part of structures" (Rogers, 2001, p.58). Classicism was rediscovered in the renaissance, reappeared as neoclassicism in the 18th and 19th centuries and is explored today in Postmodern architecture.

Although the use of classical architectural elements from the ancient Greeks and Romans was crucial for the cultural production of this period, classical architecture was never used as a prototype. As Lowenthal points out, the imitation and idealization of the classical past only took place from the 18th century onward. Archetypal elements also began to be used

to legitimize new emerging contemporary powers. However, “the Renaissance drew sustenance from the past while avoiding servile indebtedness” (Lowenthal, 1985, p.6).

The Renaissance should not be understood as a complete break with the strong spirituality of the medieval time. Indeed, some medieval elements and spiritual beliefs evolved during this period. Man became a medium between nature and the Christian God: he was seen as overcoming a state of complete subordination and recognized the Christian God in earthly things. Following the philosophy of the time, Neoplatonism, man started to question nature in a scientific, “objective” way (Rogers, 2001; Schulz, 1980).

During this time, the Italian city also ceased to be the *civitas dei*, but rather became an autocratic city-state under the control of influential, aristocratic families. Nevertheless, they were still legitimized by the power of the Christian Church. If the city and its buildings were a product of a community during Medieval times, then during the Renaissance, they were the product of an artist, or better yet, an architect, a newly defined profession (Steenbbergen & Rech, 1996).

Due to Vasari and his scholars’ interpretation, the architect is an individual creative genius and his work an authored masterpiece, valued for its originality and aesthetic. These ideas are still central to western ideologies of art history, architecture, and heritage conservation today. Before Vasari, and during the renaissance, a work of art was instead understood in terms of the client, techniques, and iconography used (Johnson, 2005).

If medieval feudalism was based on land ownership, and the production of goods was finalized to food supply accommodation, then Renaissance early capitalism was meant to produce goods for profit through a market mechanism. Several scholars consider the Renaissance to have been a period of growing capitalist systems. The economy of the city-state Florence was mainly based on the rising wool industry, at that time one of the most advanced in Europe. The emulation of Roman agricultural systems in Veneto, the region considered in this work, was also driven by a need for profit, and to make the land produce as much as possible (Cosgrove, 1984; Sereni, 1961).

The typology of the countryside villa is a European, early modern product and differs from the Roman one. Society is now completely urbanized, based on market economy and not agriculture: thus, the villa is about the urban enjoyment of nature. The villa was not only

about the self-representation of its owner but has also been crucial in defining the emerging figure of the architect. Unlike the palace, this typology gave the architect much more compositional freedom. It was about the creation of an object on which the author's signature could be easily recognized. As a result, architects did not have to deal with closed palaces, streets, or urban contexts (Rogers, 2001).

The villa had four completely free façades and was always in dialogue with the surrounding rural landscape. The relationship between the villa and its surrounding landscape was, therefore, a focus of the design research. The Renaissance garden is about the opening of the enclosed medieval garden, the change from the *hortus conclusus* to the secret garden. The secret garden was still self-enclosed and subordinate to the building, but some of the walls disappeared, as can be seen in the picture of the Villa Medici in Fiesole, Fig.5. Here, nature is not God's nature, to be kept pristine within the garden walls, but is rather terrestrial nature, intended to be observed from the *belvedere*. In this period, the natural environment was represented in paintings as overcoming the gold, bi-dimensional, medieval background (Burns, 2012).

The villa's garden is subordinated to the architecture of the building and designed according to perspective rules. It was a self-contained place for the cultivation of herbs, fruits, contemplation, and *otium*. Renaissance gardens were a reproduction of a *locus amoenus* and therefore positioned at a desirable elevation to afford fresh air and clear views. This can be interpreted as an attempt to reduce complexity, control nature through geometry, and give the impression that the landscape is not wild but rational and proportional. Generally, they included evergreen plants, shrubs, Mediterranean vegetation, and local flora that was easy to handle and keep in shape (Luzzi, 1996).

The villa intended to rescue the idealized view of countryside living as a safe, healthy life that provided economic opportunities. The "life in the villa" culture was created as early as the 14th century, through the works of humanist intellectuals like Petrarca and Boccaccio.



Figure 5 Villa Medici a Fiesole (Donata Mazzini, Wikikkommons)

According to Luzzi, the conservation of the villa garden and its settings, was important in England and Germany. But this is topic is contested in the Italian restoration field. While there is a lot of accurate research providing information for restoration projects for buildings, there is scant research on the natural elements or surroundings of Italian villas (Luzzi,1996).

The idea that plants were cultural objects of historic memory which should be conserved, was born in 18th century England. This was influenced by the 19th century's romanticized approach to nature, before garden-making as a practice was replaced by the agrarian revolution, diffusion monocultures, and extensive cultivation. Luzzi recognized that historic gardens tend not to be conserved as historic architecture and identified the need for considerably more interdisciplinary research into the definition of historic natural features. This is because the natural elements of gardens tend to change over time, according to climatic changes, and are unable to withstand increasingly massive tourism or the pressure of new development.

As trees and plants live and die, some do not last as long as inert construction materials. Vegetal elements define spatial qualities and it is important to be able to read them.

Gardens and agrarian landscapes are artificially constructed nature that are valued and conserved because of the way they have been shaped by a precise cultural context, such as the Renaissance (Luzzi,1996).

The regulations and practice for the conservation of buildings in the context of the Palladian villas are clear, but the conservation of garden and landscape settings is more difficult to grasp and control. The ICOMOS experts' concerns regarding visual conservation, are about the setting of the villas rather than their structures. Even if the gardens have been mainly conserved, as is the case in several villas, the agrarian landscape has been changing, obviously and drastically. Even in a setting where sub-urbanization has not been intense, it is possible to see how the features of the agrarian landscape have been completely changed by the mechanization of cultivation techniques.

In this chapter, I have introduced the context of the development of the Italian villa, as well as exploring its relationship to the role of Renaissance architects, and the development of the Italian countryside. This chapter concluded by discussing the question of how the villa's garden and surroundings are conserved. In the next chapter, the development of the Palladian villa's agrarian landscape will be described.

2.4 The agrarian landscape of the Palladian Villa

In this chapter, I will explain why the Palladian villa is important in the context of the Italian villa of the late Renaissance, as well as discussing why this villa's relationship with the garden and the surrounding landscape is different from that of contemporary villas in Rome and Florence. The Palladian villa will then be positioned in the context of the Italian and Venetian agrarian landscape evolution from the Renaissance until today.

2.4.1 The Palladian Villa as a Farm

Various authors have addressed the crucial role played by Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) in defining the typology of the villa, both during the Renaissance and during the Enlightenment (Ackermann, 1966; Benevolo, 2008; Steenbbergen and Rech, 1996; Rogers, 2001; Moriani, 2008; Holberton, 2000; Battilotti, 2011). The word *villa*, which is still used today, describes a country house with elements derived from Andrea Palladio's work. His projects were easy to emulate, especially because he published very clear drawings in his work, *Quattro libri dell' Architettura*, published in 1570. In accordance with the teachings of Alberti, Vitruvio and Sebastiano Serlio, Palladio was keen to communicate his architecture visually. He differed from his contemporaries who tended to just write about architecture.

Palladio was a well-educated man, more oriented to empirical study. He theorized by starting from practical experience with construction materials. He was "an early precursor of the modern experts with a penetrating knowledge of the practice and the literature in one discipline" (Ackermann, 1966, p.21). Burns describes 16th century Veneto as a time of great technical achievements in the field of agriculture, such as new forms of irrigation, land reclamation, allowing crops and corn to be grown in formerly marshy areas. At that time, Italy's rural landscape was characterized by houses often still roofed with straw thatch, by churches, and by campanili (Burns, 2012).

The villas Palladio created in Veneto were not primarily designed to amaze but were mostly functional. In contrast to the Villa Este in Tivoli, the Palazzo Pitti, and the Boboli garden in Florence, the Palladian villa did not have water features or fountains. Instead, they were functional and controlled the production and land reclamation works during hot summers.

Although Palladio was inspired by ancient Rome, his work eradicated the Veneto region's traditions regarding function, form, and construction. He focused on caring about re-emerging water, or specifically, protecting the lords' rooms from water damage and noxious smells, dealing with all these elements in a unitarian composition. Often, the "villa farm" was not built in a pleasant area and was elevated to keep it at a distance from fetid ground waters and gain aeration at the foundation level, as well as to give it a sense of monumentality (Battillotti, 2011). Palladio's work was concretized ideas supported by contemporaneous intellectuals, like Alvise Cornaro (1484-1566), whose *Discorsi intorno alla vita Sobria* (1558) cast new light on the ancient Roman idea of cultivation as an abstinent aristocratic activity, often enriched with religious symbolism, to depict as a "holy agriculture" also expressed in the art of Giorgione and Tiziano. As Cornaro, an agricultural entrepreneur of the time involved in the development of the Serenissima hinterland, writes, life in the countryside is a holy activity, healthy for the spirit and the body and especially a way of beautifying the landscape (Cornaro, 1558). The villa's façade was free of decoration, although the inside was painted with frescos depicting the landowner's life, and the illusion of a private Arcadia (Rogers, 2001). Figure 6 shows the design of the landscape surrounding Villa Emo and Fig 7, the main entrance to the building.



Figure 6 Viila Emo, Fanzolo (Markok, wikicommons)

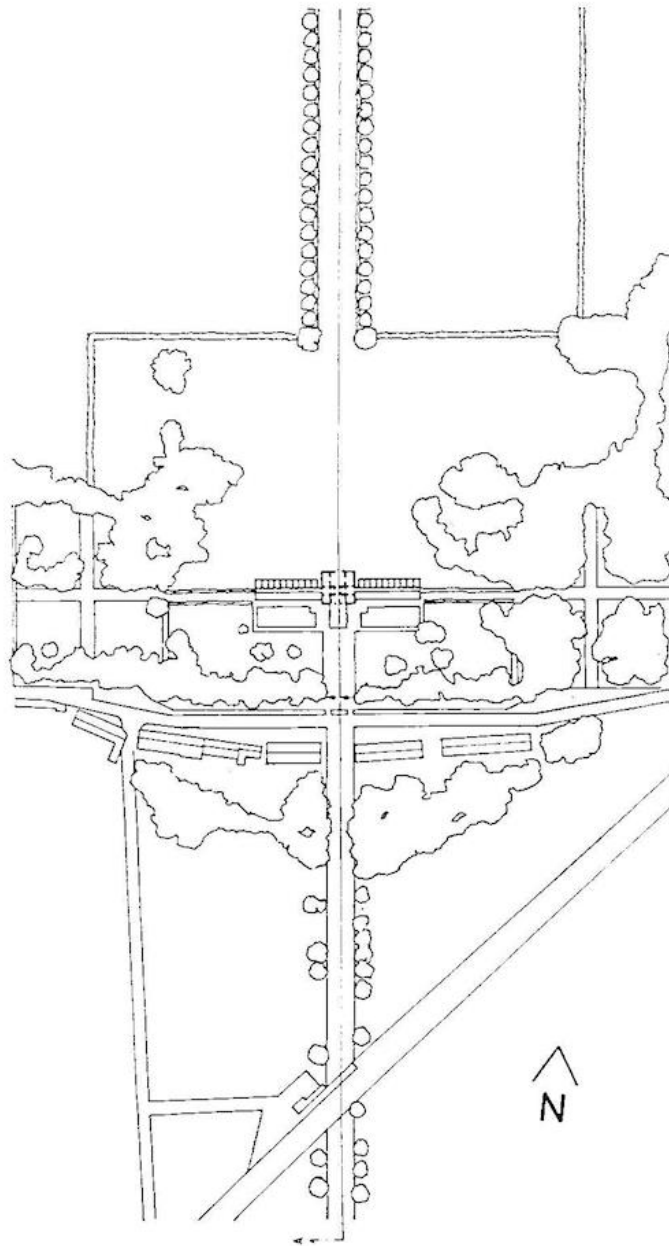


Figure 7 Villa Emo, layout plan (Steenbbergen and Rech, 1996)

Palladio's contemporaries in Florence and Rome tended to research new and different effects using various decorative elements on the façades, while Palladio did the same with different distributions of volumes in a tridimensional way (Benevolo, 2008).

The widespread tendency of Venetian aristocrats to invest in farming economics should be understood as "capitalistic speculation" (Holberton, 2000, p.156). An enormous freedom of architectural composition was possible because the architect was working on a *tabula rasa*, unlimited by urban settlements or the interference of dominant landscape elements. This

allowed freedom in the creation of the typology. The Palladian villa was not a unique “piece of art” but rather the composition of some standard components, organized in different ways, according to the contextual necessities.

The term Palladian villa is not correct in architectural terms, as each villa designed by Palladio was different depending on the location’s climate or topography, the customer’s wealth, their needs, and the experience of the architect at the time. Because his clients came from middle-low economic levels, Palladio always organized elements symmetrically so that the work could be stopped if the client ran out of money. Palladio still wanted there to be a harmonious composition, even if the work could not be completed. The houses were not built from carved stones, but bricks, which were then colored. This made the work much cheaper and more affordable, as it was a re-interpretation of the typical *villa rustica* in Veneto (Holberton, 2000; Rogers, 2001, Moriani, 2008).

To understand the development of the country house, it is necessary to return to Roman times. Then, country houses were organized diffusely, without ordered location, and were typically constructed close to rivers or street crossings. The agrarian landscape faced a strong regression during the Middle Ages, almost returning to the conditions before Romanization. The areas flooded easily and were subject to population shrinkage, while the more secure areas close to the Alps became more populated and several castles started to be built. The most common structures in the upper part of the Po Valley were the castle, the monks’ court, and the urban palace in the countryside. These were the three rural settlement typologies that influenced the development of the Palladian villa.

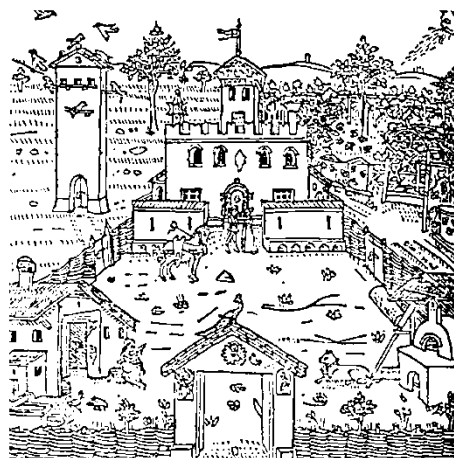


Figure 8 Rural houses in Veneto of the 15th Century (Pier de Crescenzi 1495, De Agricultura)

The monks' court was functional, it controlled the ecclesiastical agrarian land. Monks' courts were a sort of monastery for small religious communities. The urban palace in the countryside looked just like a palace in the city, except for being located in the hinterland. It was a residence used for mediation, study, recreation, and as a humanistic villa. In the 15th century, rural houses in Veneto were usually organized on two floors. The main façade was entirely open with a portico, an upstairs loggia and in some cases, was constructed with formerly feudal towers on the sides, for doves (Moriani, 2008).

The house was situated without any criterion in a fenced field at the center of the agricultural management and produce sorting. The house included other elements, such as a structure for the barn, a portico for tools, livestock and hay, and a tower for collection and dove-breeding. From the second half of the 15th century, isolated farms began to spread, especially in Vicenza's and Padua's province, without a precise order or hierarchy. Palladio was able to translate the elements of the *villa rustica* into a harmonious composition. (Moriani, 2008; Battillotti, 2011).

The hall was mainly used for festivities, a departure point for accessing other spaces. The loggias were used for walking, eating, and playing. Sets of stairs led to the *piano nobile* where the family lived and controlled the land, while the servants lived in the basement. The temple front was representative and ceremonial, suggesting that civic architecture can also be holy. Meanwhile, the rear was rustic and contained the kitchen spaces. As a result, the villa was composed of an urban and a rural part: the urban house, in which the owner received his guests and did the accounting; and the rural structure containing the related agrarian structures like barns and farmyards (Ackermann, 1991; Moriani, 2008).

Palladio's first projects were free of classical Roman references. In the second period of Palladio, during the second half of the 16th century, elements such as the lodge and tympanum in the façade appeared, as can be found in Villas Emo, Foscari, Cornaro, and Badoer. The barns changed and began to be like wings, with columns and arches. Villa Poiana (Fig.9) realized before his stay in Rome and Villa Badoer (Fig.10), designed after it, can be compared in the following pictures.



Figure 9 Villa Poiana, Poiana (Torelli)



Figure 10 Villa Badoer, Fratta Polesine (Torelli)

The site and environmental context were very important in Palladio's projects. The villa had to be located in the middle of the property, but close enough to rivers to provide protection from wild animals, good irrigation and water for livestock and far enough away from swampland to avoid humidity and flooding. In addition, Palladio also wanted to make sure there was easy street access for transportation, and above all, a decent view.

A composition of paths surrounded the villa, both inside and outside its borders, creating a connection with the agrarian landscape (Battilotti, 2011). The garden was rarely articulated as a decoration, as was the case in the villas in Rome and Florence. Instead, they were almost empty and disappeared into the surrounding agrarian landscape. Only a few elements, such as low walls and gates, gently directed the view towards the horizon, in the same way that trees flanked the field drainage.

According to Schulz, Palladio's work can be placed in the late Renaissance period, as his work had some aspects and characteristics that are already recognizable as the scenographic effect, mentioned in the previous works. Here there is a sense of infinity that

can be perceived from the garden, where nature yet again plays an autonomous role. In the early Renaissance, nature was about a sense of order that could be discovered. It was also about scenic beauty, something to simply admire and enjoy. Scenic beauty was meant to inspire contemplation, and Palladio's projects tried to capture the beauty of the landscape as much as possible (Schulz, 1980).

Moreover, the creation of dynamic spatial successions makes a clear difference with the self-contained, renaissance garden at Villa Medici in Fiesole (Schulz, 1980). Palladio's conception of the garden was an attempt to blur the distinction between what was created by nature, and what was created by the artist. Therefore, the Palladian garden could have a more ornamental part at the entrance, together with a more productive part, *brolo*, or an orchard, at the back of the house. The design of the *brolo* suggests a continuity into the agricultural fields located behind.

The agrarian landscape was considered by many as purely functional and without aesthetic qualities. However, for Palladio, it was very much a part of his projects, from the framing of the local scenery to the villa's loggia. Palladio wrote in his books, *Quattro libri*, that the location chosen had to offer a "Vista Bellissima", a beautiful view (Palladio, 1570).

Beyond the composition of crops, rows of poplar, elm, beech, and linden trees, and the paths and irrigations systems of the agrarian landscape, the profile of the hills and the mountains is visible; this is the natural landscape, not yet modified by the artist or the "man" of the time. The garden, agrarian landscape and setting had different degrees of artificiality and wildness but were bound together in the same project.

As I have already mentioned, my research interest is in the environment, the setting and the landscape of the Palladian villa, rather than in the villa itself. I will particularly consider how the villa's construction site has changed throughout time, and how different actors value it today. Schulz's work, *Genius Loci*, is about an environment's influence on the production of architecture (Schulz, 1980).



Figure 11 View from a Palladian villa on the Euganei Hills (Torelli)

Figure 11 shows the view from a Palladian villa over the land and to the Euganei hills. As Schulz points out, different climatic and cultural environments mean that different architecture is needed for similar functions, like sleeping or eating. Agrarian works on mountains or hills will not give the same extensive surface for cultivation, as flat, plain-like areas. Schulz iterates that as a valley is created through limits imposed by the horizon of the mountains, certain landscapes will give us a sense of closeness. In contrast, planar areas, or better, areas gained from great amounts of deforestation, gave landowners a sense of control. The extension of the lowlands was enormous. Paths and rivers gave orientation and the fields' extensive spatial schemes defined the villa setting (Schulz, 1980).

Referring back to Luzzi, conserving Palladio's landscape means looking at the relationship the author wanted to create between the elements (Luzzi, 1996). Luzzi's interpretation follows the idea that a work of art, including gardens, is primarily the product of an artist during a precise period and of their own will. However, this idea of conservation becomes contradictory in relation to the agrarian landscape. I will return to this aspect in Chapter 4.

In this sub-chapter, I have provided some insights about the role played by Palladio in defining the villas' typology and his interpretation of their gardens and setting. In the next, I will describe the Palladian villa's agrarian landscape and how its attributes have been changing, from the Renaissance until today.

2.4.2 The agrarian landscape seen from the villa

In this sub-chapter, I will contextualize of the Palladian villas' development during the 16th century Venetian republic, and its relationship to the development of the Veneto region's agrarian landscape.

According to Sereni, the transformation of the agrarian landscape has always been related to changes in agricultural technologies, "from the hoe to the plow." Therefore, I will follow the development of the Center-North Italian region and Veneto's agrarian landscape after the Renaissance, in chronological order. The following descriptions are drawn from the works of several international and Italian scholars (Cosgrove, 1984; Tempesta, 2014; Vallerani, 2012; Moriani, 2008; Battilotti, 2011; Zanetti 1990; Sereni, 1961).

The agrarian landscape of the Palladian villas, where still properly conserved, is and was characterized by agrarian land use. Rows of mulberries support vineyards in the typical composition of the *piantata veneta*, surrounded by meadows. Detached rural buildings with clay tiled roofs, rural villages, their clock towers or *campanili*, stand with mountains and hills in their background.

The process of Romanization took place in the central part of the Po Valley plain from 140 B.C. to 40 B.C. This included the construction of infrastructure for the region, the development of the first villages, the extension and organization of the countryside through huge reclamation works, and deforestation. The Roman *villa rustica* was at the center of this new, agrarian system. But there were no gardens, only functional fields and slaves to increase food production.

The main feature was the Via Postumia, the street running from Genova to Aquileia, the backbone of the centuriation system which subdivided the land into plots based on a grid-

system. After the fall of the Roman empire, during Medieval times, the landscape was much less controlled. Many reclamation areas returned to swamp, various areas went uncultivated, and numbers of previously deforested woodlands were reformed. The medieval landscape was mainly used for pastoral activities and hunting (Sereni, 1961; Zanetti, 2014; Moriani 2008).

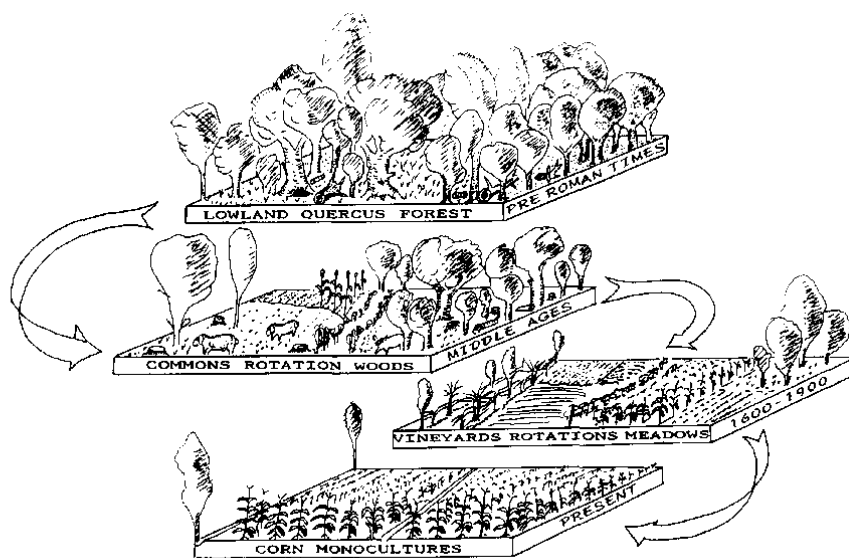


Figure 12 Evolution of the crops of the agrarian landscape in Veneto from Pre-roman time until today (Paoletti & Lorenzoni, 1989)

Plain areas especially, such as the Veneto region, were completely abandoned, because greater effort was needed to cultivate the land. Medieval villages and towns were mainly located in mountainous areas or on hilltops, as there was more vegetation and it was a safer area. Agriculture began again in the later Middle Ages, around the 15th century in the Comuni age, with the birth of the plow, and the first reclamation and remodeling works along the Po riverbanks. This also led to the rebirth of ancient Roman villas as economic centers, vineyards, mulberry cultivation centers, and the development of sericulture. Fig.12 shows the evolution from the Pre-roman landscape to the contemporary one (Paoletti & Lorenzoni, 1989; Sereni 2008).

Around the 16th century, the entire agrarian landscape and especially that of the technically developed Veneto region, was completely remodeled. At that time, the region was also the center for agrarian studies, which were still framed in the humanistic view of culture. The

Renaissance landscape in Tuscany was characterized by the work of many entrepreneurs which brought more diverse features to the crop composition. In contrast, the landscape in the Veneto region was simpler and more homogeneous because it was controlled by fewer but more powerful, landowners. The landscape in Veneto was much more technically advanced and better organized (Sereni, 1961). Denise Cosgrove describes the agrarian landscape of the Palladian villa as follows:

“[It is] more than simply the architectural and artistic monuments; the term serves to locate those distinctive architectural elements within a complex cultural geography that developed within a distinctive physical, economic and political milieu during two centuries of political control and economic investment by the Venetian Republic” (Cosgrove, 2007 p.3).

and Vallerani cites this traveler’s description, as reported by Sestini:

“a completely cultivated landscape, split up in a very regular way by rows of mulberry trees, and sometimes fruit trees, and even more so by trees tangled with vines and more or less evident rows of vines resting on dead supports. Alternating in the fields are the various shades of green of the wheat and corn, of beans and leguminous animal feed crops [...] The countryside is dotted with numerous detached rural buildings, but also groups of buildings huddled together (contrade), or even aligned, more or less detached the one from the other, in long lines at the sides of the roads” (as cited in Vallerani, 2012 p.137).

The Palladian villa project was part of a process, or regional reorganization, in the hinterland of the Venetian Republic of the Serenissima in the 16th century. Towards the end of the 15th century, the Venetian republic was about to collapse in overseas trade, and prominent Venetian families started to develop agricultural activities with extensive farmlands in the hinterland, by investing capital from overseas trade. Around the 15th century, The Venice Republic used to have the most important European harbor and be one of the biggest cities on the continent. But, toward the end of the 16th century, the Italian States were losing their powers as new nations such as Spain and France, increased their influence on Italian territories. Moreover, the 1492 plague was causing a considerable economic recession in sea trade. Therefore, maritime Republics were losing their primary role in maritime trade and Venice moved to agrarian production in the hinterland (Cosgrove, 2008). With the support of the Republic government, these families started re-tracing the Roman centuriation systems and located their new villas close to the new networks’ strategic crossroads (Sereni, 1961).

The villas were the region's load-bearing structure from the topographic, economic, and social perspectives. The villas were also banks, as landowners were constantly buying up land from less powerful owners and renting out the very same plots, which was made possible by the Republic's expropriation. Palladio's clients were Venetian merchants, new professionals working in the city, such as lawyers and doctors but also Vicenza's landowners, whose wealth was still based on their land holdings.

The region was characterized by a rich variety of agrarian land arrangement, differing from crops like mulberry, vineyards, corn, and wheat. Until the 16th century, irrigation was based on creating rills along sloping fields to let water move through, especially for rice crops. The way plots were designed was also influenced by the design of the streets and settlements, and trees were usually located along the irrigation channels. Characteristic elements of the landscape included moats flowing along the plots and small streets of gravel that were important before the use of tractors. At that time, wooden carts were used for transportation and they could not be driven on arable land (Zanetti, 2014).

Private roads bordered by rows of trees, divided the plots. The main public roads were widened with gravel and moats on both sides. Some of them were completely flooded after rainfall, while others were designed to prevent this and were always accessible. The private roads were also made of gravel, and flanked by poplar trees on both sides, with secondary private roads being of grass, bordered by vineyards and smaller trees, as shown in Fig.13.



Figure 13 Private street primary and secondary, and public street (Zanetti, 2014)

In the medieval times, the fields were enclosed by vegetation and used for different functions, like supplying food for the family or livestock. Vegetation such as hedgerows, produced wood and wine, and protected the crops from wild animals. The enclosed fields which were typical of medieval times, slowly disappeared during the Renaissance. Even today, the modifications deriving from land reclamation are important features which enable us to distinguish medieval land plots from those defined in the 16th century. In Fig.14 regulated and organized land patterns of artificial channels dating back to 1550 ca can be

seen on the left side of the river. On the right side of the river, smooth subdivisions of land follow irregular watercourses (Zanetti, 2014; Moriani,2008).



Figure 14 Pattern of cultivated fields XVI century and enclosed fields of medieval time (Zanetti, 2014)

La piantata veneta is the best-known element of the Veneto's agrarian landscape. The *piantata veneta* can be seen in the backgrounds of Figs.15 and Fig.17, it consisted of a system of vineyards and tree rows whereby the vineyard was supported by elm, mulberry-silk, or willow. The trees were useful because the branches gave structure to the vineyard, the mulberry leaves could be used for silk production, and the wood could be used to produce tools. Each tree was located 25-40 meters apart. This kind of mixed crop was multifunctional; the trees were also used to feed livestock.

According to Tempesta, in the 16th century, 73% of crops on arable land were vineyards, 13% were meadow, 3.2% forest, and there was no livestock (Tempesta, 1989). The main, important crops cultivated during the Renaissance were wheat, wine, and rice. The new cultivation of corn, imported from America, was what most reshaped the Veneto's

landscape, replacing woodlands and pasture (Paoletti & Lorenzoni, 1989). The government of the Serenissima Republic supported massive deforestation in order to make the land cultivable, especially by corn monocultures. Giovanni Bellini, in his work *Uccisione di San Pietro Martire*, Fig.16, includes a background scene of deforestation that, according to Tempesta, could be interpreted as a second murder (Tempesta, 2014). Certain aspects of the medieval and Renaissance landscape are summed up in following Tab.1.



Figure 15 Villa Rotonda and the “pianata veneta” (Zanetti, 2014)



Figure 16 Murder of S. Pietro, Bellini, 1507 (Tempesta, 2014)

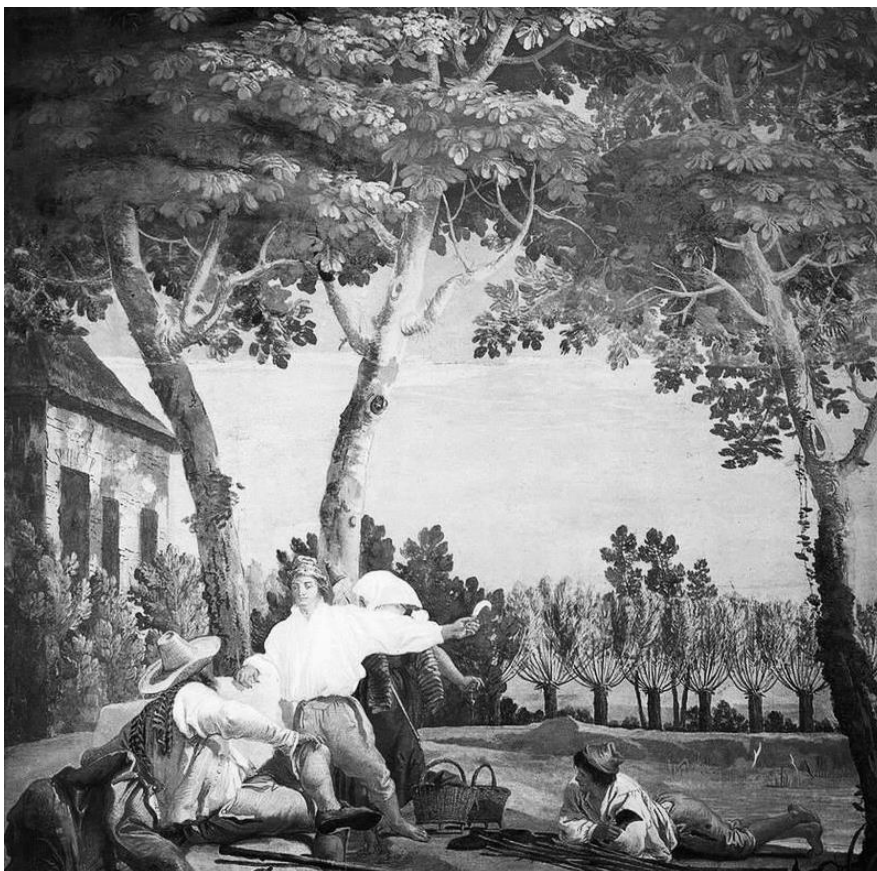


Figure 17 Resting Peasants, Tiepolo, Villa Valmarana, Vicenza, 1757 (Wikikommons)

Table 1 Comparison of agrarian attributes of the medieval landscape and the Renaissance landscape in Veneto (Torelli)

Agrarian landscape attributes	Medieval landscape in Veneto > feudal society (value of use)	Renaissance Landscape in Veneto > capitalist society (value of exchange)
	-	Vineyards (piantata veneta)
	Woods	-
	Livestock	-
	enclosed fields with hedgerows	Open fields, corn monocultures
	meadows	Less meadows
	Marshy areas	irrigation systems
	monks' courts and castles, churches and campanili, villages	Palaces and villas, churches and campanili, villages
Agrarian landscape practices	Hunting and pastoral activities, production based on food supply	land reclamation deforestation production based on profit
Garden	Horto conclusus surrounded by the castle's walls, medical herbs	Open to the surroundings without walls > Belvedere of the villa
Nature	God's production, man as "inferior"	Object of scientific inquiry and artist/man as a medium between god and nature

2.5 Transformations of the landscape of the Palladian villa

The messy urban development that took place in the 1960s in Europe after World War II, is often cited as one of the reasons for the increasing international attention paid to rural cultural heritage and its protection (Smith, 2006). Nevertheless, this process has been different in the various European contexts. In this chapter, I will go through the studied landscape's most relevant transformations, including the mechanization of the agrarian landscape in the 1950s and the small-scale industrialization in the 1970s. The landscape's transformations can be divided very roughly, into the following five phases.

- uncultivated landscape *Middle Age*
- agrarian landscape *Renaissance*
- agro-industrial landscape *19th Century*
- agro-industrial and urbanized landscape *20th century*
- urbanized and touristic landscape *21st century*

2.5.1 Mechanization of the agrarian landscape and rural exodus in the 1950s

The following sub-chapters will attempt to describe the sub-urbanization of the region from the morphological and economic perspectives, by starting from the Counter-Reformation and continuing until the present.

Agriculture in Italy and Veneto was in economic and technological recession during the 17th century Counter-Reformation: The Church's land holdings were increasing and were kept in very unproductive conditions. Paintings of the time also show a nature as wild, without the level of organization of the Renaissance: at that time people worked only in pastoral, fishing, and hunting activities. At the end of the 18th century, several enlightened intellectuals defined reforms to limit the Church's power over the land and pushed the states to relaunch agriculture. The specialization of agrarian production in the second half of the 18th century, brought the first monocultures to northeast Italy, including corn and rice, which had a strong, homogenizing effect on the landscape's features (Sereni, 1961).

Rationalization, deforestation, and reclamation brought a progressive loss of livestock, woods, and meadows (Paoletti and Lorenzoni, 1989). These achievements were the basis of the 19th century “agronomic revolution”, which was organized around a new typology of agrarian center: the *cascina*. The *cascina* was a place for performing agricultural activities, crafts, and manufacturing products. The *cascina* employed people on a salary, just as in other industries (Sereni, 1961; Moriani, 2008).

The industrialization that occurred in Europe and in Italy during the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, cemented the mechanization of agriculture and the consequent loss of certain typical elements of the agrarian landscape, especially mixed cultivations. In Veneto, this was the *piantata veneta*. Instead of hanging the grapevines on trees, the workers used concrete or steel and separated the mulberry cultivation from the grapevines. Regions started to specialize in the cultivation of just one crop, like hemp, beetroot, or tomatoes. Mechanization meant the loss of the traditional irrigation systems and their related designs. The use of the tractor developed and spread and has become a characteristic element today. According to Tempesta and Vecchiato, there has been a continuous loss of hedgerows, woods, and meadows since the beginning of the 19th century (Tempesta & Vecchiato, 2017, p.8)

The mountainous and hilltop areas of Italy were mostly abandoned after World War II and coastal areas have been transformed by commercial activities, while industrialization and sub-urbanization have greatly changed the agricultural plain areas of Veneto and the Po Valley in general. Ginsborg describes the Italy of the 1950s as an undeveloped country with an economy based mainly on hunting, fishing, and undeveloped, small-scale industries. Agriculture was only advanced in the Po Valley. In comparison, the country’s industrialization in the 1960s went very fast (Ginsborg, 2006, p.281).

The 1950 Agrarian Reform was the most significant development for rural Italy at the time. It was set in motion by Segni, as a political response to the tension developing from several protests by peasants against their landowners. The state used the reform to expropriate landowners, especially in the south of the region but also in the northeast, and to devolve the land to peasants, support mechanization, and create services and infrastructures to develop rural areas affected by emigration to the new industrialized urban centers, the industrial triangle, or to the USA (Ginsborg, 2006). Before this, land workers could only use and work the land under different forms of contracts stipulated with the owners; this form

of share cropping can be defined as *mezzadria*. With the reform, the Italian state gave them state-owned land and used the income to support rural land mechanization as well as the construction of connections to main centers for electricity, water supply, and services.

2.5.2 Small scale industrialization in the 1970s

According to Antrop, the cancellation of the boundaries between rural and urban led to the birth of post-World War landscapes characterized by increasing globalization, and new landscapes of suburbanization and counter-urbanization, urban fringe, edge cities, and exurbs (Antrop, 2005). Other authors describe these post-modern landscapes as “urban nebular” or “ruruban” regions (Pauwels, 2014). They are recognizable by “isotropy” and car transport infrastructure networks. Urban nebulars are also objects of study for environmentalists and have been defined as “heavily polluted areas with a highly deteriorated environmental matrix” (Romano and Zullo, 2016, p.109). Bhatta considers them a typology of hybrid environment, and defines them as “neither an urban situation nor suitable for an agricultural, rural environment” (Rahman et al. in Bhatta, 2010, p.8). Fig.18 shows the mixing of urban and rural areas, with urban settlement in gray and agrarian areas in light gray.

The country and the Veneto region transformed the agrarian economy into an industrial one between the 1950s and the 1970s, and started playing a role in the international market, thanks in part to the push from the Marshall Plan. In the 1960s, industrial expansion arrived in the Po Valley and in Italy, and the proportion of people working in agriculture reduced to 30% (Ginsborg, 2006).

In Italy, governance power became decentralized in 1977, thanks to the birth of the regions as administrative institutions (Manente, 2005). As a result, the regions are gaining more decisional power and autonomy, and this could be considered one of the aspects supporting the Veneto’s strong economic development.

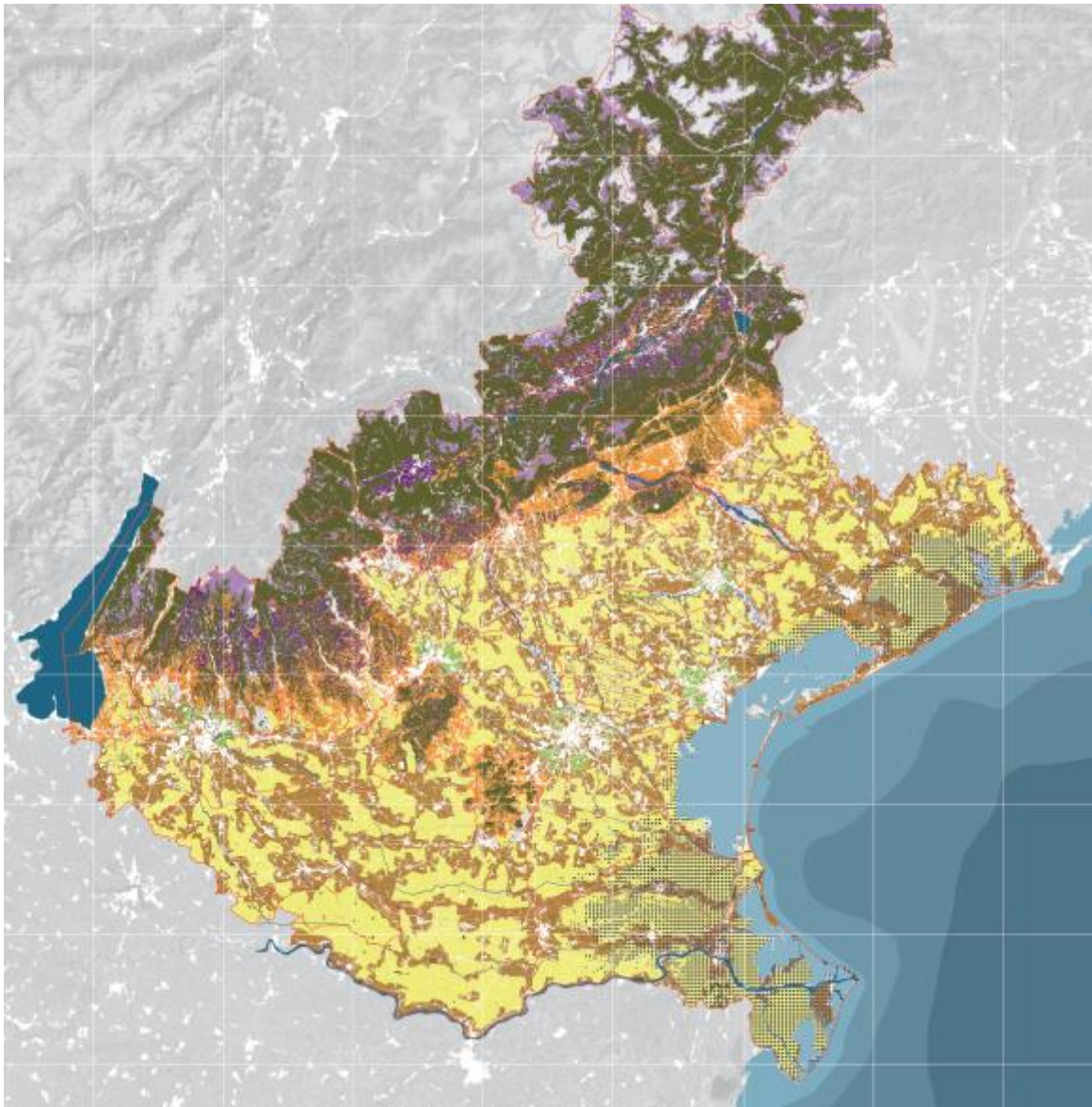


Figure 18 Territorial Plan Veneto Region: in yellow the agrarian areas today (PTRC, 2013)

The core of industrialization was the industrial triangle, including the cities of Milan, Genova, and Turin; significant numbers of peasants moved to these areas from the north and the south. Towards the 1970s, the younger generations who had moved to the industrial triangle to work, returned to the northeast and started developing their own enterprises. These businesses were still often related to agriculture or local crafts and were established close to their grandparents' agrarian settlements. The contemporary urbanization of this region can be described as "a product of Italy's successful late-twentieth-century economy" (Cosgrove, 2007, pp.1-2).

Industrialization in the Veneto, Emilia, and Marche regions mainly comprises small industries with 20 up to 50 employees, producing clothing, ceramics, leather, and furniture. Their products are known all over the world as the fashion and marketing "made in Italy" brand. The spreading of small industries connected by the car transport infrastructure network, has been the backbone for further urbanization. Fordism and consumerism reshaped Italian society, its culture, work, and the features of its former agrarian landscape. The petrol economic crisis in the second half of the 1970s affected the main industries in Europe and Italy, such as those in Milan, Genova and Turin but not Veneto's small industries. These family industries have less problems in terms of governability and also a smaller investment risk (Manente, 2005).

Several terms are used to describe this small-scale industrialization and urbanization, such as the *città diffusa*, meaning urbanized countryside or diffused industrialization (Indovina, 2009). Cosgrove describes the urbanized countryside as polycentric, composed of several "formerly independent, historic urban centers" (Cosgrove, 2007, p.1-2). Middle-sized cities such as Padova and Verona, which used to be important commercial centers in medieval times, became prosperous again. Enterprise in Veneto was and is, still strictly related to family businesses, therefore, in the family, the boundary between working and living spaces were at times blurred. Here, the words of a woman living in a village in the central Veneto:

"my uncle used to work all the time, it was just about home and work,
actually he had his enterprise downstairs and was living upstairs"
(B&B Host, woman, 50 years old c.a.)

Several scholars have described the approach of Veneto's planning authorities in the 1970s, as a "policy-making largely guided by emergency measures" (Gazzola, *et al.*, 2004,

p.190), or as being based on a “laissez faire” approach (Tattara & Anastasia, 2003). This had consequences, such as the lack of development of public social services or environmental problems. The lack of control by authorities, on the one hand, allowed these small enterprises to develop faster by reaching a high level of income. On the other hand, the lack of planning also meant that public services, like hospitals and schools, were missing, as well as a welfare system (Ginsborg, 2006).

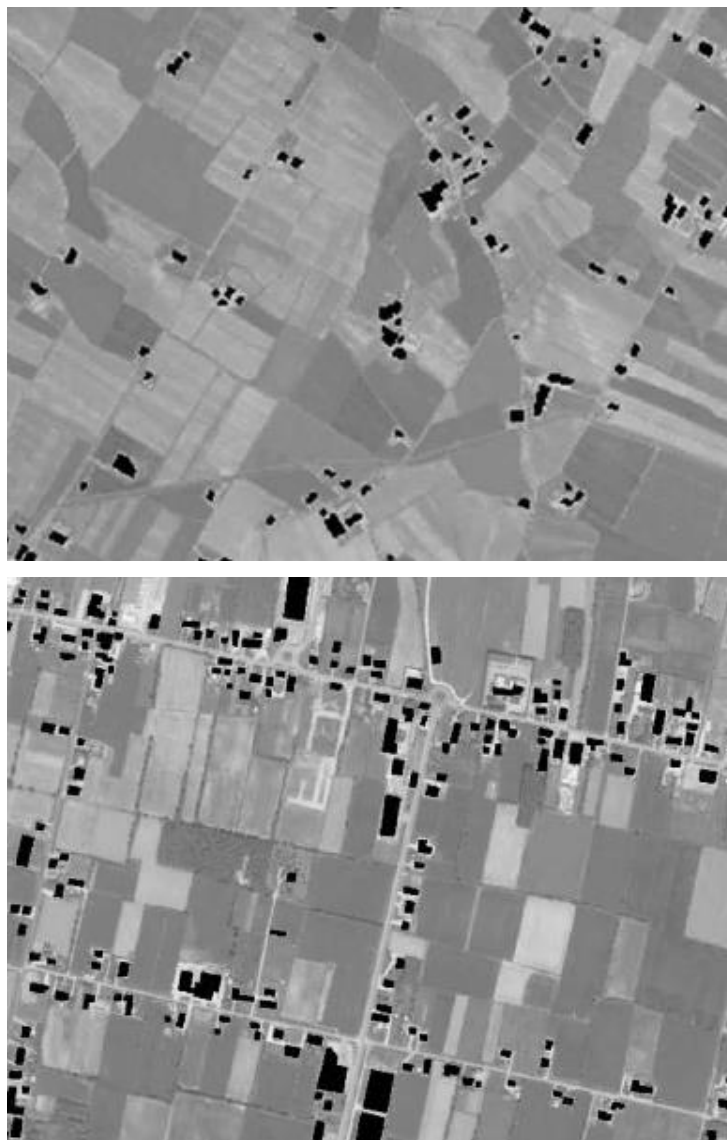


Figure 19 Modalities of suburbanization (Romano & Zullo, 2016)

The scholars Romano and Zullo described this sub-urbanization as a peculiar urban sprawl, or as “sprinkling.” Fig.19 shows this phenomenon. They believe that urban sprawl can be recognized by the expansion of big urban centers into the surrounding countryside. Meanwhile, the expansion of multiple, miniature historic centers dispersed in the countryside, as in the two pictures above, is better described as sprinkling. The settlements tend to be organized along the streets of the former *centuriation*, around former historic villages, or, in the case of the landscape of the Palladian villa, around the villas themselves (Tempesta, 2014).

According to Romano and Zullo, the reason for the phenomenon can be related to the excessive decentralization of planning structure and decisional power to the municipality level, whereby each municipality takes its own decisions (Romano & Zullo, 2016). As La Riccia points out, the lack of concern for the conservation of the agrarian landscape could also be a consequence of local politicians being divided between conservation and urban planning (La Riccia, 2017). In the next chapter, I will introduce the landscape’s relationship to its visual representation, which is vital to the understanding of my critical investigation into the way in which the history of the landscape of the Palladian villa is conserved as heritage today. In fact, the conservation of visual aspects, as implemented in the World Heritage Convention, is the reason for the conflicts between the ICOMOS experts and the inhabitant’s ways of producing the rural landscape.

2.6 The rural landscape and its visual representation

In the chapter, I will use a literature review to reflect on how the rural landscape, especially that of the country house, has been used throughout history to represent an idealized past. The topic of visual representation will then be addressed, as an intrinsic property of the rural landscape, and as a tool for remembering of the past and conserving its traces. How the visual representation of the rural landscape has been used for heritage conservation purposes since the rise of the nation-state, will then be explained. Finally, I will consider the importance of critical analysis in today's visual conservation practices, and how rural landscapes of the past are represented, which elements are selected, and which elements are forgotten.



Figure 20 Adamo and Eve in Paradise, Jacopo Bassano, 1573 (Tempesta, 2014)

The more a society urbanizes within a historic period, the more it idealizes its rural past: According to Van der Ploeg: “the more the world urbanizes, the more the fear of disappearing rurality seems to be a constant factor” (Van der Ploeg, 1997, p.40). According to Lefebvre, one of the main outcomes of the “urbanization of society” (Lefebvre, 1991) is the way we view the rural by idealizing and romanticizing it as an object of consumption. In Fig 20, Bassano, like many other painters throughout history, represents Paradise as a bucolic, rural landscape.

Mac Donald notes that the focus of rural heritage in history was a reaction to phenomena such as modernization, industrialization, and the consequent disintegration of the rural world (Mac Donald, 2013).

Throughout history, remembering the rural past has been a sort of *pastoralization*, or aristocratic idealization of a wild, pristine rural. The term derives from “the complex pastoral,” a literary structure of Greek and Roman origin (Machor, 1998). Hesiod and Theocritus, in the ninth and third centuries B.C. respectively, described the rural past as “a first Golden age of ease and comfort, with spontaneous crops and docile animals” (Short, 2006 p.134).

In the rapidly urbanizing world of the second century B.C Roman Empire, the need to look back at idealized nature, was expressed through ornamental gardens and rural landscapes. These were depicted as frescos on the walls of urban houses. The upper classes wanted urban gardens, inspired by Virgilio’s poems of the first century B.C. which depicted scenes of agriculture and celebrated the sober agrarian life in contrast to the “corrupt” urban one. The urban garden was conceived as a private *arcadia*, purely ornamental and functional, while also demonstrating the power of aristocratic Roman families (Rogers, 2001).

During medieval times, the rural idyll disappeared in favor of a better vision of the city: the agrarian life was related to slavery and nature; risky, unknown, and wild. In contrast, living in a town was considered more secure and free from feudal relationships. Later, in Breton literature, the medieval rural was depicted as a secret and magical place located in monasteries, the courtyard gardens of abbeys, or even better, in the *hortus conclusus*. The medieval garden was not there simply to be admired or used as decoration, but rather was a simultaneous investment of two new meanings: the wild, sacred untouchable nature of

the Christian God, and the *hortus functionalis* of food and herbal medical supplies (Rogers, 2001).

During the Renaissance, a Venetian family's villa in 16th century Veneto's mainland, which was recently reclaimed territory, was the center of agricultural management. The villa was designed according to the Roman ideal of holy agriculture, conceived as a sober and aristocratic activity. To this end, frescos on the villa's walls depicted the landowner's *agrarian* life (Rogers, 2001). The most common example of rural heritage landscape in the European context, could be that of a country house with its surrounding gardens and properties, designed to frame a beautiful view over the land. This form of heritage was present in Roman times, in the Renaissance, and again in the 17th century in England. As in other countries, it was mainly used to legitimate aristocratic families' power and to establish control of the agrarian land.

The rural past was depicted from the outside, through *landscape paintings*. The birth of the term in the XV century, from the Dutch word *Landshap* (Tramontana, 2012), dates back to the Renaissance. During this time, linear perspective was being developed and applied to paintings and environmental representations. In fact, Benevolo suggests that the birth of the Renaissance coincided with Brunelleschi's development of perspective in 1420. In other words the development of a controlled, visual representation (Benevolo, 2008).

Indeed, the term landscape was originally defined as "rural scenery, a tract of land perceived from an artistic viewpoint" (Afanasyeva, 2015). As Cosgrove suggests, the first controlled visual representations of a natural rural environment, can be seen in the paintings of XV century Flemish and Venetian artists, something which was driven by the increasing production of cartographies, and the study of Euclidean geometry of the time. The origin of the term suggests the intrinsic connection between the rural land and the landscape, as well as its connection to an idealized past.

The visual representation of the landscape has been used to conserve the landscape's beauty since the rise of the nation-state. According to Cosgrove, landscapes conveyed the belief that land and life, or better still, the way in which humans transform the land, should be a visible, harmonious process (Cosgrove, 2004). The belief that harmony exists within the landscape is close to the idea of conserving the landscape's idealized beauty. This can be traced back to England and Italy's first national conservation policies.

The visual aspects of the landscape were, and still are, the most common way to select and remember elements of the rural past in the present. By the end of the 18th century, the time of English state-formation, the landscape had become an important national heritage resource. It was properly conserved for its harmony and its outstanding scenic beauty and was protected by legislative frameworks as an analyzable object, based on visual evidence.

By the 19th century Victorian period, the middle classes in industrializing England were consuming a significant quantity of landscape paintings. This contributed to the development of the idealization of the countryside's beauty, which was then understood as "timeless, untouched, unchanging" (Aitchison *et al.*, 2000, p.51). Later in the 1930s, the National Park Commission was established in England to control the beauty of landscapes, based on the classification of measuring scenic amenity.

In the Italian context, the birth of rural landscape heritage conservation can be found during Italy's fascist period, with the creation of the Ministry for popular culture (Bodo and Bodo, 2016). At that time, the rural landscape was, on the one hand, being exploited for agricultural work. Fig 21, at the end of this Chapter, shows how the agrarian landscape was used for fascist propaganda. On the other hand, it was protected, as cultural heritage, by the first Italian law for landscape protection.

The Croce Law (1920) was the outcome of a long discussion process of discussion and had been sought by intellectuals who lamented the ongoing destruction of the Italian landscape. Drafted by Benedetto Croce and inspired by aesthetic idealism, the Croce Law was intended to protect natural landscapes and buildings of historic interest, and to protect them exclusively because of their "beauty" and "scenic" qualities. The definition of landscape used included an expression of national pride in the young state:

"Landscape is the material and visible representation of the country with its particular physical features (...) and with various and different land features as they arrived to us through centuries" (IUAV, 2011).

Croce underlines that the landscape is a national matter, a public good of natural beauty, and a cultural asset, comparable to history and literature, that should be protected from individual and private interests. The 1939 Bottai Law brings together the Croce Law and the law on conserving historic and artistic heritage. Drafted by Giovannoni and Bottai, the

law stresses the importance of protecting landscape, particularly for its scenic beauty, as well as protecting villas, gardens, and parks. This includes the complex of assets that create a “distinctive appearance having aesthetic and traditional values” (La Riccia, 2017) and emphasizes the need for drafting Landscape Plans (Normattiva, 2019).

As already mentioned, the development of landscape conservation ideas is always related to the pace of urban development. The more a society urbanizes within a historic period, the more it idealizes its rural past. The Ponte Law of 1967 was enacted following the Agrigento landslide in Sicily in 1966, a disaster triggered by excessive, unauthorized urban development. The law regards an extension of the idea of landscape to include “historical complex, monumental, environmental and archaeological protection” (as cited in La Riccia, 2017).

Historically, the rural landscape has been conserved for its “exceptional beauty” by international and Italian landscape conservation laws. A very recent awareness of ecological values can be observed, which only achieved legal status in 1985 with the Galasso Law (La Riccia, 2017). The first law regarding landscape environmental protection and its planning through the regional Landscape Plan, came into force in 1985, while many other European countries had already had such laws since the 1960s. The law defines the first categorization of natural systems of landscape and environmental value and also introduces Environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedures. The most recent law regarding heritage and the landscape protection, is the Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape (2004). This law once again refers to the protection of the landscape’s beauty, and the landscape’s protection as a touristic resource.

The rural landscape as heritage, in both the Italian and European contexts, is a product of the nation-state. The study of landscape today is still part of geography. This discipline was born towards the end of the 18th century together with the development of cartography. It came from European nations’ need to map, measure, and catalogue the characteristics and differences of their colonized territories (Cosgrove, 2004). At the time, the same approach was used to evaluate landscape beauty, being based on the belief that the landscape was an objective reality. This approach to landscape study is employed today in physical geography, aided by computer representation through the lens of spatial analysis in a mathematical and quantitative way. But this is not accepted by human geographers, who understand the landscape as a social construction.

In the 1970s, critiques of the positivist classification of landscape values arose from support for the idea that the landscape was a social construction. As a result, landscape studies in cultural, social, and human geography are still based on this important paradigm shift, known as the *cultural turn*. During this turn, geography grew closer to the social sciences and framed core questions relating to culture, meaning, and identity (Cosgrove, 2004). According to Cosgrove, the landscape is a “way of seeing,” a product of capitalism, existing from the Renaissance until modernity. In this, he is addressing the ideology behind the idea of landscape in contemporary Western culture. The landscape, in his understanding, is about the separation of the object from the subject and the claim of objectivity. He sees this ideology behind linear perspective, geometry, the rules of cartography, microscopy, photographic camera techniques, telescopes, and current computer technology.

This is exemplified in that landscape analysis is understood as a matter of perspective and representation. According to Aitchison, Macleod, and Shaw, landscapes are “a scene from nature that has been appropriated and framed by the agency of human perspective.” In addition, landscapes have become “a cultural construction, nature framed and set aside for contemplation” (Aitchison *et al.*, 2000, p.73). Furthermore, landscape is often constructed by a relationship of forms, namely through morphological analysis. The representation, mapping and identification of landscape, is the “act of landscape making itself.” Therefore, the landscape is defined and constructed by the way it is represented (Smith, 2006).

Even today, the fascination for the pre-modern, our postmodern society’s nostalgic remembering of the rural past, is often concretized in the visual representation of certain heritage values. The landscape is therefore, one of the main mediums used by European society to remember the rural past through visual representation.

In heritage studies discourse, visual representation is identified as a selective medium in different cases. Watson and Waterton explain that visual culture is becoming the “predominant (heritage) discursive medium” (Watson & Waterton, 2010, p.85). Their argument also considers visual culture’s power for heritage interpretation. In this sense, the visual representation of heritage is often used to state what heritage *is* or should be. In addition, visual conservation is often based on legally defined “inherent and aesthetic values” which, according to Watson and Waterton, should be the object of social inquiry.

Since the visual representation of landscapes cannot be objective, I find it relevant to investigate for which groups and societies these views are significant. I intend to do this particularly in my case study. Therefore, visual representations of heritage should be considered in the same way as texts for analysis; they should be analyzed in relation to the social context that produced them. Furthermore, when heritage is represented, it is often done so in a way that makes certain aspects invisible. This invisibility tends to hide accountability because “who makes what or whom visible and how is always a question of power” (Wenk and Krebs, 2007 p.31).

Watson & Waterton considered the case of the English country house. English country houses, made popular by the post-war period heritage guides that presented *Rural England* with patriotic pride, became a national property in the second half of the 19th century. In the heritage conservation domain, visual representation is used to define what to conserve by selecting certain historical moments from the past. This selection means that a sense of historic continuity is inevitably compromised by the “nostalgic need to consume and create static heritage” (Aitchison *et al.*, 2000, p.100).

In this case, the nostalgic need for aesthetic consumption becomes more important than the memorial role of the landscape. As Choay points out, “the beauty has been slowly taking the place of the memory” (Choay, 1995, p.16). This is a dangerous outcome of the use of visual representation as a means of heritage conservation. In this chapter, the link between the rural landscapes, their visuals and heritage, has been explained. I have emphasized the importance of the critical study of landscapes as visual representations, because they often offer an exclusive view of the past. The chapter that follows will introduce my epistemological and theoretical positions.



Figure 21 The agrarian landscape in the fascism propaganda (Domenica del Corriere, 1933)

3. A theory of the production of rural heritage

landscapes

The research's interdisciplinary position will be framed in this part of the work. I will explain my epistemological and theoretical positions and how they lead to my methodology and selection of methods. I will frame my methodology and my main research question.

I will use this chapter to explain my position among the many disciplines dealing with heritage studies. I will avoid using the term *historic* or *historical*, because I want the rural landscape to be open to other heritage values, not only the historic. Thereafter, I will go on to explain the concept of *heritage scale* in relation to World Heritage conservation. I will explain how I interpreted Lefebvre's theory of space, in order to understand how the rural landscape was produced as heritage in the context of two Palladian villas in Veneto. I will make clear why I have chosen this theory, this author with his scholars, as well as my epistemological and theoretical positions and how I apply Lefebvre's theory to the domain of the rural heritage landscape. Afterwards, I will explain what I mean by dissonance and harmony in this process and in the following sub-chapters, I will explain the three dimensions of the rural heritage landscape: visual representation, materiality of attributes, and experience. How these three dimensions inform my methodology for data collection and analysis, will be stated in the conclusion.

3.1 Heritage studies and sociological research

This research is positioned within the interdisciplinary field of heritage studies. In the following section, the differences between heritage preservation, conservation, and the *heritage approach*, will be explained. This will be done to justify the decision to use spatial sociology theories and methodologies. Spatial sociology is that field of studies which critically analyzes and theorizes the spatial transformation of cities and landscapes by using sociological research methods.

Heritage studies engages with the idea of heritage as a complex phenomenon concerning the conservation practices of individuals, institutions, or groups. According to Lowenthal, "though the past is a topic of almost universal concern, little research explicitly focuses on how people in general see, value or understand it" (Lowenthal, 1985). Lowenthal, the pioneer of the heritage field, states that the role of heritage studies is to investigate how

members of society make sense of the traces of their past in the present (as cited in Tramontana, 2007). In other words, “if history is made up of the raw facts of the past, (...) heritage is history re-shaped for contemporary consumption” (Aitchison, Macleod, & Shaw, 2000, p.94). According to Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge, when we study heritage, we are focusing on “the ways in which we use the past now” (Graham *et al.*, 2000, p.2). In addition, according to Bortolotto, if history focuses on cultural facts, then “heritage is a self-conscious selection among cultural facts” (Bortolotto, 2013, p.78). Heritage, then, is our use of the past in the present.

Heritage has an influence on several domains of contemporary society, such as the political, the economic, and the social. It is a matter of sociological endeavor. Therefore, although this research field deals with how to remember the past, it does not use historical science research methods. Historical science is a discipline based on the study of one or more specific events in the past, it tends to describe them in chronological order with a linear perspective, so that the interconnections can be better understood. Sociological research methods, which are employed in heritage studies and in this research, are based on the analysis of a social phenomenon. The aim is to produce generalizations about a phenomenon in order to produce new theories or contribute to those that already exist.

In this research, theories and methods from sociology are used to look at heritage(s) conservation as a phenomenon. Heritage conservation answers questions such as what is “historically more correct” or “intrinsically authentic” and worth preservation. But heritage studies scholars tend to suggest possible new approaches to conservation by encouraging social justice, inclusion, participation, and democratization. The Getty Institute states that, “conservation regarded as a technical and legal endeavor rather than social has failed to attract significant input from the social sciences” (Avrami *et al.*, 2000, p.9). This shows that heritage studies could make an important contribution to heritage conservation practice.

Heritage studies research is generally based on constructivist epistemologies, which believe that only a “temporary, tentative, uncertain and socially constructed” knowledge about heritage can be achieved. The critical task for social scientists engaging with World Heritage landscapes, lies in understanding the heritage phenomenon by breaking down the classification systems for ordering and cataloging that are often used by international conservation institutions, such as UNESCO and ICOMOS.

Heritage conservation practice is based on national or international law, which often seems to imply that it is possible to have an “objective, reliable, and authoritative knowledge” about heritage (Aufenvenne *et al.*, 2014). In one aspect, this research aims at understanding the conflicts between local and international understandings of heritage conservation practice in the rural landscape. This research is thus situated in the context of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and will examine differing lines of thought in order to better understand how such a phenomenon could arise. The following diagram describes the research’s position in the disciplinary framework: I consider the phenomenon of heritage conservation through the theories of heritage studies.

The main element of this study is the rural landscape, which implies a strict connection to the fields of urban and rural sociology. By studying conservation as a social phenomenon and providing giving inputs for conservation practice, the research can position itself in the *applied sociology* branch. As represented in Fig.22, among the several disciplines that make up heritage studies, I am mainly within cultural and social geography. Applied rural sociology can be seen as a way of connecting theoretical disciplines with practical disciplines, such as architecture, rural landscape planning, and landscape conservation.

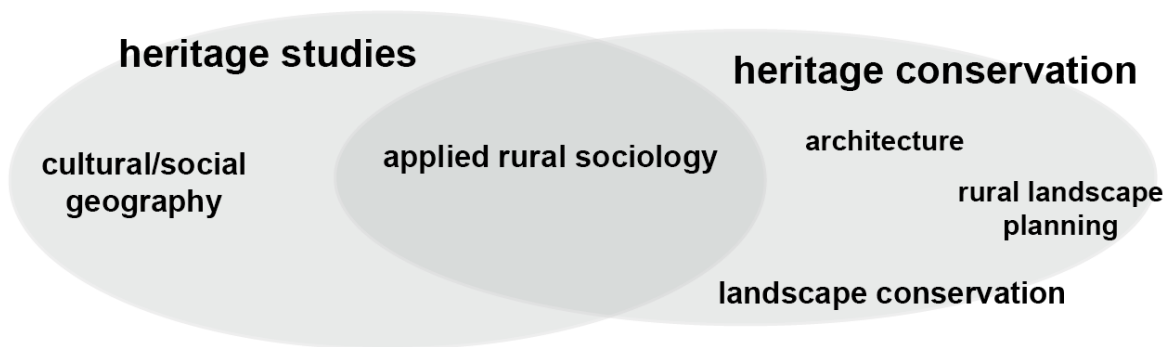


Figure 22 Intersection of disciplines of the research (Torelli)

This study is driven by a constructivist epistemology, which aims to link phenomena with general theoretical discourses. This study follows that empirical reality and theoretical concepts mutually construct themselves (Given, 2008). Both qualitative and phenomenological research are used in the chosen case study, and I aim to develop a theory for dissonances related to visual integrity in World Heritage rural landscapes.

The practice of heritage conservation, as structured in a classification system of ordering and cataloging, is a product of modernity (Harrison, 2013). An understanding of modernity and its cultural ideology is fundamental to understanding the phenomenon of heritage conservation. To give a rough definition of the evolution of modernity, the early modern period can be found in the 16th and 17th century, the modern era in the late 18th and 19th century, and the (post)modern, from the 20th century until today (Graham *et al.*, 2000). Nation states began forming in late 18th century Europe.

These new nations needed to legitimize themselves through the celebration of a glorious past, or what Hobsbawm described as “the invented tradition” of the nation state (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). From that moment in history, the past was understood as “a different realm”, a “foreign country”, one radically different from the present (Lowenthal, 1985). This nation-building era also birthed the philosophy and practice of heritage preservation. The idea of heritage preservation is based on the differentiation of the present and the past, the definition of the former in contrast to the latter.

This period is a crucial moment for heritage studies. An additional explanation is needed so that the differences between heritage preservation, heritage conservation, and heritage studies, can be better understood. Ashworth defines preservation, conservation, and heritage as “approaches to the past in the present through the built environment.” Furthermore, Ashworth believes that all these approaches still survive to this day, either mixing with or in conflict with practice and academic debate. As Fig.23 shows he places the development of heritage preservation at around 1900, the development of heritage conservation at around 1960, and the birth of the heritage studies field at around 1980 (Ashworth, 2011).

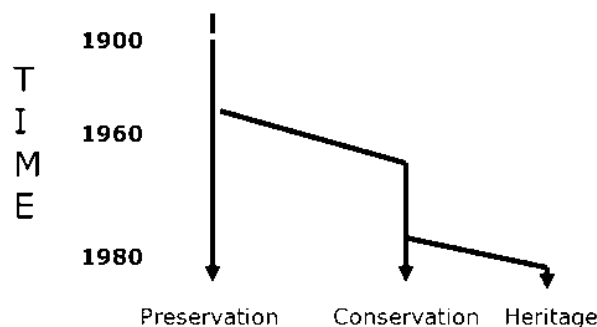


Figure 23 Development of the three approach through time (Ashworth, 2011)

Towards the end of the 19th century, the rapid pace of industrialization and loss of natural landscapes may have given intellectuals of the time the idea that “time passes, and we forget everything” (Harrison, 2013, p.26). This fear is at the very core of the preservation approach. This approach can be defined as the belief that physical traces of the past have an intrinsic value and therefore must be preserved “as authentic documents of the past” (Rajagopalan, 2012, p.309), in particular, by keeping their original conditions intact. This approach was tied to the aims of the 19th century liberal education movement, which emphasized the importance of educating the public about their civic and national duties as moral responsibilities (Smith, 2006).

In 1877, the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings was formed by William Morris. Later, in 1904, the Sixth international Congress of Architects was founded, and in 1931, the Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, held in Greece, began to set the standards for ancient building preservation. Several approaches were developed during this period. These included the idea “protect the historic building from harm” by “preserving it as found,” which was supported by John Ruskin and William Morris of England, and also by Eugene Viollet-le-Duc of France’s idea of “the total replication of what has been completely lost”. Both these approaches considered heritage resources as something to be kept but not used, existing in strict opposition to the needs of the present (Ashworth, 2011, pp. 1-8).

As well as the standardization and internationalization of conservation practice, the World Heritage phenomenon is also related to an increasingly shared need for international agreement on the protection of cultural heritage during war. Following the plundering of the Napoleonic wars, the 1899 Hague Convention defined a legal framework to establish protection for historic buildings during conflict. Again, after World War II, the destruction of cultural heritage was further defined as a crime against humanity in the context of the Nuremberg trials. The institutionalization and development of preservation practices during the last century were related to a consciousness of the permanent “loss of values” that happened, in particular, due to the two World Wars. The industrial revolution which occurred in this same time period, also influenced conservation practice. The Venice Charter was published in 1964, following the destruction of World War II and the messy urban development of the 1960s.

Jokiletho states that the 1964 Venice Charter was the first international document to employ authenticity as a fundamental criterion for classifying monuments as heritage (as cited in Rajagopalan, 2012). The internationalization of the European preservation discourse centered around the idea of authenticity, was also at the core of the World Heritage Convention, which was ratified in 1972 and defined as the “most visible international achievement of the modern movement in the conservation of cultural heritage” (Jokiletho, 2008, p.1). Even today, the concept of authenticity is operationalized in the conservation of values through national bodies of laws. This is evidenced by international policies from institutions such as UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM, that aim to control and predict how physical features in our contemporary built environments change.

By expanding its concern from buildings to cities, the preservation approach inevitably generates friction through the question of use. This, according to Ashworth, is the difference between the preservation and conservation approaches. Preservation does not address questions of use, while conservation aims to integrate the historic city and its need for contemporary urban development. This implies choices or solutions, such as “the adaptive reuse” (Ashworth, 2011). Conservation matters are also part of policy objectives, such as urban renovation, revitalization, renewal, and urban regeneration. However, the preservation approach is traditionally in conflict with these issues.

The heritage approach is another significant approach used to interpret the use of the past in the present. According to this approach, heritage is not simply a technical matter of material culture management, but a medium used by actors to go beyond heritage objects themselves. According to MacDonald, critical heritage studies looks at how some objects become heritage because of this process (MacDonald, 2013).

Scholars view heritage as a meta-cultural operation consisting of conservation, legislation, listing, reorganizing landscapes, validating certain social groups, ownership, an emphasis on a past, and the exclusion of others. It is therefore important to examine how conservation works, including how “historical consciousness on the ground” is expressed, and how people organize non-institutional heritage in space and time (Mac Donald, 2013). Scholars in the field agree that while “relics are mute, they require interpretation to voice their reliquary role” (Lowenthal, 1985, p. 243), and that intrinsically valuable heritage resources do not exist. Heritage is a social construction, and the *heritage question* focuses on how this construction takes place. According to De Cesari, heritage studies researchers must

look at the subtle politics of everyday life. They must see how politicians are “talking about and organizing the relation between people and aspects of their environments” (De Cesari, 2012, p. 400).

Experts often mask the heritage’s political nature with technical concerns about management, or by employing a purely technical language. The main lines of questioning used to unmask heritage’s political nature, are about how we use the past in the present and for what purposes. In other words, “how is such a selection made, who makes it, on what criteria, and based on what authority?” (Ashworth, 2011, p.12). Other related questions are, “who owns heritage, who is involved in its nomination and management, which ideological perspectives do management schemes have on culture?” (De Cesari, 2012, p.15).

Critical heritage studies scholars also address the critique of power asymmetries in heritage management by analyzing the linguistic repertoire of international institutions, such as UNESCO and ICOMOS, to outline how they use the word heritage in certain ways to create hegemony ideas. This includes an evaluation of the “Authorized Heritage Discourse” (Smith, 2006). To this end, international conservation, being based on international law, is often seen as a normalizing discourse that forms “subordinate identities” for those who are not part of the authorized discourse (Butler, 2002). These critical approaches also include the revision of concepts used in heritage preservation and conservation, specifically the assessment of methodologies and heritage planning tools.

If we also consider that heritage experts understand heritage as a property and generally objectified through monuments, it is important to break this idea down by examining practices and processes, in order to uncover the “heritagization” behind these objects. In a European context, and as is slowly developing all over the world, heritage is usually aesthetically pleasant, is about materiality and values, and can be visited, and commodified. (Macdonald, 2013). Often the aesthetic aspects are used to hide conflicts or power asymmetries: as heritage means ownership, it implies the possibility of conflicts between social groups with claims upon the same heritage objects.

The implicit idea of this critical position is that the World Heritage Convention should be a space for free discussion, cross-cultural dialogue, and the expression of diversity. The World Heritage Convention should provide a space for authorities and inhabitants to

negotiate the meanings of heritage.

In the present sub-chapter, I described the differences between conservation, preservation and the heritage approach. I have also explained that I observe the process of World Heritage Conservation through the heritage approach, by looking at issues of social inclusion, and democracy, as well as social sustainability. In the next subchapter, I will introduce the concept of *heritage scale*.

3.2 Heritage scale as a concept: World and local scale

The concept of scale will be introduced in this chapter. For the specific context studied in this research, this refers to both the World Heritage scale and the local scale. I interpret the global and the local scale in heritage governance, as localization because the globalization trends in Europe and Italy are weakening the national scale. Moreover, both the scales under consideration refer to different social groups with different claims upon the same heritage: ICOMOS experts on one side, and local inhabitants and institutions on the other.

According to Harvey, “if we are to understand how heritage works, we must examine what scale does, and how heritage and scale interact” (Harvey, 2015, p. 579). Graham augments this by explaining how scales tend to produce dissonance because “heritage developed at different levels may not be complementary and harmonious, any scale having the potential to undermine other levels” (Graham, *et al*, 2000, p.180). We tend to consider scale in terms of organized hierarchies, as the natural order of governance systems, but these are often formatting power behaviors and dynamics of empowerment of disempowerment between actors (Lähdesmäki *et al.*, 2019).

As Brenner suggests, scales, such as the global, the national, the regional and the local, are not inert containers organized in concentrically or hierarchically. But they are social processes intertwined in constant “superimposition and interpenetration” (Brenner, 2000, p.369). Although Brenner refers to political economy rather than heritage governance, his interpretation of scale can be employed to understand heritage governance systems. I understand scales as processes of nationalization, regionalization or localization.

If we consider the nationalization phenomenon in developing countries, heritage studies scholars often criticize the national scale’s hegemony over the local scale. This is evidenced by the cases of national governments requesting expropriation processes or using heritage to legitimize national narratives by erasing local peculiarities.

I argue that, in Europe today, and especially in the context I am studying, the national scale’s role in heritage is becoming weaker. Harrison reflects on this point, writing about how our time, late modernity, is characterized by the “erosion of the nation state” (Harrison, 2015, p.297). This weakening or erosion, of the nation state is a contemporary process of heritage governance scale re-organization. To understand this process more fully, I will

refer to Brenner's idea of *rescaling*. This idea expresses the transformation of the state-controlled, hierarchical, Fordist-Keynesian scalar system from the 1970s onward.

In this sense, the contemporary scalar system is much less controlled by the state. The scales are no longer organized in a hierarchy, and the process of rescaling involves three interrelated processes. One, the decentralization of the nation state's power; two the loss of the fixed order of scales; and three, the rise of new, supranational forms of governmentality and subnational production cores (Brenner, 2000). Therefore, rescaling is a trend toward globalization and localization. If we also understand heritage as a production process, exactly the same rescaling process can be observed in the heritage domain.

The ratification of the World Heritage Convention and the increasing control of heritage matters by global, non-governmental institutions, such as ICOMOS and UNESCO, is part of the heritage globalization phenomenon (Harrison, 2015). The World Heritage phenomenon, or the increasing inscription of landscapes into the UNESCO World Heritage List around the world, is driven by universal narratives and strategies but takes place in and is implemented by policies in local contexts.

The implementation of the World Heritage Convention aims to protect the diversity of geographically and culturally located sites against globalization, but its modalities are based on universal, global values (Tramontana, 2012). Several scholars have observed that by setting conservation standards to be implemented all over the world, the Convention forces non-monumental cultures to adopt a Western understanding of heritage (Smith, 2006; Harrison, 2013; Graham *et al.*, 2000).

According to Elliott and Schmutz, one of the main concepts of the World Heritage Convention, that of Outstanding Universal Value, is based on the assumption that "particular national treasures can have value for, and require protection from, anyone around the world (not just local residents)" and the idea that heritage is "a common, universal heritage of creative human achievements to which all cultures or societies can potentially contribute" (Elliott & Schmutz, 2012, p.259). The idea that national treasures have value for people all over the world and that a common universal heritage exists, both legitimizes the World Heritage experts' work in implementing conservation schemes and sets global standards at World Heritage Sites.

Jokilehto states that values are “social associations of qualities to things” (Jokilehto, 2006, p.5), produced through progressive social awareness. He believes that in this globalizing world, values are not just the concern of local communities but are becoming universal. Therefore, the role of the World Heritage Convention is to ensure the protection of these values’ specificities. The concept of universal and outstanding value is at the very foundation of the World Heritage Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972.

Values, according to Jokilehto (2008), can differ or be in a range including historical, artistic, aesthetic, scientific, ethnological and anthropological. *Outstanding* means that “in comparison with the generally documented cultural heritage they belong to the very best”, while “universal means that these outstanding values can be acknowledged as such in general and worldwide” and that “mankind as a whole” feels responsible for their protection and conservation (Jokilehto, 2006).

Based on these ideas, new forms of authority have developed, such as the UNESCO advisory body, ICOMOS. These organizations are not legitimized by a body of laws but have an increasingly large say about the rules and standards of behavior in heritage conservation. Paradoxically, the World Heritage Convention has produced an expert system that moves between heritage sites, works with technocratic bureaucracies and is increasingly distant from local knowledge (Van der Ploeg, 2006). Indeed, experts are constantly moving from one country to another to carry out assessments, evaluations and prepare state of conservation reports, to ensure that universal values are conserved everywhere according to the same global set of rules.

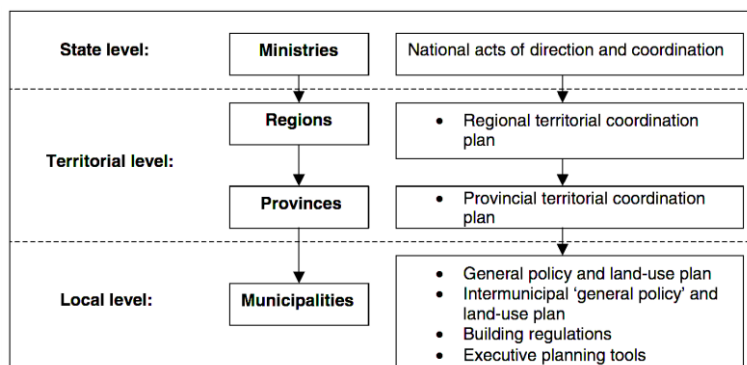
English, as a common language, allows this machine to run but this can easily lead to simplification or the elimination of significant linguistic nuances across cultures and between legal traditions. The consequences of the differences between the global and the local scale therefore deserve a “careful inquiry in the way heritage is described, named and managed” (Bortolotto, 2012, p.405). Because of these weaknesses and contradictions, conflicts can easily arise when the Convention is implemented in local contexts, or due to assessments by ICOMOS experts.

Heritage is, therefore, globalizing on the one hand and localizing on the other. Especially with the rise and increasing power of mass cultural tourism which has been growing since

1970s, subnational institutions such as private heritage entrepreneurs, have started to play an important role in the heritage industry (Hewison, 1987). This is especially true in the Italian context, where heritage is becoming a matter of business, of enterprises' ability to take charge of the enormous restoration and maintenance costs of the historic built environment. The localization in the empowering of local authorities, can be seen as a consequence of decentralizing heritage governance, and in local authorities' tendency to act as entrepreneurs by using heritage for local priorities. This trend can be defined as the "rediscovery of locality as an answer to international modernism" (Graham *et al.*, 2000, p.219).

The Italian case is a good example in this context. According to Donato, the Italian heritage management system is based on a "new public management" approach. This means that the local heritage institution works alone, as a single private company (Donato and Gilli, 2011). The Italian heritage and urban planning systems are decentralized: rural areas are often transformed at the municipal scale, or even at the private scale. The local municipal scale has a fundamental role in planning and heritage conservation. It is also the level closest to the population, especially in rural villages, and therefore also susceptible to pressure from the population or individual citizens. The framework of the Italian planning system, or a municipality's level of administrative responsibility, is presented in the following diagram, Tab.2. Despite the important role of regions in landscape planning and conservation, land use and planning functions are still relegated to municipalities, resulting in a range of different trends within one region.

Table 2 Scales in the Italian planning system (Gazzola, Caramaschi, et al., 2004)



The nation state is slowly losing its control of heritage and becoming merely an institution to allow the interplay of two forces: The legitimization of ICOMOS experts' roles on local heritage matters, and private institutions' deployment of heritage functions. In the postmodern time of decentralization and an overall weakening sense of nation, heritage governance is being both globalized and localized simultaneously.

The second reason why I do not consider the national scale in the study of scale dissonance, is that Italy does not have a national rural landscape. Rural landscapes are often representative of the nation. In English, the word *countryside* encompasses the *country*, as a symbol of England as a state. According to Graham and Ashworth, the rural landscape is very potent in the national imaginary of countries like England and the USA. But, in the Italian context, any attempts to delineate a "Italian rural landscape idea failed", probably due to a lack of nationalism.

Scholars suggest that there are multiple interpretations of Italian "ruralness" which can be found in different regional contexts (Graham *et al.*, 2000, p.61). Italy is composed of internationally known, regional landscapes. Of them, the Veneto region's rural landscape has an established "universal value", as the influence of the "Palladianism" architectural style can be seen in Western Europe, North America, Russia, and in colonial architecture all over the world. The local scale I am working with encompasses the scale of the region and its several municipal localities.

Once again, local or global scales are never a given, but are about different social groups which far from working together in a harmonious way, are engaged in a continuous struggle to define themselves. The way a site is understood and controlled through its nomination as World Heritage is usually very different from how it is understood by its inhabitants or local institutions. There is always conflict between heritage scales surrounding the questions: whose heritage? or which heritage values? (Lähdesmäki *et al.*, 2019). According to Delaney and Leitner, we can see the emergence of scale in the heritage conservation domain in "the fusion of ideologies and practices" (Delaney & Leitner, 1997, p.94).

The World Heritage phenomenon easily leads to dissonance. In fact, at the time of its inscription in the list, a given World Heritage Site's conservation system and its regulations necessarily overlap with previous heritage production processes with different rules. Here, I am not mean the conflict between international and national conservation rules, which are

actually quite similar in this specific case study, but rather the dissonance between two different ways of physically defining and experiencing heritage.

I argue that the global scale is often used by social actors, such as ICOMOS experts, to exert power on lower level social groups by fostering cultural elitism, a narrative of classes, or social exclusion, in an attempt to create harmonious, homogenous, hegemonic landscapes. A landscape without dissonance, or a harmonious landscape, is one where the dimensions of global experts and local users coincide. This is a landscape where there is no space for difference, discussion, negotiation, or interpretation.

Therefore, dissonance of scale is a quality of heritage. It is a positive outcome, the creative force of local social groups that gives voice to alternatives. In this research, I will study the conflict between the experts' discourse expressed in the ICOMOS conservation standards implemented in the case study, and the way inhabitants approach the making of heritage. My theoretical position will be described in the next chapter.

3.3 Theoretical position

At this point, I will describe my position at the epistemological level, explain why I am using a Marxist author, and my position in the contemporary theoretical debate in heritage studies.

I propose that a rural heritage landscape is not something inert or given, but a production process constructed by several actors. The heritage production process is often carried out by one actor for consumption by other actors. The theory of the Marxist philosopher, Henry Lefebvre, is well suited to describing how the rural landscape is produced as heritage. Rather than attempting to have a fixed definition, I consider the rural heritage landscape as a "becoming ontology": its components are in continuous change and interrelation (Gray, 2014, p.18).

By using a becoming ontology, my theoretical perspective is close to postmodernism. this might be interpreted as contradictory because I am also adopting Lefebvre's theories. Marxism and postmodernism are different forms of critical inquiry: Marxism is based on a progressive vision of history, or the belief that knowledge and science can liberate us, and that knowledge is uniform (Butler, 2002, p.13), while postmodernism arose from French intellectuals' disenchantment with Marxism after World War II. These intellectuals denied

Marxism's meta-narratives and overall totalizing explanations. Instead, they believed that knowledge and culture were processes not uniform ideas, and that the world was about "multiplicity, ambiguity and ambivalence" (Gray, p.18, 2014). Furthermore, they were not interested in political affiliations (Butler, 2002, p.15).

The power asymmetries which are the focus of this work, are not merely related to economic or commodification issues, they are related to the legitimization of certain local cultural institutions through ideologies and elitist narratives. In this sense, I am distancing myself from the Marxist focus on economic differences between classes. Although I am studying an increasingly wealthy middle class, I will not consider the entanglement of economic differences with heritage production.

By distancing myself from a radical Marxist position, my research is able to consider the cultural production of the rural heritage landscape without necessarily seeing it as the result of economic material production relationships (Cosgrove D., 1984). It will consider how economic relationships shape cultural ones, and vice versa, and how no cultural production can be explained by ideology alone because it is exclusively related to a specific local context. Therefore, I am aligning myself with postmodernism, namely its attention to local narratives and refusal to propose meta-solutions to societal problems or any form of political affiliation, and instead supporting "small scale local reforms" (Butler, 2002, p.49).

The work of postmodernists is very much about the deconstruction of discourse and based on the idea that there is not necessarily a strong correlation between language and reality (Cilliers, 2012). Postmodernists deny the "normalizing" discourses of law, science, and history as being produced by institutions. They believe that the "cultural production of institutions is just about legitimation of their power and not about the advancement of collective knowledge" (Butler, 2002, p.8).

Postmodernists use the deconstruction of dichotomies as the potential for creating new knowledge: they generally unpack binary oppositions, for example, the urban-rural, body-mind, or nature-culture binaries, to show how two such concepts are interdependent. The way postmodernism views the institutions' cultural production may be particularly suitable for the study of World Heritage, especially regarding an aesthetic judgment, which is often at the very core of cultural heritage management. Postmodern approaches in heritage studies are quite well established in theory and methodology.

Waterton and Watson define heritage theory's development during the last thirty years, as a shift from theory *in* heritage to theory *of* heritage. *Theories in heritage* refers to a set of reflections related to practical heritage conservation issues, developed primarily by disciplines that focus on material culture. These include architecture or archeology. They believe that these theories consider heritage as a "system of production and a method of display," and that they are developed around concepts, such as authenticity, identity, commodification, and community, in order to inform heritage practice without addressing "the heritage question" (Waterton and Watson, 2013, p.550). In contrast, *theories of heritage* are different; they address the "heritage question." This posits the idea that heritage is a cultural process, used as an instrument of power, and can be studied through the analysis of discourses.

I am convinced that the current postmodern approach to heritage studies is vital to its development as an overall discipline. But this also tends to disregard the potential of a more in-depth study of material culture. I argue that the study of material culture is a very effective way of unfolding hidden discourses and related power asymmetries. According to Harrison, critical discourse analysis can also be done with objects and behaviors, to take the "material effects" of heritage discourses into consideration (Harrison, 2013, p.112).

Consequently, as I am considering the material effects of discourses, and looking at material culture instead of language, I am closer to the Marxist approaches. Discourses, or certain cultural representations of heritage which are supported by cultural institutions, shape the physical environment through certain choices made during conservation projects, such as rural renovation, restoration, renewal, and regeneration. I think that objects have an impact on our experiences, not of themselves but because they are produced in accordance with certain heritage ideologies and representations of cultural heritage. For instance, at a World Heritage Site, the experts' discourse may be concretized in the way the site's physical boundaries are defined or how objects are displayed. This tells us a lot about how this social group views heritage. I believe the study of material culture can be used to enrich the ontological debate about heritage.

Discourses embedded in the physical environment, shape the experience of the people who live at, visit, or use these sites. The way the physical environment is shaped inevitably influences our way of remembering our *memory experiences*. Universal ideas of rural

heritage landscapes are implemented and concretized through conservation projects, and by exercising power over the experience lived by the site's inhabitants at the local scale. In the next subchapter, I will describe my interpretation of Lefebvre's production theory.

3.4 The production of the (rural) space

The process of rural heritage landscape production will be observed through a re-interpretation of Lefebvre's theory. Lefebvre's late works and those of his pupil Halfacree, are fundamental to the consideration of the role played by material culture in the heritage phenomenon; they shed light on the conflicts between heritage experts and the everyday lives of the local inhabitants. Lefebvre's production of space looks at how transformations of space, such as development projects, influence real life social practices. His work has been crucial in social geography, urban sociology, and landscape studies for critically analyzing and theorizing the spatial transformation of cities and landscapes since the second half of the 20th century.

Lefebvre's *contradictory space* (1991, p.292) expresses the idea that space is never neutral, cohesive, or in equilibrium, in terms of how it appears on charts, maps, and urban regulation plans in a representation of Cartesian and Euclidean geometry. According to his theory, space only exists in social relationships characterized by power dynamics. Space is never "neutral," but always underpins social inclusion and exclusion processes. He compares the conflicts between space, as it is represented by experts, planners, and bureaucrats' mental abstractions, and the space directly experienced by its inhabitants, the space of everyday life. Politicians and planners give a physical shape to their abstract imagination of space by implementing projects in an attempt to control social practices. Although development projects attempt to regulate social practices, oftentimes it is not possible to regulate how people actually live and carry out social practices.

I want to point out a very similar process that is happening in conservation projects, particularly in the actions of ICOMOS and other heritage experts who are attempting to control World Heritage landscapes. World Heritage's conservation practice is obviously not about constructing new development projects such as new infrastructures or new shopping malls, but it can be about regulating or limiting public access, about transforming landscapes into processes of *value of exchange* through tourism, and also about the

concretization of certain heritage discourses through the conservation of certain chosen aspects of the past.

Furthermore, this can also be applied to dimensions of rural space. The diagram below, Fig.24, shows Halfacree's theoretical model of space production so that the variant interactions between dimensions of rural space can be better understood. The schematic can be explained by Halfacree's interpretation of what Lefebvre calls *perceived*, *conceived*, and *lived* space. Halfacree defines these terms as follows:

- *perceived* space: the rural locality in terms of forms, pattern, topography, i.e. the materiality of rural space,
- *conceived* space: the formal representation of rural space expressed by politicians, planners, and bureaucrats through measurements and economic evaluations,
- *lived* space: the "everyday life of the rural," or an individual's cognitive interpretation of the rural space, as gained through lived experience (Halfacree, 2006, p.51).

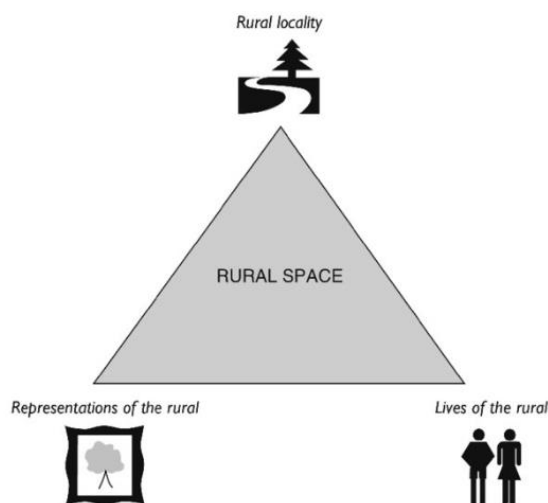


Figure 24 Halfacree's model of rural space (Halfacree, 2006, p.51)

In the second schematic, Fig.25, I have drafted a possible model for transferring the rural space production theory to the domain of rural heritage landscapes. I have interpreted the rural heritage landscape's dimensions as visual representation (*conceived*), materiality (*perceived*), and experience (*lived*). Silva and Mota Santos support a way of translating the theory of space production into the heritage studies domain. The *conceived* space can be

seen as the “abstract or planned spaces of heritage professionals which aims to control spatial practice.” The *lived* space is defined as the “space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols” and is hence “inhabitants” and “users” space (as cited in Silva & Santos, 2012, p.438). Another helpful definition of lived space is proposed by Soja: “the meaning of the spatiality of human life, the way the life take place” (Soja, 2000, p.11).

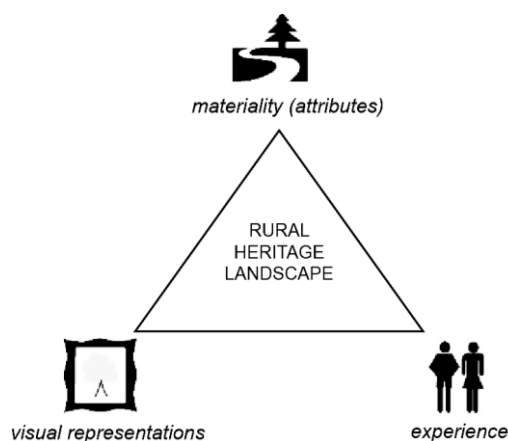


Figure 25 The production of the rural heritage landscape (Torelli)

I am reinterpreting Halfacree’s model in order to explain the production of the rural heritage landscape through the different levels of heritage governance in my case study. Instead of considering only two groups of actors, i.e. the heritage experts who conceive of the rural heritage landscape and the inhabitants who directly experience it, I will also consider another group. This group will consist of those who are responsible for the implementation of conservation measures and projects in the World Heritage site conservation domain. In other words, a third group that is responsible for shaping the materiality of the site.

When a rural heritage landscape is listed as World Heritage, experts identify the values for listing, and monitor and assess the modalities used by local institutions to take care of these values. In the last decade, in several assessment reports regarding field visits to the World Heritage site of my case study, ICOMOS experts have stated that two main trends can be observed among the twenty-four villas: some villa settings are still valuable, while others have lost their value due to “unappropriated development” (Basili *et al.*, 2016). “Unappropriated development” refers to the suburbanization of the Veneto region’s countryside, based mainly on the diffused small-scale industrialization that occurred from the 1970s onward.

In order to understand how institutions wish to control “the heritage everyday life” through conservation schemes, I will examine two heritage production processes taking place in the two villas’ setting. Here, I am looking at how two different groups, in one case, a cultural heritage institution, and in the other, a local administration, are producing materiality and staging the experience of the social group living at the site. In the first case, the ICOMOS’s visual representation, the materiality and the experience are in accordance with how the villa’s setting is being shaped by following World Heritage ideologies.

In the second case, the materiality and experience are in dissonance with ICOMOS’s visual representation, as local institutions are prioritizing other aspects and shaping the villa’s setting differently. In the second case, the heritage governance is not working because local authorities give inhabitants freedom to construct their homes in the “visual contexts” of the villa. What is considered unappropriated settlement by the experts, is seen differently by the inhabitants.

3.5 Dissonance and harmony

The term *dissonance* in heritage studies derives from the work of Tunbridge and Ashworth, who understand it as an intrinsic quality of heritage (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996). Smith states that, “Heritage is dissonant—it is a constitutive social process about working out, contesting and challenging a range of (...) values and meanings” (Smith, 2006, p.82). Heritage dissonance can relate to different types of issues, from cultural differences, postcolonial issues, religious conflicts, or dissonance between scales. In this research, dissonance is between the local and global understandings of heritage.

As mentioned previously, I see the production of the rural heritage landscape as a process that happens at World Heritage sites; it starts with ICOMOS conservation schemes, continues through their implementation, through local institutions’ conservation projects, and finally concludes with the delivery of an experience that inhabitants and tourists both consume. The production is, or should be, a top-down process in accordance with the original idea of World Heritage sites. By referring to the dynamics of heritage production through governance, I am redefining this theory in order to identify the main differences between the sub-cases under consideration: in the first case, there is a top-down process of heritage production, while in the second, the process is bottom-up.

In some cases, this process happens in a harmonious way. This means that the local institutions *do* follow the recommendations of the ICOMOS experts, and the prescribed experience is delivered to the inhabitants. This is what I describe as harmony in rural heritage landscape production; when the perceived materiality coincides with the visual representation and drives a certain *controlled* experience. In this case, experts might impose a non-negotiable way of understanding and living within the landscape. In other words, the landscape is hegemonic. The following diagram demonstrates that the process begins with the ICOMOS experts and arrives at the inhabitants very harmoniously.

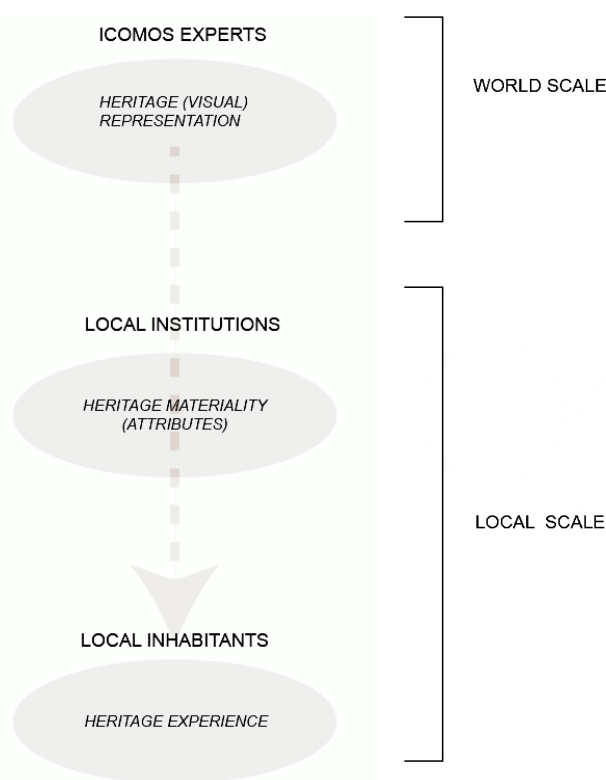


Figure 26 Harmony in the production of the rural heritage landscape (Torelli)

My interpretation and application of Halfacree’s theory allows us to see how conservation institutions are imposing or encouraging certain behaviors and uses of the rural landscape through visual integrity. When a rural heritage landscape is in dissonance, it means that the social groups involved are negotiating new meanings of heritage, either directly or indirectly. Heritage conservation can be seen as a practice which attempts to control social practice and heritage dissonance as a form of resistance to this, or at least the expression of the need for negotiation about its meaning. I want to try to understand why, in the case

of dissonance, people do not care about ICOMOS's evaluation of the values in the setting. They have their own way of understanding the Palladian villa's setting and landscape as heritage. The dissonant process of rural heritage production is represented in the following diagram.

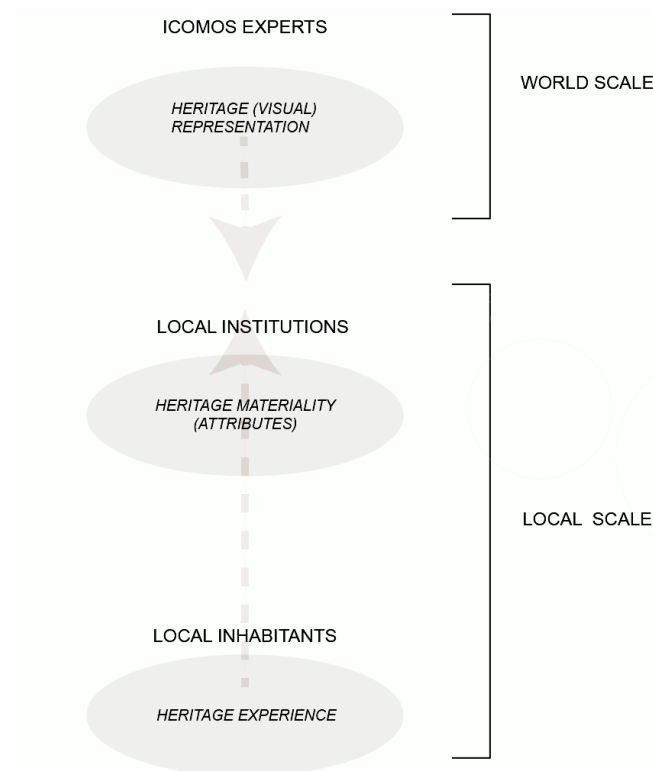


Figure 27 Dissonance in the production of the rural heritage landscape (Torelli)

Villa Saraceno is a harmonic landscape while Villa Caldogno Nordera is dissonant. This difference arises from the different positions taken by local institutions regarding the site's conservation. In the first case, the experts' visual representation is translated into local institutions' conservation projects, and then consumed by inhabitants and tourists. In the second case, the needs of the population have shaped the villa's setting over time, and the local administration has "let them do" so. Therefore, the materiality of the landscape is in dissonance with the ICOMOS experts' visual representations.

If World heritage conservation regulations are not respected, the inhabitants are free to do what they want with their landscape in messy and unplanned ways. For example, constructing their houses in the 'wrong' places, resulting in dissonance. However, in no

way do I want to foster the neoliberal tendencies found in urban planning that do not respect public goods. I will expand on this point in Chapter 5.

I will consider the suburbanization caused by villagers building detached houses located close to the villas, from the 1970s onward, from this perspective and examine them as a way of creating dissonance in an “authorized heritage landscape.” As I will later demonstrate, this could also be interpreted as a form of local, alternative, heritage production. It could enrich the way the landscape is visually represented today. In the following three sub-chapters I will clarify my understanding of visual representation, material attributes, and experience.

3.5.1 Visual representation and visual integrity

In accordance with Lefebvre’s idea of space production, Halfacree defines *conceived rural space* as the space represented by the mental abstractions of the experts, planners, and bureaucrats who attempt to control and regulate the *lived rural space* or the space directly lived in by inhabitants, the space of everyday life. He also believes that this attempt often fails so that conflicts arise between the planners and the inhabitants.

I interpret the ICOMOS experts’ practice as the same attempt to control and regulate. ICOMOS experts define the ways in which local administrations should or should not modify the rural heritage landscape and therefore, also how the inhabitants should live in these places. As World Heritage conservation very often fails, conflicts arise, which I describe as dissonance. The rural heritage landscape is comprised of physical attributes (*perceived space*) and visual representation (*conceived space*). The landscape’s physical features are not meaningful *per se*, but become meaningful because someone or something, such as a social group or a society, gives them value through cultural (visual) representations (Tramontana, 2007).

In this research, I consider *visual integrity* to mean the way ICOMOS experts define the relationship between physical attributes and visual representation. I use *visual representation* to mean what the ICOMOS experts think the landscape should look like in order to conserve its historical and aesthetic value. The landscape’s visual conservation is about the selection and maintenance of certain attributes that are valued as heritage. The

selection implies that while certain attributes are maintained, others must be removed, because they are deemed “inappropriate”.

ICOMOS experts identify visual representations of heritage landscapes in historic pictures or images, to evaluate the current state of conservation and detect possible negative changes. The protection of attributes, the tangible manifestation of heritage’s visual representation, is at the very core of the 1972 World Heritage Convention. Together with the aesthetic enhancement and physical appearance of sites and cityscapes, it is stated by UNESCO in the 1962 Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding of Beauty and Character of Landscapes and Sites.

Together with the First International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments in Athens, 1931 and the definition of the *Carta del Restauro*, the introduction of ideas, including the aesthetic enhancement and physical appearance of sites, cityscapes, and neighborhoods, laid the foundation for ideas surrounding visual integrity. Since the drafting of the Venice Charter in 1964, visual integrity has been considered a part of the conservation of monuments.

Visual integrity is a “measure of the wholeness, intactness of natural or cultural heritage and its attributes” (Craith, 2012, p.62). According to Jokilehto, visual integrity ensures the conservation of natural or cultural heritage’s “iconic image”, whereby “examining the conditions of integrity requires assessing the extent to which the property includes all elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value” (Jokilehto, 2008, p.5). Jokilehto asserts that in order to distinguish between authenticity and integrity, we should understand that “authenticity is related to heritage as a qualifier, while integrity is referred to the identification of the functional and historical condition of the site” (Jokilehto, 2006). Furthermore, “the concept of a historic monument embraces not only the single architectural work but also the urban or rural setting in which is found the evidence of a particular civilization, a significant development or a historic event” (Jokilehto, 2006).

The practice of visual conservation is often based on the assessment of impacts on pre-defined values and thresholds, and therefore, often lies in the field of environmental impact assessment. In this process, heritage practitioners measure the visual impacts of urban developments by comparing projects as rendered on postcards, ancient paintings, and

historical photos. They then state the project's level of impact and make a recommendation to the local administration to modify or to stop it.

A visual impact assessment is based on the idea that the risk of losing an attribute makes the heritage resource vulnerable, as it has a potential for a loss of cultural values. The vocabulary used is about the prediction of risks or threats, *vulnerability*, and *exposure*. This terminology was described by Harrison as one of the outcomes of a modern society obsessed with the idea of risk and which identifies the only solution as relying on the *expert system* (Harrison, 2013). Visual impact assessments are then implemented as a form of analytical reasoning that is extremely limiting when speaking about complex concepts such as landscape, heritage, rural, urban, space, and place shaped by the relationship between social groups and their environment. Often assessments are “processes using indicators manuals and checklist in order to reduce human judgment” (Dahler-Larsen P., 2018, p.882) instead of a “contextualized argumentative practice” (Ibid.). This might demonstrate what Lefebvre describes as the experts' way of constructing the rural landscape according to analytical reason and subordinating it to finality (Lefebvre, 2006).

ICOMOS experts tend to consider landscape as a purely objectified field of analysis. The ICOMOS guide for heritage impact assessments at World Heritage sites emphasizes the importance of preserving *visual links* or identifying *negative impact* or *sensitive viewpoints* (Roders, 2012, p.3). Heritage experts often state that “every judgement should always be supported by clear evidence” (Wilson, 2002, p.5).

According to ICOMOS experts, if a development project could potentially change a conserved view, this is “a serious threat” and “harms the sensitive landscape” (Basili, *et al.*, 2016). The idea of visual integrity is, therefore, a strict boundary between the visual representation of the landscape and its related material attributes. I believe that the potential for dissonance of scale, namely between the international heritage professionals and the local communities, is very high in World Heritage rural landscapes that are conserved for their visual aspects.

Physical attributes that convey heritage values are protected from change or harm through conservation schemes. The two main components of the rural landscape according to World Heritage conservation are illustrated in this schematic: the material attributes and the related valued visual representation. In the first diagram, Fig.28, these are joined

together, indicating that the way the landscape has been conserved respects visual integrity. In other words, the landscape in this example has not been transformed.

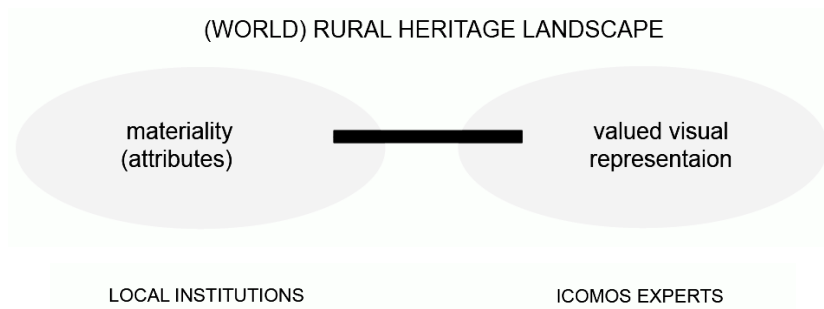


Figure 28 Materiality and visual representation should coincide in the visual integrity idea (Torelli)

Tempesta's work in the following illustration demonstrates how visual conservation assessment normally works. Tiziano Tempesta attempted to define the features of the Veneto countryside in the late Renaissance by a careful analysis of representations of the environment found in paintings of the time (Tempesta, 2014). After identifying elements that might be have been represented with the aim of a realistic representation, he compared these pictures with contemporary photographs of Veneto's agrarian landscape in order to understand its transformation. An example is shown in Fig.29. where we can see that in both pictures the Monte Berico in the backdrop ist clearly visible.



Figure 29 Comparison between *Madonna of the Meadow*, Bellini and the surrounding of Villa Saraceno (Tempesta, 2014)

This second schematic, Fig.30, represents the case where the landscape has not been conserved as it *should* have been. This means that some attributes may have been lost and new *unappropriated elements*, such as the construction of houses, may have been added. In other words, the landscape has been intensively transformed.

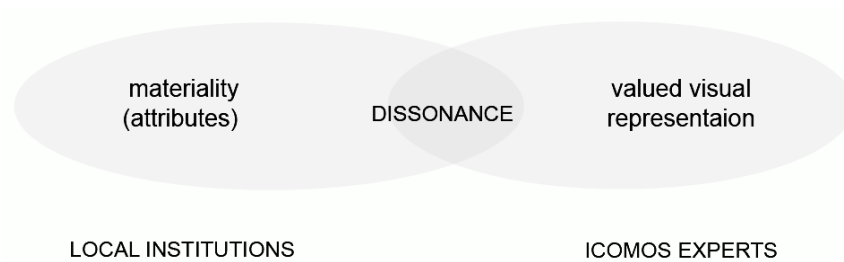


Figure 30 When materiality and visual representation do not coincide dissonance arise (Torelli)

In the picture, Fig.31, part of a recent ICOMOS Heritage Impact Assessment, we see the view from the Villa Rotunda in the historic city of Vicenza. Experts have indicated the area that a new building project might occupy by drawing a red square. In this way, they can predict and evaluate how the view from the villa over the landscape would be compromised in terms of visual integrity. In this way, they can predict and evaluate how the view from the villa over the landscape would be compromised in terms of visual integrity. In this case, the homogeneity of the landscape features might be compromised, as among the many rooftops of bricks a new element mainly in concrete will change the scale of the settlement.



Figure 31 Identification of the potential visual impact of the foreseen projects (Basili, et al., 2016)

According to World Heritage conservation, the studied landscape's management plan is based on the idea of *visual integrity*. Historic research using analysis of paintings shows how the landscape used to look, where certain kinds of crops and trees were visible, and where there was a particular arrangement of streets and paths. According to ICOMOS experts and regional experts, visual integrity in this case study is a composition of the

attributes that frame the villa's windows, extending to its gardens and landscape. The experts contend that the visual integrity of the Palladian villa's landscape should be as similar as possible to the landscape that could have been seen from the lodge of a Palladian villa during the late Renaissance. This perspective has been in place since the first half of the last century (Tempesta, 2014).

Once the cited elements and their compositions can no longer be seen from the villa's lodge, experts speak of "loss of visual integrity" and loss of heritage values. The experts suggest that the rural heritage landscape should be very well manicured, free from settlement or urban features, and with the same agrarian features as before mechanization, dating back to the beginning of the last century. According to this idea, the landowner's surrounding former land holdings, although post-productive, should be kept free of new construction, to keep this area as rural as possible, by interpreting *rural* to mean a green void in a suburbanized landscape (Basili, *et al.*, 2016).

3.5.2 Materiality of physical attributes

By materiality, I refer to the tangible manifestation of heritage in the landscape, or more specifically, the *attributes* that can be seen in certain patterns of crops, trees, street designs, and paths. The materiality of landscape attributes is very much about the landscape's appearance. Landscapes change constantly and elements of layers from the past and present are constantly being mixed together. I see the materiality of the landscape in all its elements, those which are valued by the ICOMOS experts as well as those which they consider inappropriate. Different actors understand the physical attributes of landscapes in different ways: the progressive suburbanization of the Palladian villa landscape is not considered inappropriate by its inhabitants.

The ICOMOS experts cannot modify the landscape directly, but they can give the responsible local administration recommendations for actions. So basically, local administration or institutions decide the landscape's appearance. Some of them follow World Heritage conservation trends and give material shape to the landscape's visual representation. In other cases, the local administrations do not follow the ICOMOS experts' visual representation and shape the landscape according to the requests of citizens. In this

case, dissonance arises. The materiality of the Palladian villa landscape is therefore understood and produced in different ways, by different institutions.

3.5.3 Heritage experience

The *experience (lived space)* dimension of the heritage landscape, is about the social practices or performance carried out by the inhabitants at the heritage site. These can be cultural events, everyday life rituals or ceremonial moments. The scale of the villa's setting is crucial to understanding this dimension, because here we can consider physical behaviors. It is assumed that the way a landscape is physically regulated and shaped influences the experience of the place.

The materiality of heritage and its objects are "as actors aiding the public performance of commemoration" (Harrison, 2015 p.165). According to Escobar, research in heritage studies often focuses on discourses. But in order to detect the *sense of place* (Smith, 2006), it should instead look at the inhabitants' use of landscape materiality, or in other words, at the "bodily, place-based, and practical aspects of social life" (Escobar, 2001, p.149). The experience can be grasped "through contemporary interactions with physical places and landscapes" and is very much about "what exactly people 'do'" (Smith, 2006).

Institutional discourses are concretized into the heritage landscape's objects, creating a certain experience, and a certain way of remembering. ICOMOS conservation schemes and the idea of visual integrity define a certain kind of behavior that should take place within the borders of the property. When a landscape is not harmonic, we have a materiality that does not fit the experts' visual representation and might be produced by an experience that is radically different from that which the ICOMOS experts wish to produce. In the next chapter, I will demonstrate how different kinds of heritage landscape materiality can lead to different kinds of heritage experiences, by applying the theory.

In these two chapters, I started by reflecting on the potential for dissonance of scale that arises as soon as rural landscapes becomes World Heritage Sites, and how this dissonance is manifested in the process of heritage production. The three components of the production process have been described as the visual representation, the material attributes, and lastly, as the experience. I then explained how I interpret the rural heritage landscape production process in the context of conservation projects in World Heritage

sites. In the next chapter, I will outline how the theory of the rural landscape and its heritage dissonance informed my methodology of data collection.

4. Methodology: Sampling the local scale

In this chapter, I will explain how the selected theory led to the methodology, and how the methodology will be implemented in order to answer my research questions. This chapter is about the sampling: how I chose the setting of the two Villas, the kind of heritage production processes they represent, where there is *loss of visual integrity*, and how it relates to the region's suburbanization.

4.1 Sub-urbanization and the loss of visual integrity

In this chapter, I will consider how the region's suburbanization has been considered by intellectuals and ICOMOS experts as a loss of visual integrity. This concept of *loss of visual integrity* can be identified in local and international literature regarding the region (Vallerani, 2012; Cosgrove, 2007; Tempesta, 2014; Turri, 2013) and repeatedly during the last decade, in the ICOMOS experts' assessments.

Turri describes the regional suburbanization as the birth of a *Megalopolis* which is destroying the structured countryside and expanding all over the Po Valley (Turri, 2013). The dissonance considered in this research is between World and local heritage, which occurs around the boundaries of the Palladian villa's landscape. If the Palladian villa as a heritage object, is clearly defined for every scale, its landscape is much more contested, easily misrepresented, evanescent, and somehow immaterial. Nevertheless, institutional heritage always needs boundaries so that it can be defined.

The landscape which is included as a World Heritage site, must therefore also be defined by boundaries and protection measures, just like every other heritage object in the UNESCO list. The landscape was recognized as a World Heritage site in 1996. Even then, at the time of the nomination, it was characterized by its "loss of visual integrity" (Basili, *et al.*, 2016) because it had been seriously "compromised" by the last fifty years of urban development. Therefore, although almost all of the villas of the WHS were considered properly conserved, the territorial context was "excluded from the site perimeter" in the nomination report (ICOMOS, 1994).

According to the ICOMOS experts, the landscape's site perimeter included the area surrounding the villa, and beyond that, its garden, which should be maintained in its "rural

character” and “agrarian use” to suggest how the landscape might have looked during the Renaissance (Basili, *et al.*, 2016). These protection areas should ensure that the visual cones surrounding the villa are preserved. These regulations are applied to each villa in the regional site in the same way, and often come into conflict with local usage. In the ICOMOS report, the experts characterize the visual integrity of the villa's landscape as:

“the authenticity and integrity of the villa lies in the system of relations between the villas and their rural landscape” and in the “formal relationship between the villas and the countryside of the Veneto region” (Basili *et al.*, 2016).

Several villas were originally constructed close to villages. Therefore, as soon as the villages expanded, for example through the connection of the car-transport infrastructure to the main urban centers, the areas and the related visual cones, were compromised. — According to ICOMOS experts, some villas’ settings are still valuable. For instance, Villa Emo in Fanzolo, Villa Maser in Maser, or Villa Saraceno in Filiale di Agugliaro. The villa settings where there is “inappropriate development”, are in the villages of Caldogno, Quinto Vicentino and Fratta Polesine. The two typologies are also historically different, with some of them being in almost open countryside, while others are close to villages. Fig.32 shows the UNESCO Management Plan of Villa Badoer and its landscape.

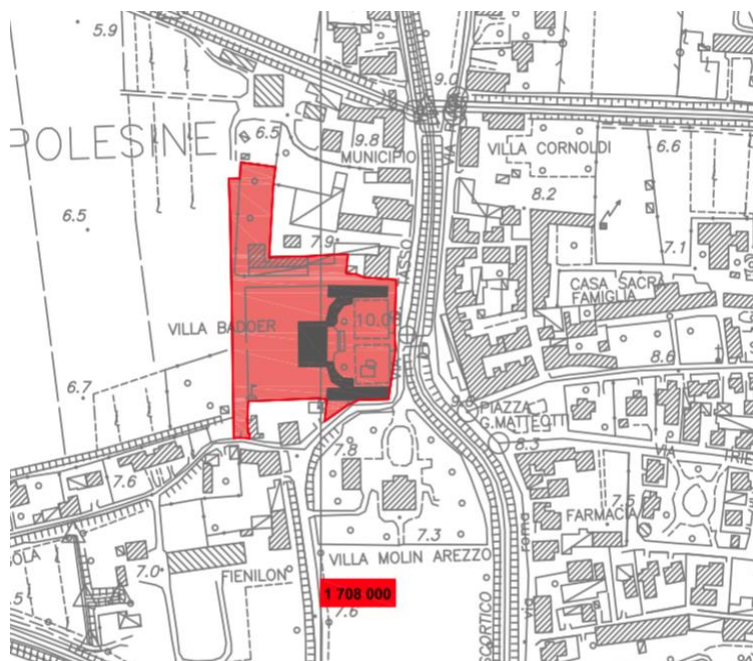


Figure 32 Villa Badoer and its landscape, Fratta Polesine, Rovigo, Management Plan (UNESCO, 2019)

Of course, the villas that were located near to former villages, are more likely to be surrounded by sub-urbanization. During the 1990s, Cosgrove identified that the suburbanization of the Veneto region was putting the integrity of the Palladian landscape at risk. The region's sub-urbanization was the subject of negative aesthetic judgment; it was referred to as formal and functional hybridity and homogeneity, typical of the American suburbs of Las Vegas or Los Angeles (Cosgrove, 2006; 2007). He describes the sprawl or the urbanized countryside, as a loss of the rural landscape's agrarian and ecological structure, together with the spread of a feeling of *placelessness* and the cancellation of the boundaries between rural and urban (Cosgrove, 2004). The sub-urbanization is interpreted as a process that generated a loss of a monumental heritage, unique in the world (Vallerani & Varotto, 2004).

The criticism expressed by intellectuals and ICOMOS experts, is based on the common belief that from the 1970s onward, there has been fast and messy development in this region which was not properly planned by authorities. In the last decade, the ICOMOS experts have stated in several assessment reports, that two main trends can be observed among the twenty-four villas of the "City of Vicenza and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto" World Heritage Site: Some villas' settings are still valuable, while others have lost their value due to "unappropriated development:"

"the condition of the setting and wider context of the World Heritage property is already very vulnerable as a result from increasing urban development pressures. For this reason, the direct and cumulative impacts of the current projects can soon be a serious challenge for maintaining the OUV of the property" (Basili, *et al.*, 2016, p.2)

Some villas have indeed been surrounded by the urbanization process that took place from the 1970s until 2000 (Tempesta, 2014). The ICOMOS reports point out that the landscapes have been completely transformed and traditional land use, historical features, and visual cones have been permanently compromised (Basili, *et al.*, 2016). My work focuses on the setting and surrounding landscapes of two such villas.

According to the experts, these villas are representative of the two trends described above. The Villa Saraceno in Agugliaro, managed by The Landmark Trust, has a setting and landscape which is considered "still valuable." In contrast, the setting and landscape of the Villa Caldogno-Nordera in Caldogno, managed by the local administration, are considered

to have “lost its value” (Basili *et al.*, 2016). The following Figures (33,34,35) show the progressive sub-urbanization from the 19th century through the 1970s, and until today, in the surroundings of Villas Saraceno and Caldogeno, their position among the villas (36) of the World Heritage Site and finally, their level of visual integrity (37,38).

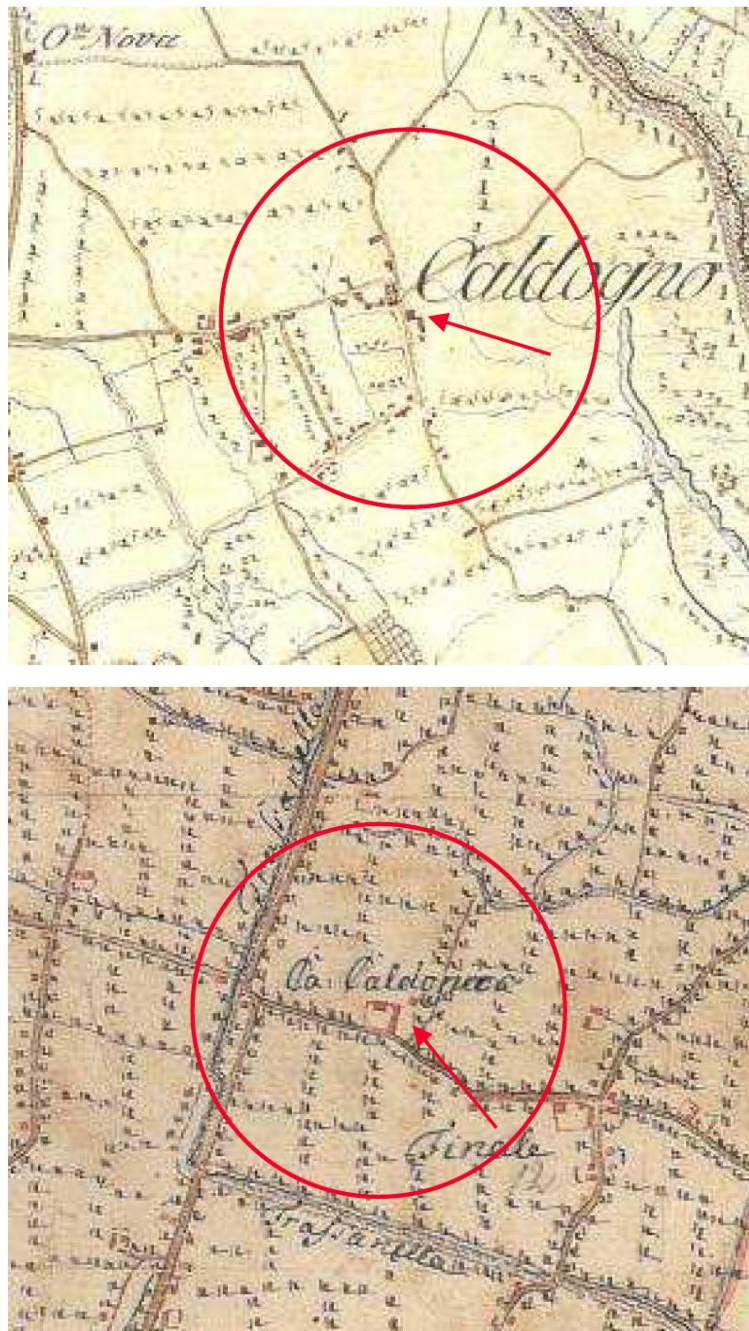


Figure 33 Villa Caldogeno and Villa saraceno (Von Zach, 1805)

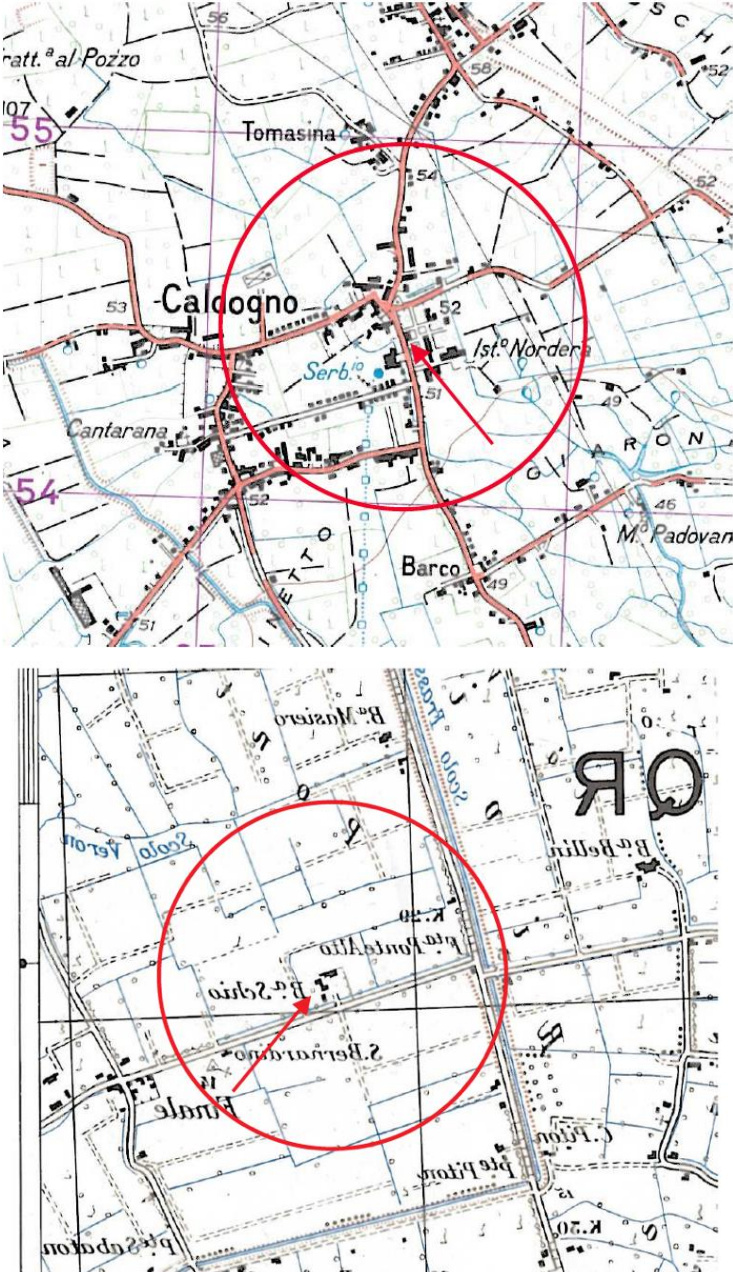


Figure 34 Villa Caldogno and Villa Saraceno, (Italian Geographic Military Institute, 1970)



Figure 35 Villa Caldogno and Villa Saraceno (Maps, 2015)

Scale Dissonances between Local and World Heritage: The Rural Landscape of the Palladian Villa

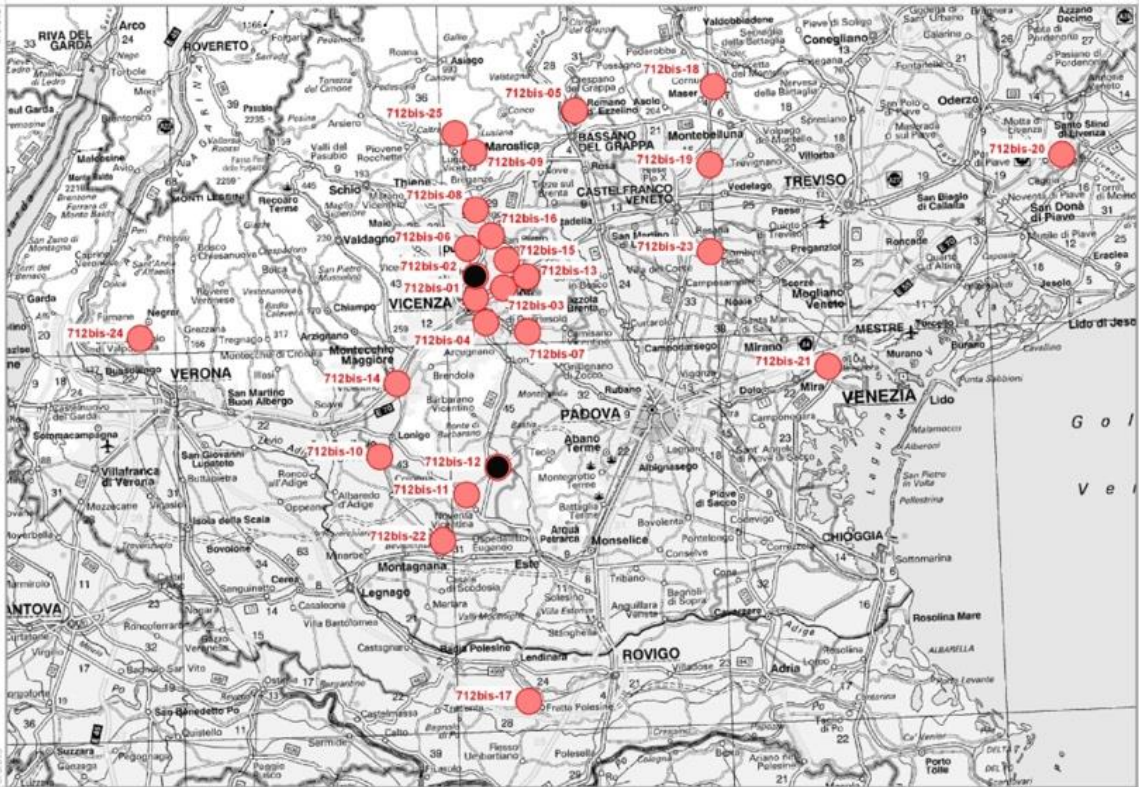


Figure 36 In black at the top Villa Caldogno, Villa Saraceno at the bottom (UNESCO, 1996)



Figure 37 The surrounding landscape of Villa Caldogno (Torelli)



Figure 38 The surrounding of Villa Saraceno (Torelli)

4.2 Framing the research questions

In this subchapter, I will explain how I collected data during my periods of fieldwork and how I have been analyzing and interpreting it. My research methodologies have evolved during the last three years. As I have mentioned, I started my research with some experience in the field. As my theoretical reflections started from observations I made while in the field, I can place the research in the grounded theory approach. Grounded theory is based on a “case-oriented perspective” and according to Glaser and Strauss, “the basic idea of the grounded theory approach is to read a textual database and discover or label categories, concepts and properties and their interrelationships” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Grounded theory was developed originally by Glaser and Strauss with the intention of showing that theories in social science could be “discovered”, as they are for natural science and quantitative methodologies. As I have positioned myself in social constructivism and I do not think that a theory can be “discovered”, I am distancing myself from Glaser and Strauss and instead positioning the research within constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz *et al.*, 2018).

Nevertheless, in both interpretations, grounded theory is about the simultaneous and iterative process of data collection and data analysis; the process is both inductive and deductive, it is about going back and forth between theory generation and data collection analysis. This process continues until saturation is reached, until the interpretation of the phenomenon and the generation of the theory have been completed according to the author’s research question. Mayring defines grounded theory as a form of “stepwise explorative sampling” (Mayring, 2014, p.11).

I used ethnographic work, interviews and observations to collect data. In the meantime, I identified theoretical concepts able to describe what I was observing. I did not have a pre-defined theory when I was working in the field, just some ideas about the literature in heritage and rural studies. When I was working in the field, I saw there was a conflict between the way in which the experts and inhabitants were interpreting the rural landscape as heritage. Returning to the literature, I searched for a theoretical concept which could be used to describe what I had observed, the idea of dissonance. Thereafter, I returned to the field and to the data collection and interpretation. Therefore, I have been constructing a theory which is a very good fit for the phenomenon I was looking at. I have been using theoretical sampling and selective coding for the analysis. Later, I will explain these terms.

The methodological framework I used is represented in the following schematic.

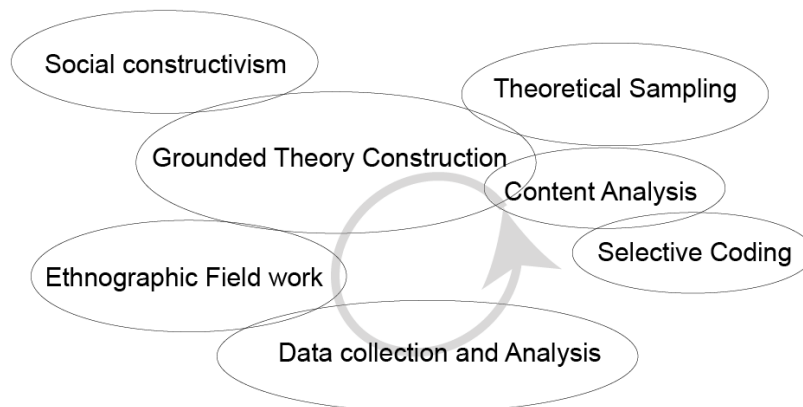


Figure 39 Methodological framework (Torelli)

As Charmaz suggests, in constructivist grounded theory, we should try to use research question based on “how” rather than on “why”, as well as looking at actions instead of topics. For instance, asking “how are actors producing heritage?” instead of only looking at their definitions of heritage. She suggests that if we look at processes instead of notions, we can better understand the complexity of the phenomenon we are looking at, because social structures are created through people’s actions and the repetition of those actions (Charmaz *et al.*, 2018).

As I expected, my sampling was based on the identification of two processes of landscape production: one harmonic and the other dissonant. This is a case of theoretical sampling because it is driven by the theoretical ideas of harmony and dissonance. Regarding the selection of groups and the related actions, I have considered that in the harmonic process ICOMOS is visually representing, the local institutions are materializing and finally, the inhabitants or visitors, are experiencing. In the dissonant process, the inhabitants are visually representing, the local institutions and inhabitants are materializing, and finally, the inhabitants are experiencing. I have articulated two research questions in relation to these two processes. In the case of the Villa Saraceno, I will look at the harmonic production of the rural heritage landscape and I will consider a dissonant production of the rural heritage landscape in the case of the Villa Caldogno. Studying of the Villa Saraceno’s setting in Agugliaro will help me to answer these questions:

- *How is the Villa Saraceno's landscape visually represented and through what attributes?*
- *How is agriculture experienced as heritage, in the Villa Saraceno's landscape?*

I will look at how the ICOMOS experts' visual representation is being translated into The Landmark Trust's conservation project and how the inhabitants experience the site. The following picture shows the process.

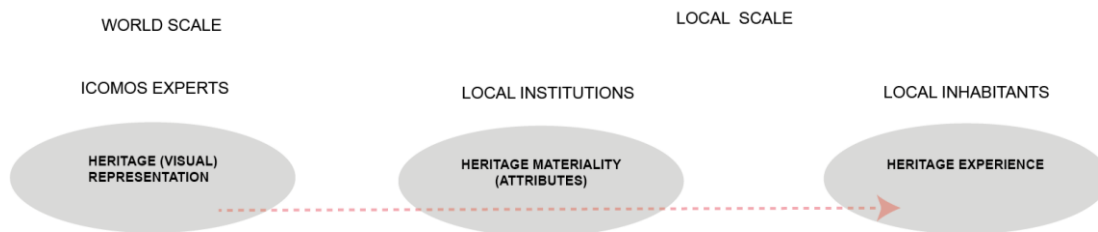


Figure 40 Relationship between ICOMOS's visual representation, materialization by local institutions and inhabitants' experience at the site in the landscape of Villa Saraceno (Torelli)

The second case is that of Villa Caldogno-Nordera in Caldogno, managed by the local administration, which is a case of a heritage production process with dissonance. The purpose of studying this site is to answer these research questions:

- *How is Villa Caldogno's landscape visually represented and through what attributes?*
- *How is agriculture experienced as heritage in the Villa Caldogno's landscape?*

The following picture shows the process.



Figure 41 Relationship between ICOMOS’s visual representation, materialization by local institutions and inhabitants’ experience at the site in the landscape of Villa Saraceno (Torelli)

4.2.1 Ethnographic field work

I have used ethnography in my work but as I have used grounded theory as my methodological framework, ethnography is considered to be a method rather than a methodology in this research. In fact, ethnographic work usually demands much more time in the field, less theorization and more description. Rather than describing, I am generating a theory which is at a very low level of generalization and fits my specific case very well.

Nevertheless, as I have used this method, I will describe my understanding of it. I see ethnography as the process of understanding a social group, and how its culture influences its behavior, together with its shared meanings, and the group’s perspectives about the world (Gray, 2000, p.25). According to Gray, the researcher observes how the group members live and do things, and this requires the researcher to be physically present in the group.

Questions the ethnographer faces include: how are places constructing cultures and how are cultures constructing places? How can power asymmetries or contested cultural values be uncovered? Answers to these questions do not necessarily have to be obtained through interviews, or direct questions about the past, they might be found in discourses about the present or ordinary, everyday life behaviors, as “the past can be performed” and not necessarily told (MacDonald, 2013, p.52).

The function of observing individuals is not any sort of psychological analysis, but rather to understand them as symptoms of the social group to which they belong. According to

MacDonald, the use of ethnographic methods in heritage studies allows us to understand how personal heritage and that of the group, are brought together (MacDonald, 2013).

Ethnographic research tends to be in-depth and on a small scale. It is very much about attempting to look at the experience from the perspective of those experiencing it. The small scale allows for more details and interactions and for becoming familiar with a historical consciousness performed on-the-ground, in contrast to the dominant historical consciousnesses (MacDonald, 2013). I am looking at the “ways in which past events and experiences, perceived, and used and recast today” (Macdonald, 2013, p.55).

Ethnography is about understanding places by studying sociological behaviors and discourses and observing differences in human practices in the “production of space” (Lefebvre, 1991). According to Smith, it is also about looking at “the interlinked relationship between the activities that occur at places and the places themselves” (Smith, 2006, p.83). When ethnography is used to study sites rather than individuals, it is about the “identification of pattern of behaviors and beliefs within a social group which should share the language” (Gray, 2000, p.25).

For instance, in this research I will examine how the past is performed through local institutions’ conservation projects and experienced by inhabitants living at the site, when World Heritage conservation is applied and when it is not. I employ ethnography to understand the relationship between the village’s social groups and its environment. I also use it to see how people represent, materially produce, and experience the past in the present, and how the differences in how it is done by groups at the local scale and at the World Heritage scale, create dissonances.

The unit of analysis is the World Heritage site, which is a system of several villages containing the Palladian villas. I have considered four villas and their settings as sites for investigation:

- Villa Saraceno and its setting.
- Villa Thiene and the village of Quinto Vicentino.
- Villa Badoer and the village of Fratta Polesine.
- Villa Caldogno-Nordera and the village of Caldogno.

I have chosen these villages because I have seen the sites' potential for explaining how the rural landscape's heritage production process happens in a harmonious or dissonant way. They will allow us to clearly identify the social heritage practices within World Heritage regulations that create dissonance.

The picture 42 shows Villa Fornaro in the village of Montecchio Precalcino, which is a Palladian villa considered part of the World Heritage Site. As it is mostly abandoned, there has been no attempt to produce heritage from it, either through conservation projects or any kind of activity. In accordance with the idea that heritage "is only such if there is a project by contemporary society reinterpreting it" (Governata, 2006, p. 22), the abandoned villas have been excluded from this study.



Figure 42 Villa Forni Cerato, Montecchio Precalcino (Torelli)

Although the title of this work refers to the rural landscape of *the* Palladian villa, I recognize that *the* Palladian villa does not exist and that each villa and related landscape that I have explored, has different qualities. Rather than looking at the differences, I have been focusing on the commonalities between them. For example, at the Villa Saraceno, I identified the same patterns of harmonious production and consumption of heritage that I saw at Villa Emo in Agugliaro and Villa Maser in Maser.

Through observations and interviews, I identified certain patterns of symbols, behaviors, and beliefs in the villages of Fratta Polesine and Quinto Vicentino, which I have observed in depth in the case of Caldogno, where the levels of suburbanization, and resultant dissonance, are very high.

My ethnographic work can be divided into two main parts. The first part concerns the realm of World Heritage conservation, its language, its actors' beliefs, their behaviors among themselves and towards "non-expert" actors, and how their ideologies are realized in the local authorities' conservation projects. In the second part of the field work, I have attempted to identify a system of relationships between the inhabitants and their environment. I have been looking at the relationship between the inhabitants' social practices and local administrations' planning. The material collected in this research is the outcome of iterative fieldwork, the consultation of archival and library sources, semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and photo surveys. I participated as an observer at the following events:

- a ten-days workshop exclusively regarding the topic of the Heritage Impact Assessment at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg (16-26 July 2017);
- the scientific symposium of the ICOMOS General Assembly in December 2017 in New Delhi (11-15 December 2017).

Being present at these events was an important moment in the participant observation period of this research. The only way to access a group of people's way of thinking and evaluating, and of fully understanding their world, is to be among them. The ethnographic work in the first case aimed at understanding the group I call the "ICOMOS experts."

According to Smith, this group is a sort of international lobby and I have focused on certain rules and ritual meanings within it, including their shared core ideas about heritage and translating them into practice, or what Smith would call their “professional philosophies” (Smith, 2006, p.90). In this case, ethnography was about the understanding of the idea that created the bond within this group, rather than their relationship with a place. Through these two experiences, the Summer school at BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg and the General Assembly of ICOMOS in New Delhi, I started to understand how World Heritage conservationists think, and how their ideas are operationalized in conservation tools. By understanding the ICOMOS experts’ production of documents by using *categories of analysis* instead of *categories of practice*, I started to identify some of the terms used in visual impact assessments that I wanted to work on, such as *the visual integrity*.

The second part of my ethnographic work covers the local institutions and inhabitants. While speaking with the inhabitants about heritage and landscape conservation, I realized that they tended to tell me what they thought I was expecting to hear, and that they generally repeated what the ICOMOS experts were saying. Having acknowledged that direct interviews might be misleading, I have instead been looking at their behaviors, use of common spaces, and ordinary ritual social practices. This section of the participant observation took place in the context of:

- a workshop with the title “Living with our Heritage”, organized by the University of Ferrara and the Association of the Landmark Trust in Villa Saraceno in Filiale di Agugliaro (25-30 June 2017)
 - in this context, we visited:
 - Villa Poiana in the village of Poiana,
 - Villa del Verme in Agugliaro,
 - Palazzo delle Trombe, a part of Villa Saraceno.

I had the opportunity to get to know representatives of The Landmark Trust, an association for cultural heritage, and of several other associations which are active in the territory for the protection of its cultural heritage and the protection of the environment, such as UNESCO4Vicenza, Civiltà del Verde, and Osservatorio Urbano/Territoriale Vicenza. We visited several villas during the workshop and engaged with stakeholders through semi-structured interviews. We then visited Villa Poiana in the village of Poiana, and Villa del

Verme and Palazzo delle Trombe, both close to Agugliaro. This experience was essential for getting to know the perspectives of the local institution, The Landmark Trust, and several other associations which are also involved. The most recent experiences include two fieldwork trips:

1. Villa Caldogno Nordera in Caldogno (4-6 March 2018)
2. Villa Thiene in Quinto Vicentino (6-7 March 2018)
3. Villa Badoer in Fratta Polesine (7-8 March 2018)
4. Villa Caldogno Nordera in Caldogno (2- 4 January 2019)

Almost every villa making up the World heritage Site is located close to a town or village, the size of which varies from 1,000 to 30,000 inhabitants. The villages I visited ranged from 1,000 to 10,000 inhabitants.

Table 3 Chart of people interviewed (Torelli)

Villages, Villas	Local administration/institutions	Inhabitants
Caldogno, Villa Caldogno	vice mayor	1 Teenager; 2 middle age women; 3 old woman 1 bar tender; 2 customers in the old people's centre 1 B&B housekeeper - woman 1 Priest of the local parish
Fratta Poelsine, Villa Badoer	Mayor	bar customer
Quinto Vicentino, Villa Thiene	vice mayor Councillor cultural heritage	
Filiale di Agugliaro, Villa Saraceno	The Landmark Trust representative	representative of cultural heritage/environmental associations Palazzo delle Trombe, owner

4.2.2 Visual and Content analysis

According to Mayring, content analysis can be defined as a form of text analysis (by also considering visual sources as texts) based in qualitative research, it is about a qualitative interpretative act, about assigning categories to the passages of a text whereby categories are mental representation of the world, making categories is about putting things together. (Mayring, 2014). Content analysis is different from critical discourse analysis in that the first is at the text level and the second is also about the level of social structures embedded in the text. Postmodernists look at language; instead, I am looking at actions and at how landscapes are materialized through actions.

Content analysis can be defined as “a research technique used for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the context of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004, p.18). The researcher “must construct a world in which the texts make sense and can answer analyst’s research question” (Krippendorff, 2004, p.24). The technique can be employed in the interpretation of written texts, as well as in the interpretation of visual sources. I think the critical study of visual images in the field of heritage studies, enables us to unlock the author’s heritage idea. The texts I have been analyzing and interpreting are:

- the nomination file for the World Heritage site, City of Vicenza and the Palladian villas of the Veneto, 1996,
- the Heritage Impact Assessment report, 2017,
- semi-structured interview texts,
- webpages describing the villa landscapes,
- webpages showing the villa landscapes,
- the UNESCO webpage showing the villa landscapes,
- collection of annual books of the village of Caldogno.

I interpreted two types of visual sources in this research: photographic material that I produced myself and photographic material that I discovered. Regarding the first type, I carried out photo surveys during my fieldwork in the rural villages. I took photographs to depict the sense of place, peoples’ behavior in public areas, uncover social hot spots, and reveal the “complex patterns of action/interaction with the material world and interactions with others,” which can be found in ordinary social practice (Margolis and Zunjarwad, 2018, p.601). I took several pictures to understand the material qualities of these places and how they shape the experience of those who stay there or pass through them.

I will also use photographic material that I have found on the Internet, such as the municipalities' webpages or touristic webpages. In this case, the process is "the interpretation of the interpretation," as we must put the image in its larger social and cultural context and understand who produced it, for what purposes, and for which audience (Margolis, Zunjarwad, 2018, p.603). According to Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, other questions also arise, such as "what ideas and values do the places and things represented in images stand for?" (as cited in Margolis and Zunjarwad, 2018, p.617). The analysis of visual sources could also be used in the way that Laurajane Smith uses critical discourse analysis in the field of heritage studies, to analyze how institutions speak and write about heritage.

4.2.3 Selective coding

Coding is about labelling passages in the text according to categories (Mayring, 2014). Coding necessitates examining the collected data and grasping the most important data by using the theoretical concepts employed in the research. I use coding in the way intended in the grounded theory approach. My method of coding can be described as selective coding, which was defined by Strauss & Corbin as "the process of choosing one category to be the core category and relating all other categories to that category" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In order to begin sorting the huge amount of data in the work done by the ICOMOS professionals and in the villages, I have focused on the rural landscape category as heritage, and on agriculture. I have been looking for definitions, and descriptions, as well as observing behaviors. Regarding definitions, I gained clusters of concepts which were used by the ICOMOS experts, local institutions, and inhabitants to describe and visually represent the rural landscape of the Palladian villa as heritage. Regarding actions, I have examined how ICOMOS and the inhabitants experience agriculture in the two-case study under consideration.

5. The harmonic landscape of Villa Saraceno

In this part of the work, I will look at the production of the rural heritage landscape in the two chosen contexts by using my research question and theoretical concepts to examine the data I have collected. I will look at the landscapes' visual representation, materiality and experience.

In Chapter 5, I will describe how the harmonic landscape is visually represented and its attributes identified, and what experience is produced.

Chapter 5 addresses the following research question for the landscape of Villa Saraceno:

- *How is the landscape of Villa Saraceno visually represented and through what attributes?*
- *How is agriculture experienced as heritage in the landscape of Villa Saraceno?*

In Chapter 6, I will describe how the dissonant landscape is visually represented and its attributes identified, and what experience is produced.

The Chapter 6 regards the following research question for the Villa Caldogno landscape:

- *How is the Villa Caldogno landscape visually represented and through what attributes?*
- *How is agriculture experienced as heritage in the Villa Caldogno landscape?*

In this chapter, I want to understand how the Palladian Villa landscape is visually represented in the context of Villa Saraceno. The attributes of this landscape are conserved according to the ICOMOS experts' visual representation, based on the two criteria for inscription in the World Heritage List, namely, the idea that each villa is a "masterpiece of creative genius" and a symbol of the style of "Palladianism." I will examine how these ideas are realized through The Landmark Trust's conservation project.

I will describe the two criteria for inscription in the World Heritage List and look at how these ideas are materialized through The Landmark Trust's conservation project, as well as describing the kind of heritage experience which is produced in this setting.

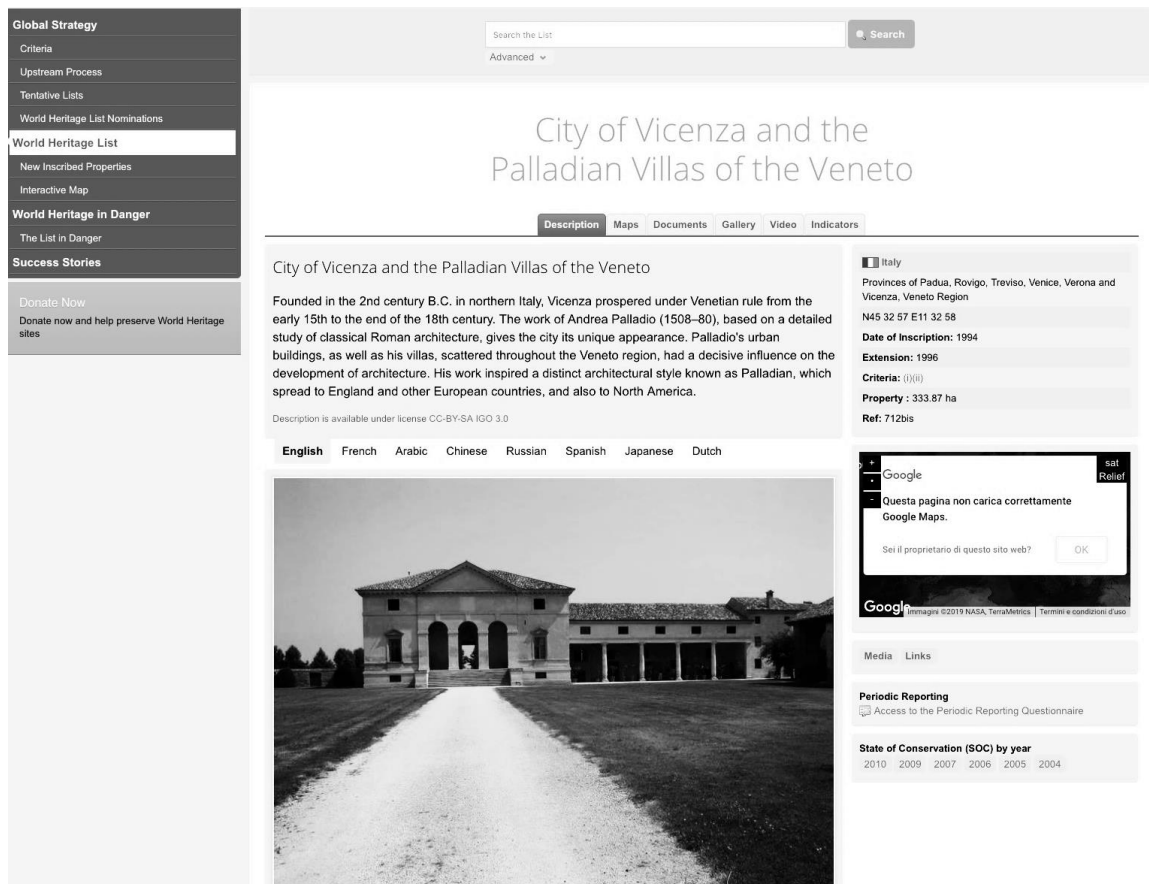


Figure 43 Villa Saraceno as the first picture in the UNESCO webpage about the World Heritage Site (UNESCO webpage)

I have chosen to work on this villa and its setting, because UNESCO considers that it represents good preservation conditions (Basili *et al.*, 2016). The picture of its façade is the first item to appear on Villa Saraceno's UNESCO webpage, Fig.43. Having looked at several villas' state of preservation as reported by Tempesta, I have noticed that there is a correlation between a villa's ownership and the condition of the visual integrity of its surroundings: most of the villas whose surroundings have been urbanized tend to be those in public ownership (Tempesta, 2014). In Fig.44 the UNESCO symbol is used to legitimize the work done by the family running Villa Maser as a business. Like Villa Saraceno, Villa Maser is an example of harmonic landscape.



Figure 44 Webpage of Villa Maser with the World heritage UNESCO brand (villadimaser.it)

5.1 The Outstanding Universal Value

I am using content analysis of the UNESCO and ICOMOS assessment reports, management plans, and nomination files, to critically investigate how the representation of the UNESCO rural landscape as universal heritage is based on the idea of Palladianism and the landscape as a masterpiece. I will also examine how they are translated into conservation measures for the World Heritage Site and how these are implemented in The Landmark Trust's conservation project. A property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is a requirement for its inscription on the list. Here the site's description:

“Basing his works on intimate study of classical Roman architecture, Palladio became the inspiration for a movement without parallel in architectural history. The property extends the recognition of the Outstanding Universal Value of the work of Andrea Palladio to the other manifestations of his creative genius in the Veneto region” (ICOMOS,1996)

Every site is also inscribed according to at least one of the “criteria for selection”. The chosen landscape meets the following criteria:

criterion (i) “a masterpiece of human creative genius”

criterion (ii) “exhibits an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in

architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design” (ICOMOS, 1996)

The site nomination is based on the following criteria:

“Criterion (i): Scattered in the Veneto, the Palladian villas are the result of this Renaissance master’s architectural genius”

“Criterion (ii): Palladio’s works in the city of Vicenza and in the Veneto, have exerted exceptional influence on architectural and urban design in most European countries and throughout the world, giving rise to Palladianism, a movement named after the architect and destined to last for three centuries” (ICOMOS, 1996)

The two most important aspects for inscription emerge from the statement of OUV and criteria : that Palladio’s work is considered to be the masterpiece of a creative genius and that it has given rise to Palladianism. In addition to these criteria, the management measures have been developed and based on notions of integrity and authenticity. The notions of authenticity and integrity and the related protection and management tools, as the boundaries of the site, are defined in the OUV description. As I mentioned at the very beginning, my focus is on the relationship between the site’s universal values and the ideas of integrity and visual integrity. These are expressed in this way in the nomination file:

Integrity: “The property is composed of the City of Vicenza, twenty-three Palladian buildings, twenty-four extra-urban villas, and the territorial context that underwent several changes and for this reason was excluded from the site perimeter” (ICOMOS, 1996)

visual integrity: “the Palladio Villas to protect the ‘intrinsic universal value recognized for each villa, the formal relationship between the villas and the countryside” (Basili *et al.*, 2016)

“protection of visual relationship between villa and countryside with its rural character” ((Basili *et al.*, 2016)



Figure 45 The view from the Villa Rotonda on the surroundings and from the surroundings on the villa (Basili et al., 2016)

The formal relationship between the villas and the countryside is about there being a free view from the villa over the landscape and from the landscape to the villa, as depicted in Fig.45. The surroundings should have a rural character, without “obstructive” elements and in which signs of “traditional” agrarian use are still visible.

The villas should be visible at least from the boundaries of the property’s buffer zone. Usually, all architectural contributions which imitate or are inspired by the work of Palladio, are defined as part of “Palladianism”; in some cases these overlap with neo-classicism. Palladianism, in the context of country houses, is a form of “transnational rural landscape” (Gorman-Murray *et al.*,2008). Palladio created the intellectual gentlemen, the villa’s landlord, a social and cultural figure emulated especially in England and USA, by drawing from humanistic literature and cosmology.

By transnational rural landscape, I mean that in many cultural contexts, such as England and North America, the use of Palladian language in architecture is related to a socio-cultural landscape of *colonization*, very similar to that of the Venetian Republic in the 16th century. The best known examples of Palladianism in Europe and America include: Inigo Jones’s work for the 17th century English monarchy, the work of several architects like Campel, for the emerging Whig Aristocracy during the 18th century, and Thomas Jefferson’s work at the time of Colonial America, or the beginning of the 19th century (Rogers, 2001).

Palladio’s work has been a relevant source of inspiration since the last century in many different cultural contexts, but I will focus on the geographical contexts because they are explicitly mentioned in the WH nomination. This landscape idea was indeed based on the land control practiced by Venetian families as they organized their capitalist production. The American and English national heritages, as well as that of other European countries, have deep roots in the idealization of the rural as represented by the country house. Palladianism plays an important role in this idealization.

During these three historic periods, architects and their clients were consciously recovering Renaissance symbolism to legitimize their current and future projects. The English and American projects represented the relationship between the country house and the landscape: it is a relationship primarily between the landowner’s, or we could say colonizer’s, visual control of nature and the work of slaves (Rogers, 2001; Cosgrove, 1984).

Veneto's agrarian landscape, at the time of the Venice Republic and its huge reclamation work, suggested a sense of infinite, a new world waiting to be discovered in terms of its economic resources. It is no coincidence that the Palladian Villa narrative fits so well with Thomas Jefferson's vision of America, as a new, as yet unknown, continent to colonize. It is also in accordance with the Whig aristocrats' understanding of agriculture as a land exploitation strategy in the 18th century.

Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States, was fascinated by the European Enlightenment and transferred its ideas of classic philosophy and architecture into his planning projects and political activities. Inigo Jones, who was employed by Charles I of the English Stuart dynasty and toured the Veneto to examine Palladian palaces places and villas, used Palladianism as the architecture of English absolutism, as seen in France (Cosgrove, 1984). We can see a continuity between Palladio and Inigo Jones's projects, such as the Queen's house in Greenwich in Fig.46 (Moriani, 2008).

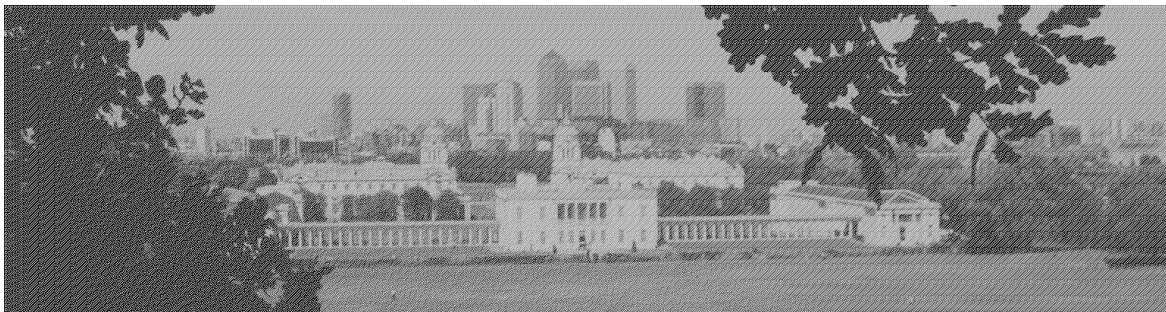


Figure 46 Queen's House, Greenwich (Wikikommons)

The monarchy completely lost its power with the death of Charles I. Landowners and the mercantile classes took control of the Palladian language, which became the inspiration for liberty rather than absolutism. It expressed a new, functional concept of landownership to legitimate the role played by landowners in the context of an increasingly capitalist country.

Tafari describes how the central symbolic landscape of the White House represents the Republic in Washington. In this context, as a representation of the capital of a once fledgling nation, Palladianism showed how "an elitist architecture can be made to serve in a utilitarian and democratic context" because it could "strip classicism away from the inaccessible aura and make it architecture of a free society" (as cited in Cosgrove, 1984, p.163).

The country house projects in America are different from the White House in Washington, in which Palladianism might be defined as “democratized.” In contrast, the individual country houses are about individualism, liberalism, and capitalism. Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), the third president of the United States during the 18th and 19th centuries, understood the garden and the landscape in rather political terms. His garden was the new territory of the American landscape; a territory to plan, map, control, and make agriculturally productive by following classical narratives (Cosgrove, 1984).

Palladianism is one of the main criteria for the villas’ inscription in the World Heritage List. In addition to stylistic emulation, Palladianism very much uses Palladio’s customers’ narrative in new cultural contexts, in which the building dominates the surrounding landscape ready for consumption. This form of control values and operationalizes the conservation scheme for visual integrity. If we look at the justification for the site’s nomination, we read:

“the formal relationship between the villas and the landscape of the Veneto results in a unique quality that gives it a universal value”
(ICOMOS, 1996)

This formal relationship, therefore, plays a key role in the definition of Palladianism. The second criterion for inscription is that all the villas are considered masterpieces of a Renaissance-era architectural genius. According to the ICOMOS evaluation, the Palladian villa’s landscape and architecture should be considered “a model.” This approach to preserving the material culture, or the villa as a work of art, is therefore translated into a regional landscape. This is seen in statements such as:

“the extraordinary imprint that one single artist was able to leave on a territory”

“Palladio’s works have marked this area so deeply that this connotation has become an artistic and cultural landmark that cannot be ignored”

“its work has deeply engraved the agrarian historic landscape of the Veneto so that it has become a real model to be protected” (Basili *et al.*, 2016)

In order to understand what makes this villa a harmonious and “positive” example of conservation, I have examined the ideas underpinning the World Heritage site nomination. These especially include criteria I and II, referred to as the “masterpiece of creative genius”

and the “achievement of a style copied all over the world” criteria (ICOMOS, 1996). By focusing on these two ideas, I have been trying to understand how they are operationalized in the concept of visual integrity and how they are materialized in The Land Trust's conservation project.

5.2 The Landmark Trust's visual representation and attributes

In order to better understand how ICOMOS values and their representation are reproduced in The Landmark Trust's conservation project, I have been examining the way in which the Villa Saraceno conservation project is being carried out, displayed, and described as heritage, by using field work and content analysis of selected pages from the Trust's website.

In England, the conservation of cultural heritage mainly carried out by is based on charitable organizations such as the National Trust, English Heritage, and many others. The Landmark Trust is one of the organizations engaged in the conservation of cultural heritage. It was founded in 1965, originally with economic support from the founder, John Smith: today, its support comes mainly from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Trust's approach is conservative restoration: It selects buildings in England and Europe to recover and restore. It prefers to select buildings that can be defined as *landmarks* in the landscape, or as iconic heritage for a territory. After restoration, the buildings are used as holiday houses to recover the restoration costs. In 1989, the association started restoring the Villa Saraceno, located close to the village of Filiale di Agugliaro, in the southern part of the province of Vicenza.

The villa is located within the borders of the Municipality of Filiale di Agugliaro, as shown in Figs.47 and 48, part a village with approximately 1,400 inhabitants. The villa is sometimes used for public events but is not generally part of the village's everyday life. Designed by Palladio and recognized as part of the World Heritage site since 1994, it dates back to circa 1550 and was built for Biagio Saraceno, who was probably a silk merchant. Villa Saraceno was restored by the Landmark Trust association between 1989 and 1994 and can now be rented as a holiday house.



Figure 47 Villa Saraceno and the surrounding landscape (Bing)



Figure 48 The view on Villa Saraceno and the village of Agugliaro (Bing)

During our stay at Villa Saraceno, I took part in a workshop titled *Living our heritage* in collaboration with Ferrara University, in order to produce a framework for discussion. We mainly discussed the lack of communication between the employees involved in the villa's conservation management and the Agugliaro villagers, who lived about 4 kilometers away. The villa's managers emphasized their desire to create a connection with the population of the village. But it was very challenging, almost impossible, to find a common point of view or shared initiatives pertinent to the significance of the site.

By looking at the surrounding land beyond the building's setting, it is still possible to see some mulberry trees from the earlier silk production, as well as the typical pattern of ancient land reclamation, probably for corn or wheat crops. The Landmark Trust's conservation project is about selecting which attributes to display. The rural heritage landscape is framed through the villa's windows by re-staging the villa and creating an idealized background. This production of a rural heritage landscape is about re-working the traces of the past, and about creating boundaries between today's environment and that of the past, by removing items from everyday life by removing artifacts and landscape from the everyday life, following the fashion of musealization.

The way the rural heritage landscape is produced here is very similar to Smith's description of English country houses. In her study of the tourist experience in English country houses, Smith describes the parks surrounding the country houses as being delimited by walls and as exclusive private properties, with a grass lawn setting, neat and controlled, free of possible obtrusive elements, and with a bucolic panorama. She noted that the country house's park was like an oasis, de-contextualized from the social and historical context, and that servants' spaces could often not be seen. Slavery was not mentioned in the way in which the story was (Smith, 2006, p. 87).

Palladianism, the second criterion for site inscription, in English culture meant re-using Palladio's work to legitimize the monarchy and the rise of the Whig aristocracy. Because, according to the ICOMOS definitions, this landscape is considered to be the masterpiece of a creative genius and a designed landscape that serves as a "model", the only aspects shown must be related to Palladio.

The villa is a long way from the village of Agugliaro and the village is not visible from the villa, as is apparent from Figs.49 and 50. The setting is free from signs of the “unappropriated” contemporary regional suburbanization, and thus, expresses the idea of Palladianism in the best way possible. There are no traces of pre-Renaissance architecture such like *campanili* or churches. These may have been reasons for the Trust’s decision to restore this villa and not the others.



Figure 49 Villa Saraceno and the surrounding landscape (Landmark Trust webpage)

By looking at the way the association frames the villa’s landscape, it is apparent that there is an attempt to remove aspects relating to contemporary agriculture, such as tractors working in the proximity of the villa, automobiles, and every sign of mechanized agriculture, and suburbanization. The heritage landscape has been removed from its social and natural environment: Tractors, agrarian vegetation, people, village squares, everything else is left aside. The object has been saved from decay to convey a sense of monumentality.



Figure 50 The surrounding landscape of Villa Saraceno (Landmark Trust webpage)

The past is depicted as peaceful and aesthetically pleasant: it is hard to imagine that peasants were working long hours under a blazing sun on the landowners’ properties. The landscape is de-contextualized, removed from its social and historical context: We cannot

read the evolution it had through time, but only the recognizable essence of the Palladian “model” used by the Whig families’ architects for the development of their country houses in England. In the next sub-chapter, I will describe the kind of heritage experience which is produced in this setting.

5.3 Agriculture as a touristic experience produced by the experts

In this sub-chapter, I consider what experiences are created at the heritage site. The production of the rural heritage landscape through the visual marketing and conservation schemes suggested by the ICOMOS, influences the types of social practices that take place. Conservation schemes and projects are powerful for defining the relationship between people and the environment in which they are implemented; according to Smith experiences can be regulated by management processes (Smith, 2006). In this sub-chapter, I will describe the “landowner experience” i.e. the experience created for the tourist by the Landmark Trust cultural heritage institution.

I will consider my own experience during my fieldwork at Villa Saraceno, and the behavior of the inhabitants who visited the villa with me. As I am looking at a social group, I must emphasize some considerations in this regard. According to Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge, social groups are significant in heritage studies if they are “able to generate a distinctive heritage, or at least the claim upon one” (Graham *et al.*, 2000, p.42). There is indeed a strict relationship between the idea of heritage and the group claiming it. Often, the creation of heritage is directly linked to the aim of creating a social group, as in the case of the “nation” (MacDonald, 2013) or in this case, the regional or local landscape.

The social group under consideration, the inhabitants of the Palladian villa landscape, is not homogenous in terms of its members’ s relationship with the rural heritage landscape. The Palladian villa’s social group’s behavior is highly contradictory, as what they *do* is different from what they *say*. As MacDonald emphasizes, in some cases is important to depict communities in their contradictions “rather than evoking a coherent bounded community” (Mac Donald, 2013 pg.69). Here, I will illustrate what the Palladian villa’s social group *says*; in contrast, I will discuss what they *do* in the description of the Villa Caldogno’s landscape.

The Landmark Trust is creating a landscape that is in accordance with a certain version of its representation of the past and leads to a certain experience, what could be called the “countryside experience” (Smith, 2006). In other words, the heritage landscape is designed to be consumed by someone: The consumer is supposed to have a specific, *staged*, heritage experience. I stayed in the villa for almost one week. The view over the landscape and the Euganei hills was beautiful, the villa has a dominant role in the landscape in that

the view of the outside gives you a sense of control, while the view of the villa from the landscape is quite the opposite, and gives you a sense of submission. The power relationship between the landowner and the peasant can be seen in the visual relationship between the house and the land. The villa functions primarily as a tourist attraction, with the most important tourism groups being cultural tourists. The guest is invited to interpret the role of the landowner, as can easily be seen from the description of the heritage site on the first page of the Trust' website. The description reads:

“A UNESCO World Heritage Site”

“Villa Saraceno has historically been a place of refuge for those seeking respite. Today, you can do the same”

“During the peaceful years in the middle of the sixteenth century”

“Andrea Palladio designed for a peaceful but cultured rural existence. (...) taste this life of fulfilled recreation. Just like the Renaissance noblemen”
(Landmark Trust website, 2019)

I would like to emphasize three main points that become clear from this text: the first is that the guest should imagine himself like a Renaissance nobleman; the second is that the landscape is perceived as a safe place of respite, and the last aspect concerns the use of the World Heritage brand. The Palladian Villa landscape is immediately identified as a UNESCO World Heritage site on the Landmark Trust's webpage. The use of the brand makes it clear that the Trust is aligned with the UNESCO's preservation philosophy.

A tourist who lives in the villa for a while can enjoy the view over the land which gives a sense of the infinite, and this is very much about the sense of controlling the landscape of colonization, the enjoyment of a nostalgic sense of power.

Here, cultural tourism offers the opportunity for tourists to experience the *Renaissance nobleman* lifestyle. Instead of leading to heritage interpretation, the heritage presented here is transformed into an experience to be consumed; the tourist accepts and embodies an idealized, simplified vision of the past. In Smith's work on English country houses, she points out how no reference is made at the site to the role played by servants or slaves at the time (Smith, 2006).

There is no dissonance in the country house landscape. These are places for constructing the identity of the rural middle class, and they must be a “safe place of respite”, separated

from the context in which they are located. In her work, Smith shows that visitors to houses in the countryside tend to see the rural landscape of the English country house as unproblematic: About continuity, peace, tranquility and nourished by nostalgia for a golden age, especially in comparison to the city (Smith, 2006).

In order to stage the *countryside experience*, the Trust creates a distinction between inside and outside. This is the creation of a social boundary (Harrison, 2015). The boundaries between the site and the rest of the landscape are spatial but also temporal, as these places are decontextualized from social life and social experience. We could describe the time that is created through this conservation project as a sense of *monumental time*. MacDonald makes a distinction between monumental and social time by describing monumental time as reductive, generic, made of categories, stereotypes, musealized, commodified, and made as an object (Mac Donald, 2013). The past alienated from the present, de-temporalized, and de-socialized. This is the time of the creation of the *iconography of permanency* (Tunbridge & Asworth, 2016, p.90). In contrast, social time is the everyday life experience, the past living in the present.

A certain distinction is created between the tourist, the guest playing the role of the landowner for a weekend, and the people living in the site's surroundings. Excluded from this "idyll" place, they live in the "suburbanized landscape". Occasionally, the citizens can enter the villa's garden for events organized in the villa or in its setting. Generally, it is about visiting the interior or about sitting in the garden outside and watching a book presentation, while using the stairs at the villa's entrance as a stage. In this sense, the citizens are cut off from the *landowner lifestyle*. Therefore, the conservation project also impacts the way space, access to space, and behavior in the space, are regulated.

Although the Palladian villa's landscape, when properly preserved as in the case of Villa Saraceno, often tends to be exclusive, many citizens identify it as their heritage.

The landscape's inhabitants' cultural appreciation is a means of constructing its identity and is anchored in an idealized vision of the past, or what Bell calls the *rural idyll* (Bell, 2006). Pride in the Palladian Villa's history can also be found in the worlds of an old man sitting at the central bar:

"Our villa is very important for the community, and then people copy Palladio all over the world, as the white house in America is the same, then there was also the Queen of England to visit it, then yes not all are

kept well but it is very expensive to keep them well you know, and tourists from all over the world come to see it, many, although our village does not have much to offer because what you want this is an agricultural area no more” (Bar regular customer, 70 years old c.a.)

The man shows his knowledge about the origin of Palladio’s work and its international resonance, at the same time suggesting that he is ashamed of the village and its mainly agricultural nature. Another local visitor told me:

“the valorization of our built heritage is expensive, only The Landmark Trust, can afford it. They do it also because is a matter of pride but they know how to do it. They do amazing things, their villas are so beautifully preserved and valorized” (host of the pension, 50 years old c.a.)

The woman was expressing admiration for The Landmark trust’s methods. The heritage of the Palladian villa is clearly seen as something valuable because it has been copied in other countries and is visited by tourists. Thus, visitors as well as the Palladian Villa landscape’s new rural middle class, are influenced by the Authorized Heritage Discourse and are reproducing it. A typical aspect of this discourse is the tendency to focus on the aesthetic qualities of heritage and avoid heritage interpretation.

According to the findings of Smith’s study of country house heritage sites in England, the English middle class tends to love royalty and aristocratic heritage (Smith, 2006, p. 115-161). According to Scott, the preservationist approach implemented in rural landscapes in England is based on romanticized notions of the English countryside. It is also based on the new rural middle classes’ desire to preserve their exclusive heritage and increase the value of their properties (Scott, 2006).

As stated in the text above, the woman was expressing her desire to have such a villa as private heritage and a matching income in order to afford its maintenance costs. The focus on aesthetic aspects is something that I observed many times during the interviews with the inhabitants and local administration, as well as in ICOMOS’s texts. Their way of constructing the Palladian villa landscape is related to aesthetic judgement, without any further interpretation. Here are some examples:

“because Italy, is beautiful, everywhere, and people all over the world envy what we have” (vice mayor, woman, 50 years old c.a.)

Similarly, ICOMOS experts used these words to describe the villa’s landscape:

“enjoyment of the view, unique, picturesque” (Basili *et al.*, 2016)

Again, the host of the guesthouse where I was staying, who was involved in the touristic sector and in cultural marketing, told me about her impression of the people and the village:

“But here, people are villagers, they have no idea how to valorize the villa, how to do marketing, also the festivities they are doing is just things for villagers” (host of the guesthouse, woman, c.a. 50 years old)

There is a certain caution and sense of preoccupation in the physical conservation of the Palladian villas. This is because, in some cases, neither public nor private institutions can afford the restoration costs. As I was told:

“and of course, not all the villas are in good condition, but it is very expensive” (Bar regular customer, 70 years old c.a.)

The woman did not express any kind of resentment while telling me this. I would have expected her to point out the contradictions of a public heritage, which should be open to every citizen, being owned by certain families and not open to the public.

This rural middle class does need heritage in order to construct a sense of identity and keep on—in a very modern way—by detaching it from their living and lived experience. The middle classes in particular, kept repeating that Palladio’s landscape was beautiful, and that today’s landscape was awful. They did not interpret the quality of their environment without aesthetic judgment when it was compared to that of Palladio.

Although the people living in the suburban areas of central Veneto are comparable to those found in English and North American literature in many respects, there are consistent differences between these contexts. The suburbanization in Veneto has been developing around medium-sized cities, towns, and villages; around the parish, the city square, and the local bar and not in the open countryside. This is radically different to the English and American suburbs which scholars usually describe as places where individuals do not have a sense of community and tend to “retreat from the unpleasant realities (of the city) and find all meaning of life in (...) the family or even the self-centered individual” (Machor, 1987).

In this sub-chapter, I have been addressing the heritage experience in Villa Sarceno's landscape. The Trust, like many other associations, is creating an experience of agriculture which the inhabitants enjoy. The enjoyment derives from the need to show a certain cultural appreciation of the rural landscape as heritage. This group is viewing the rural landscape as something detached from the present, idealized, romanticized. Their approach is no different from that of UNESCO and the Landmark Trust, in other words, the Authorized Heritage Discourse.

In this chapter, I have been describing the process of heritage production which is being played out at Villa Saraceno and in similar contexts. The conservation scheme and its visual representation are being translated into the materiality of attributes by the Landmark Trust and a certain experience of agriculture as heritage, is being created. This process is homogenous, without dissonance; the experts, the Trust and the visitors all agree about what heritage is and how should be conserved. In the following chapter, I will describe the process taking place in Villa Caldogno, where dissonance does arise.

6. The dissonant landscape of Villa Caldogno

The process of producing Villa Caldogno-Nordera's rural heritage landscape is radically different to that of Villa Saraceno: It is the opposite process. In this process, the dissonance lies in the difference between the ICOMOS experts' visual representation of the landscape and the way the landscape has been materially produced by the administration and citizens from the 1970s onward. The chapter addresses the following research question for the Villa Caldogno landscape:




- *How is the landscape visually represented and by what attributes?*
- *How is agriculture experienced as heritage in the landscape?*

I will describe the dissonance by framing the rural landscape as heritage from the perspective of its contemporary inhabitants. As mentioned previously, the Palladian villa social group tends to say certain things about rural heritage landscape and its conservation, and then *do* something different. At this point, I will outline what this group *does*, by focusing on its peculiar way of experiencing agriculture as heritage.

Villa Caldogno is representative of the many landscapes transformed by suburbanization from the 1970s onward. In other cases, for example Villa Badoer in Fratta Polesine, Villa Thiene in Quinto Vicentino, or Villa Cornaro in Piombino Dese, villas are centrally located in villages and are therefore also affected by suburbanization. Villas located in the middle of, or close to, the villages are used for public events, and in some cases even perform administrative functions. The village boundaries often overlap with the earlier boundaries of the villa property. An aristocratic piece of real estate is today replaced by a municipality's area of governance.

The Palladian villa's suburbanized landscape has often been criticized for its perceived lack of planning. The ICOMOS experts emphasize the loss of the landscape's "rural character" or the "overthought of the established landscape and the figurative context of the Caldogno Villa" (Basili *et al.*, 2016). In the context of Villa Caldogno, suburbanization is interpreted by experts as the "unappropriated development of the villa surrounding" (Basili *et al.*, 2016).

LEGENDA

-  VILLA CALDOGNO
-  PERIMETRO BENE VILLA CALDOGNO
-  CORE ZONE VILLA CALDOGNO ha 2.77

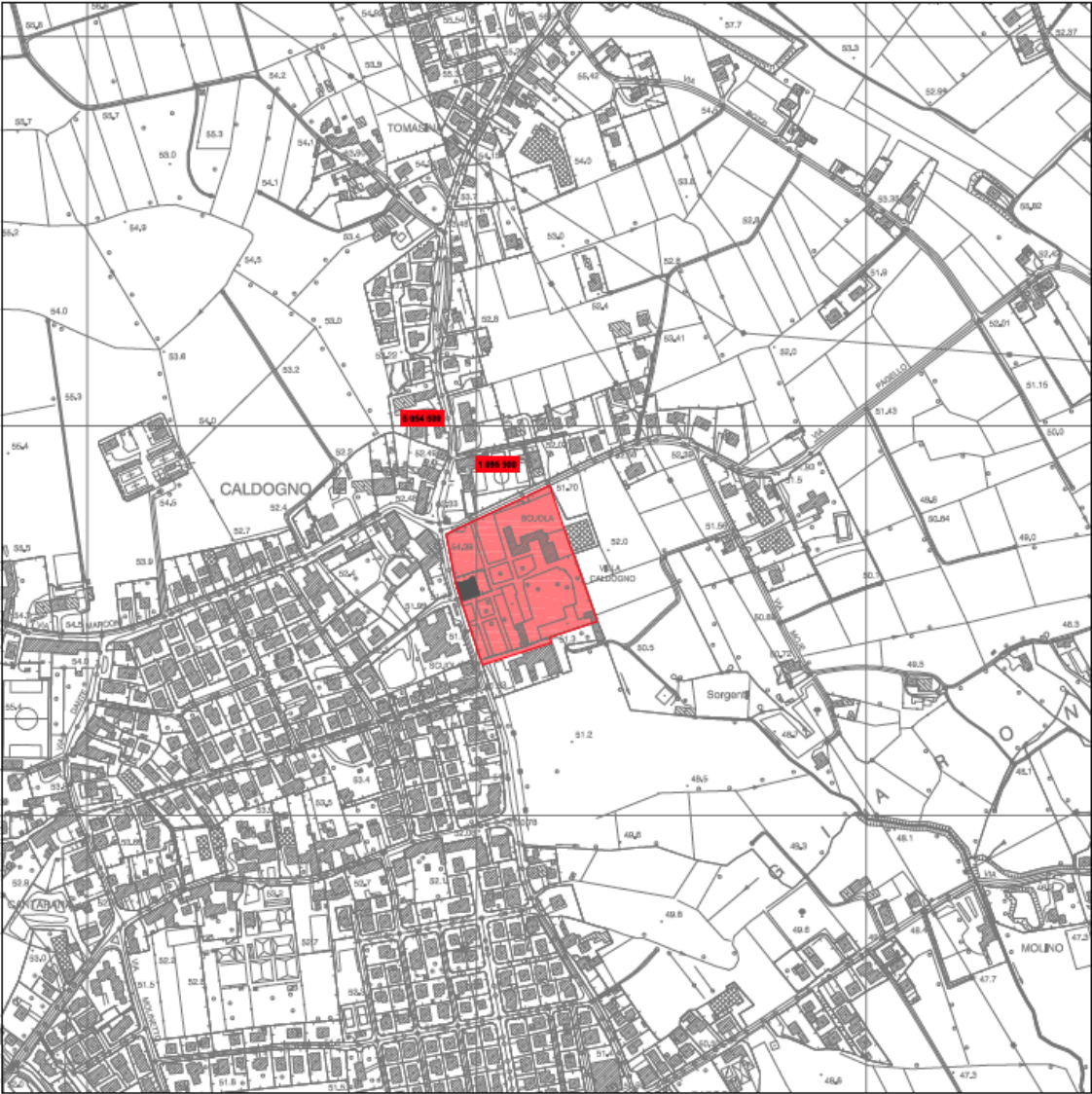


Figure 51 In dark gray the villa, in red the core zone, scale 1:5000 (UNESCO, 2008)

This figure illustrates the management plan: The core zone encompasses the villa's surroundings. The core zone's boundaries define the "rules" that the rural heritage landscape, as a process, should follow. In this graphical representation, the idea of visual integrity is represented on the ground: No construction should be allowed within the site's boundaries. The landscape inside the boundaries should remain *rural*; what is outside, is allowed to become *urban*.

I would suggest that in the picture of Villa Badoer in Fratta Polesine, the villa is at the very core of the suburbanization. Here, in Fig.52, if we look at the surrounding landscape from the villa, we obviously cannot see an agrarian landscape but instead a settlement, with car transport infrastructures, parking lots, activities from everyday life, people having a coffee at the bar, and driving to work in another village, some detached residential houses, and other areas that are extensively cultivated.



Figure 52 View from Villa Badoer, Fratta Polesine, Rovigo, Pictures (Torelli)

The village of Caldogno takes its name from the German word *kalt*, or *cold*. The village was known for having cold water that was stored in an underground aqueduct dating back to Roman times, when it collected pre-Alpine water and transported it to Vicenza. The village used to be more autonomous from Vicenza than it is today; it used to have its own craft scene, commercial activities, and services. In the first century AD, Vicenza was the nodal point for west and east commerce along the Via Postumia and peasants from the

villages sold their products there. Caldogno fed Vicenza and was strategically positioned for detecting enemies arriving from the Alps. Caldongo became a municipality in 1262 (Pendin,1996). In 1570, the Villa of Caldogno was created from the renovation of a former agrarian tenure and the parish border became the border of the Caldogno's family properties. The owner at the beginning of the last century, Dr. Nordera, constructed new buildings in the villa's grounds to serve as a military hospital. The creation of the military hospital proved useful because a military bunker was constructed by the Germans, specifically by Fritz Todt, an associate of Albert Speer, close to the villa property (Mulazzani, 2011).

The military hospital is today an old people's center where I conducted some interviews., The local administration extensively restored the villa property between 1994 and 1996 for the World Heritage site nomination; this included the structures and the interior frescos. The following pictures, Fig.53 and Fig.54, show the village of Caldogno and its villa, located close to the Prealps.



Figure 53 The village of Caldogno in the 1970s (Pendini, 1996)



Figure 54 Today's view of the villa' sourronding (Torelli)

6.1 Agriculture as the inhabitants' heritage experience

As in many other villas, the village, the community of Agugliaro plays a passive role in the cultural events organized by The Landmark Trust in the previous process of rural heritage production. In fact, the inhabitants visit the landscape as consumers. In this chapter, I use my research question to depict my interpretation of the way in which the inhabitants are producing and experiencing agriculture in the context of the Villa. I will report on a selection of the interviews I carried out and the photos I took. Through these interviews and pictures, I have tried to understand how agriculture is practiced by the inhabitants today, what agricultural heritage is like for them, and I will be able to shed light on the relationship between their agricultural practice and the suburbanization of the villa's context. While walking through the village of Caldogno and other similar villages, I noticed plenty of vegetable gardens. As the following pictures show, people spend their free time cultivating vegetables in these gardens.



Figure 55 One of the many vegetable gardens of detached houses (Torelli)



Figure 56 One of the many vegetable gardens of detached houses (Torelli)



Figure 57 A shared vegetable garden in Quinto Vicentino (Torelli)

As pictured in the photos, the vegetables are organized in small patches of land close to the typical suburban detached houses, urban elements such as benches and automobiles, are mixed with rural elements, such as grass, woods and informal structures to let plants grow. I wanted to know more about this form of agriculture, and I started to ask the interviewees about it. Here is a description of this part-time agriculture from a bar customer in Caldogno:

“People here are still doing vegetable gardens here, many still have pieces of land, they cultivate vegetables in the gardens and corn and soya in the land” (Bar Customer, woman, 70).

Here are answers I received when I asked whether the interviewees in Caldogno were cultivating any land:

“I have a vegetable garden in my house with fruit trees such as fig and plum trees” (Client of the old people’s center, 65);

“I have a piece of land where I cultivate fruit trees such as apple trees, and a vegetable garden where I have eggplants, tomatoes, beets and zucchini” (Client of the old people’s center, 65).

After interviewing the mayor and other municipality employees in Villa Thiene in the village of Quinto Vicentino and through participant observation, I discovered that the landscape of Villa Thiene, Fig.58, used to be called “small holland” because of its rich channels, rice cultivation, and water mills. It has always been a fertile area and still has lush meadows for feeding livestock on the various family-run farms. In this area, small-scale farms cultivate radicchio, corn, and soya, and the products are sold to local restaurants. Recently, there have been projects developed around sharing surplus produce, especially for people in economic need or for teaching the younger generations about vegetable garden cultivation. Ferrario noted that the growers often exchange agrarian goods through an informal barter system (Ferrario, 2011). Almost every family has its own garden.



Figure 58 View on the village of Quinto Vicentino where Villa Thiene is located (Torelli)

The vegetable gardens in detached houses are sometimes decorated with collections of ancient objects in a sort of post-modern pastiche. In Fig.59 an imitation of the fountain in the garden of the Palladian Villa Badoer, in Fratta Polesine, is seen in a private garden, or private *arcadia*.



Figure 59 Inhabitants emulations of Renaissance sculptures in their gardens in Fratta Polesine, Rovigo (Torelli)

Vegetable gardens are therefore places which combine many aspects: Food supply and the need for an aesthetic and spiritual life, as can be seen in the following picture on which a statue of Maria seems to be looking after the garden.



Figure 60 Religious sculpture in the garden, Caldogno (Torelli)

In the process of heritage production at Villa Caldogno, as well as in similar cases such as Fratta Polesine, the community has an active role in adapting the environment to its needs. The vegetable gardens seem to bring together many pre-modern elements of an agrarian heritage. The interview with the mayor of Fratta Polesine was particularly valuable for my research question. The man told me about his own experience of agrarian life before the 1950s. Here is the brief history that the mayor recounted about the landscape before mechanization:

“Every family, when I was a child, had a little portion of land with fruits trees, used to have a livestock, produce forage, and there were meadows for the livestock, used to plow the land, vineyards, hemp was used for production of textiles, then the first tractors arrived. I experienced the evolution of the peasant life. Yes, I still remember when people started to leave the countryside and move to the city to work in the industries” (Mayor of Fratta Polesine, 2017).

The mechanization of agriculture and the rural exodus are still remembered as a hard transition by the inhabitants of the Veneto countryside, especially those from the area of Polesine. The small scale, family based, agrarian practice is described as something which is slowly becoming “lost”. Being a farmer or a peasant, was a lifestyle that slowly changed into a very specialized profession of agricultural entrepreneurship. The landscape’s mechanization can be defined as the main characteristic of the super-productive countryside (Halfacree, 2007). This teenager’s words confirm these tendencies:

“Here, agriculture is over, almost nothing, some families still own piece of land but they rent it out to professionals, agrarian entrepreneurs who can afford the costs because it is too expensive” (Teenager, 15-year-old, 2017).

The perception of the older generation, as well as the results of many scholars’ research (Tempesta, 2014; De Pin, 2000), is that the agrarian life has been lost. In other words, the transformation of the landscape during the last century that the experts describe as “loss of heritage”, is perceived as the loss of the agrarian practice rather than the loss of the late Renaissance landscape’s visual integrity. The modernization of agriculture and the transformation of family agriculture into agricultural entrepreneurship, have created a rupture: small-scale agrarian activities are shrinking, the time when “everybody was a peasant” has been lost (Van der Ploeg, 2009). Nevertheless, this rupture is still being resisted by the inhabitants’ contemporary agrarian activities based on self-consumption, part-time agriculture, and small-scale production.

Many of those interviewed are connected by enduring pre-industrial social ties; they are living in the same village as their family and are still bound by religious beliefs and practices. Their mobility is limited; people still organize their lives close to the place where they were born.

Of the people that I spoke to, several told me they lived in a village close by, were working in the village, visiting a friend, or were about to go back to the city. So, their birth places, network of relations and work location, are mainly organized around the several villages in the outskirts of Vicenza. Here people tend to mix their residential and religious lives with work in their family-run industries, as well as on the pieces of land which have been owned for generations.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, I have defined the production of the rural heritage landscape as a bottom-up process. This is because, since the 1960s, local administrations have not attempted to regulate or control suburbanization in these villages and around their Palladian villas. Thanks to the planning authorities' laissez faire policies, the inhabitants have been free to shape their environment since the 1970s. Through the progressive fragmentation of land ownership, the inhabitants have been transforming the agricultural landowner-peasant system into an arrangement of small-scale agricultural forms. This kind of family-run agriculture is very different to the capitalist agriculture of specialized agrarian entrepreneurs. The family members are involved in their own different professions and therefore, the agrarian activity is not a primary but a part-time activity.

The creation of detached houses is still driven by the desire to have a vegetable garden and to keep a piece of land for the family. This can also be reversed: A new structure can be realized out of the former agrarian tenure, close to the piece of land owned by the grandparents. Once again according to Ferrario, this delicate balance between urban infrastructure and small-scale agriculture, together with the strong local ties, makes this place a potential contemporary cultural landscape (Ferrario, 2010). The small-scale industrialization of the 1970s was an informal, unplanned, anarchic, attempt to make a living and achieve better economic conditions without leaving the land, family, or community.

This landscape's messy and unplanned transformation can indeed be considered "irrational" because it mixes rural and urban functions, uses, features and lifestyles. Mixing functions

resists the organization of typical modern planning that wants to divide village life into different categories. This is an aspect of modernity, as Harrison emphasizes “anomalies within classificatory systems are treated with distrust because they represent potential source of social disorder” (Harrison, 2013, p.28).

This experience is radically different from that of the landowner, as it emphasizes the community and not the tourist. It is about production rather than consumption, and is about land use rather than *value of exchange*. As Smith points out, “the idea of landscape embodying a sense of place opens the conceptual field and allows for a greater range of interconnecting meanings and values to be identified and explored” (Smith, 2006, p.168). Today, in postmodern times, we could look back at this irrational urbanization process as an informal settlement that might have important heritage properties beyond canonical art history information.

In this sub-chapter, I have addressed the heritage experience by looking at how people experience agriculture in the sub-urbanized landscape of the Palladian villa.

I have considered Caldogno, Quinto Vicentino and Fratta Polesine. Small-scale and part-time agriculture are ways of keeping the agrarian practice alive, at least, partially. In the next sub-chapter, I will reflect on the way in which the Palladian villa’s inhabitants understand the landscape’s attributes.

6.2 Inhabitants' values, attributes and visual representation

In this sub-chapter, I will report on interviews and present photos to describe how the inhabitants of Caldoneo and similar villages understand the villa's landscape as a visual representation, and through what attributes.

I identified the most significant areas of the village of Caldogno for conducting interviews from previous observation and conversations in the field. The inhabitants told me that they tend to gather in the main bar, in the square during the weekly market, and in the spaces related to the church and the parish and an old people's center. These are the places which I focused on when conducting interviews. I sat in the village's central bar and chatted with the owner and workers. I had conversations with my host in the guest house where I stayed. The inhabitants were enthusiastic soon as I mentioned the villa. They knew about its history, Palladio, and revealed that they cared about the conservation of his works:

“The villa is an important historic monument for our territory”
(Client of the old people's center, 70-80).

Nevertheless, they did not completely understand when I tried to ask about the issue of visual integrity or the progressive loss of the surrounding agrarian landscape. People care a lot and are proud of their villa. But they were simply not familiar with the idea of visual integrity, the relationship between the villa and the former agrarian landscape. Instead, they enjoyed walking through the villa's garden and seeing it when they were going to other parts of the village, such as the square or the market as in Fig.53. As a customer stated here:

“especially on Saturday when there is the market, when you go there is nice as you can pass through the villa's garden” (Client of the old people's center, 70-80).

This social group has a contradictory relationship with the landscape of the Palladian villa. The social group, although expressing enthusiasm for the conservation of the aristocratic, idealized manicured rural heritage landscape, still has a set of heritage social practices that are in dissonance with World Heritage regulations. On the one side, they appreciate the “institutional” cultural heritage. On the other, they are unfamiliar with the idea of visual conservation:

“the surrounding of the villa as a loss of visual cones? I do not think so, here there are many important buildings as the schools and they recently did a park around the villa and lighted a walkway, it is beautiful”
(Barkeeper, woman, 60)

“The villa and the surroundings are really well preserved, especially thanks to the park around it, I didn’t know about negative remarks by ICOMOS experts...”
(Customer, woman 45 main bar)

“The visual cones of the villa might be lost but anyway the villa can be seen, is visible, they created a nice walkway which shows how it is beautiful”
(Customer of the old people’s center, 70-80).

From the barkeeper’s perspective, as well as that of the old people’s center’s clients, the villa is beautiful and well preserved. Moreover, the it plays an important role in the community, as it is a gathering place for cultural events, weddings, and art exhibitions. Paradoxically, the common functions of the village are organized around the villa, and although this is seen as “inappropriate development” by experts, it is very rational for the inhabitants:

“all the functions of the village are located in the vicinity of the villa such as the library in the barn, the church, center for old people, the university for old people, the schools” (Teenager, 15)

If we follow the inhabitants’ perspective, the villa becomes one of the many elements of the village of Caldogno, but it is not the central element as the conservationists believe. The inhabitants frequently mentioned the square, the church, and the clock tower while talking about the villa’s surroundings. The church and the clock tower shown in Fig.64, were reconstructed at the beginning of the last century and have a feeling of being centrally located in the village. According to the inhabitants, the church is the center. I spoke with bar customers and asked whether they considered the villa to be the village’s center:

“No, not the villa, the square is the heart of the village as well as the church”
(Woman, 60).

“We go to the villa when there are cultural events, but the church is the meeting point, we are still almost all religious, therefore the parish center is important as well” (Bar Customer, woman, 70).

These quotes help to illustrate that the villa is a place for cultural events, but not the center of the landscape. From the inhabitants’ perspective, the center is the place where people

mainly gather, and that is still the church. Today, the church, in both the material and social sense, still plays a significant role in the inhabitants' everyday lives, as it did in pre-Palladian times. If we observe the pattern of suburbanization in villages of the Palladian villas, especially in the regions of Fratta Polesine, Quinto Vicentino or Piombino Dese, we can see that they are all organized around churches. The village's central Christian church existed before 1000 A.D. When it was first mapped, the border of the Municipality of Caldogno was based on the parish borders. The parish has an important position within the village in material and social terms, a strong religious sensibility still exists among its inhabitants, continuing into the present (Pendin, 1996).

From the perspective of World Heritage conservation, the landscape surrounding the villa should keep its "rural character" (Basili *et al.*, 2016). It should be possible to appreciate the rurality of the landscape, especially by looking out from the loggia or the windows. If we look at the surrounding from Villa Caldogno's loggia or from its windows, the sense of visual control which could be perceived from Villa Saraceno, is missing. What the original landowner would have seen while looking out on the fields, can no longer be seen, as the villa is now surrounded by many buildings of similar height and the view has been blocked.

The view of the land, the most important aspect of the Venetian Republic's socio-cultural landscape of "colonization", of the emerging Whig Aristocracy, and of Thomas Jefferson, has been lost. The colonizer's visual control of nature and of the work of slaves, is somehow disappearing. Nevertheless, from the inhabitants' perspective, the transformation of the landscape is not a loss. The village's inhabitants only see the building from the outside, they can only enter it at weekends or for cultural events. As they focus exclusively on the outside view of the work of art, they do not see the loss of the agrarian landscape surrounding it as a problem.

These territories' infinite space and horizon, as watched over by American and English country houses, has disappeared and somehow been de-colonized: the garden, the setting, and the Palladian Villa's landscape, as represented by the ICOMOS experts, have been re-scaled and transformed. The sense of the infinite in the free horizon, seen in the view from Villa Saraceno, has here been reduced to the profile of a suburban context.

I have identified two different attributes of the landscape, i.e. the church and the clock tower. Considering these *missing attributes*, it could be important to re-contextualize the

rural heritage landscapes of the Palladian Villas. In the next subchapter, I will address the contradictions of the Palladian Villa's social group in respect of the approach to the rural heritage landscape. The following pictures show the newly reshaped urban park which takes the place of the villa's garden and the Church and clock tower of the village and the Map of the city of Caldogno of the XVI century where the Church indicated the place of Caldogno.



Figure 61 The newly reshaped urban park which takes the place of the villa's garden, view from the barn (Torelli)



Figure 62 Church and clock tower of the village (Torelli)

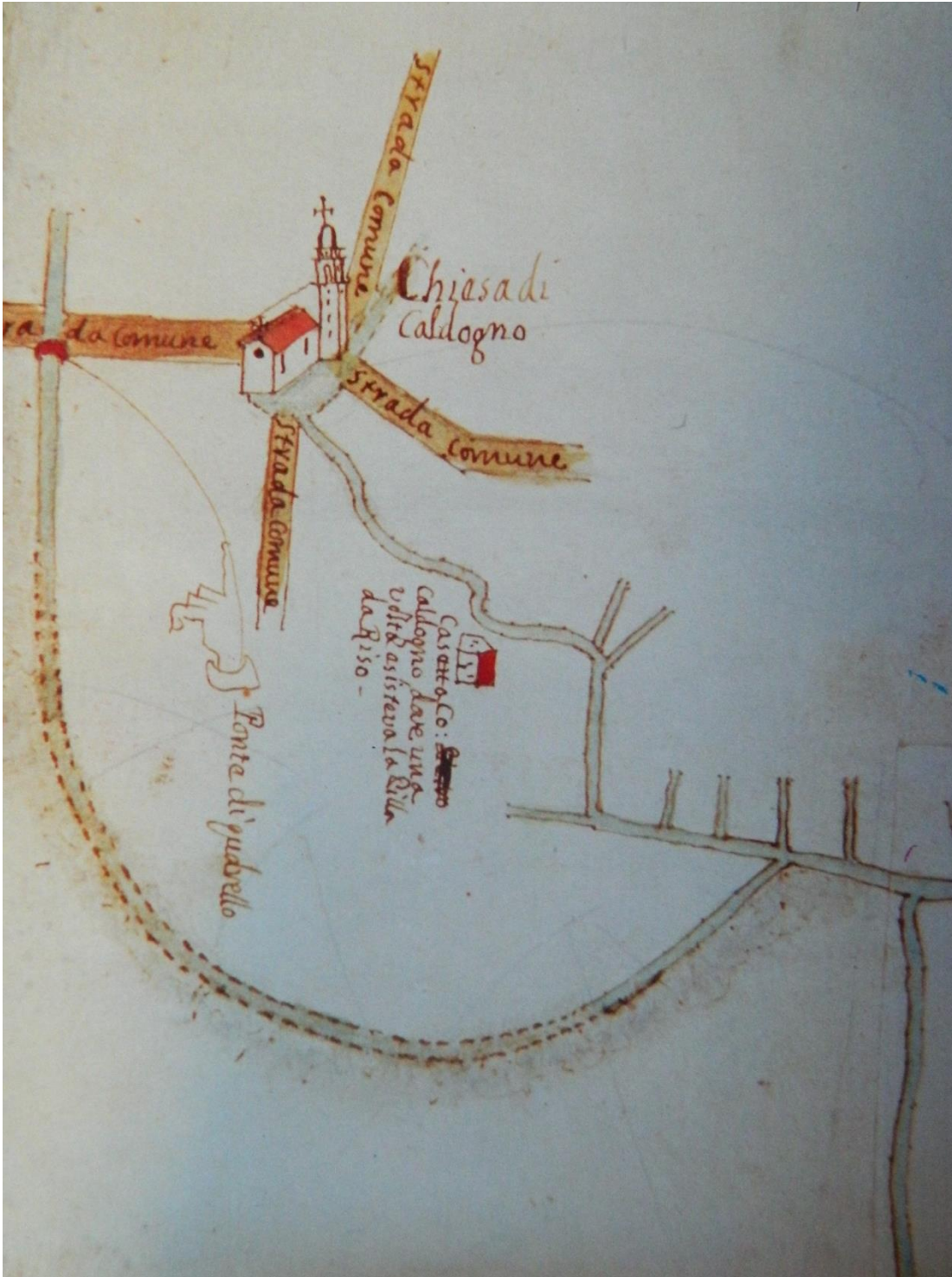


Figure 63 Map of the city of Caldoggno of the XVI century (Pandin, 1996)

6.3 A contradictory rural middle class

In the following chapter, I will describe the complexities of the Palladian villa's social group. First, I will report more interviews in which I noted this contradiction, then I will try to explain these contradictions by dividing it roughly into two main groups.

The inhabitants of the landscape studied have contradictory approaches to heritage landscape conservation and agriculture. The difference between what they say and what they do, is a typical contradiction of modernity: they express very institutionalized ideas of heritage and landscape, while, on the other hand, the way they behave in their suburbanized environment suggests a completely different understanding. From the interviews carried out at Villa Saraceno and in similar harmonic contexts, and from observing village life at Villa Caldogno, I have outlined some contradictions in the social group regarding the understanding of the rural landscape as heritage.

Whereas in the first case I collected many "authorized" definitions of heritage (Smith, 2006), in the second case, I have observed some social practices which express a different understanding of the rural landscape as heritage and the tendency to instead disregard cultural heritage and landscape conservation. For example, the host of the guest house where I stayed in Caldogno told me about her decision to move:

"Me and my husband, we are from the city and we wanted a house outside the city, in the countryside, so we moved here, and we opened a B&B"
(Airbnb host, woman, c.a. 50 years old)

It is very common for people moving from the city to the countryside to be convinced that life outside the city can be healthier and closer to nature; this attitude centers around the desire to create a new life in a fresh setting. According to McCarthy, it is "crystal clear that the movement from town to countryside is directly inspired by the specific values encountered in the rural" (McCarthy, J. 2008, p.132). In this sense, the reason for moving to the countryside and urbanizing the landscape, is the rural landscape itself. The inhabitants of several villages close to the Palladian Villas say that they care about the preservation of the rural landscape, the environment, and the local traditions.

They often protest against new planning proposals from local and regional administrations, which they see as having potentially negative outcomes and organizing in associations for

the protection of their landscape and cultural heritage. In particular, they often write and send letters to the World Heritage Center regarding issues related to World Heritage sites. As Coombe emphasizes, local communities seem to be more aware of the UNESCO'S impact on heritage matters, and "have found within UNESCO's structures, categories and practices effective public means to shame state authorities for their failures" (Coombe, 2013, p.376).

On the one hand, they demand urban services and are "urbanizing" the rural landscape with car transport infrastructures and urban lifestyles. On the other hand, they want to protect the heritage and environment from transformation, and they want the rural landscape to remain unchanged in order to foster a sense of stability and legitimation for their settlement in these areas. Herein lies the contradiction which has been outlined by several scholars (Short, 2006; Bell, 2006; Murdoch, 2006; Machor, 1987). This behavior shows a dissociation between their suburban lifestyle and the construction of the rural landscape as heritage. The vice mayor of Caldogno told me that she loves her house in the village because:

"I have a view on the fields, and this the beautiful aspects of our village"
(Caldogno vice mayor, woman, 50 years old c.a.)

She told me she likes living in her village, because she feels close to the beauty of the agrarian landscape. Paradoxically, her house is a typical, detached, suburban house and one of the causes of the destruction of the aesthetic qualities she is referring to.

Here, the parish priest expresses his concern about the village's recent urban expansion:

"I moved here because I wanted to have some green areas, but everything changed completely, it has been built so much, politicians do what they want" (Parish priest, c.a. 60 years old).

Another resident reinforces this same concern:

"Here it was just countryside. My granny, she is 80, she told me here used to be completely empty, and now you see, how much has been built, and in a bad way, one house close to the other without a harmonic planning"
(Airbnb host, 50 years old c.a.).

The inhabitants of this landscape are becoming more aware of the aesthetic criticism of the place where they live, and the idea of loss of the "heritage landscape." This tends to

lead to an idealized, nostalgic version of the past, and a pessimistic view of the present and the future. Light identifies this concern for the landscape and its preservation as an attempt to affirm class identity: In order to better define themselves, the new rural middle classes tend to see the farming community as “other,” illiterate, not properly civilized, and opposed to the “urban” sensibility for cultural heritage knowledge and appreciation (Light, 2015).

It appears that when the inhabitants are asked about *heritage*, they feel obliged to give *authorized* definitions but at the same time, they are not aware of, and do not care about ICOMOS’s Outstanding Universal Values, such as visual integrity idea or the centrality of the villa. Moreover, they enjoy the *countryside experience* created by the experts while simultaneously practicing and caring about a radically different way of farming. They appreciate the intactness of the rural landscape but have transformed it by building their detached houses in recent decades.

Although it is very difficult to draw a line between these tendencies, I want to try to divide it roughly into two main groups.

Table 4 Transformations of the landscape from the 1950s until today (Torelli)

1950 _ <i>peasant and landowners</i>
1970 - 1990 _ <i>old generation of small-scale industries and agriculture</i>
1990 - today _ <i>new generation of urban services</i>

As represented in the Tab. above, the social organization was still based on landowners and peasants in the 1950s. It was not until the 1960s that agriculture was mechanized and *mezzadria*, a form of sharecropping of the time, was abolished. Since the 1970s, the landscape has been transformed by industrialization and suburbanization and a new social organization has arisen. Many citizens have moved into these areas from urban city centers, from the 1990s until today.

The evolution of the Palladian villa landscape’s social structure from the 1950s until today, can be identified in the transformation of the binary class system of landowners and peasants into a more nuanced system (Short, 2006). This evolution is described by Murdoch as “a complex rural middle class (which) arise, while before only two classes where opposing: traditional farm workers and landowners” (Murdoch, 2006, p.171).

As represented in the following table, this division offers an explanation for the way in which these groups relate to the rural a heritage landscape.

Table 5 Comparison of the social groups of the Palladian villas’ landscape (Torelli)

Social group	Older generation (Villa Caldogno)	New generation (Villa Sarceno)
lifestyles	<i>Rural and urban lifestyle</i>	<i>Urban lifestyle</i>
Social boundaries	<i>Strong social ties as family, parish, religious community</i>	<i>Liquid relationships, grouping in sport or environmental/ cultural heritage associations</i>
Ways of experiencing agriculture as heritage	<i>Knowledge of the agrarian landscape and the practice feeling the agrarian lifestyle as a loss</i>	<i>Idealization, romanticization of the agrarian landscape as tourists, Authorized definitions</i>

I use the term *older generation* to refer to that group which is closer to pre-industrial and agrarian lifestyles, closeness and religious practices, who moved in the 1970s to create their own industries close to the grandparents’ agrarian tenure. As it is mainly composed of old people, it is slowly disappearing. Nevertheless, certain characteristics can be observed. This group is still knowledgeable about agrarian practices and can be identified as premodern.

I use the term *new generation* to refer to the people who moved from the cities to the villages of the Palladian villas around the 1990s, who are completely urbanized, have modern behaviors and beliefs, work in the urban service sector, as for example, tourism, and view agriculture and the Palladian villa in a romantic and modern way. According to Short, in the former farmer community, the *individuum* used to be strictly related to the family and to the place where one was born. But in the new generation, individuals tend to

abandon patriarchal and community based pre-industrial social ties, instead connecting through liquid relationships. They are settlers and therefore choose who they want to live with based on common interests, like hobbies, sports, and beliefs, in ever changing networks and never having one as a given (Short, 2006). The new generation is instead bounded by liquid relationships, such as the membership of an association for sporting activities, or cultural heritage and environmental protection. They appreciate the Palladian villa's rural landscape as heritage and are in agreement with ICOMOS experts' visual representations.

This group is both urbanizing and loving the rural landscape, it *does* care about the preservation of the rural landscape and writing letters to the World Heritage Center. These new generation continue to create and re-create the rupture of modernity. Coming from the city, they want to show they have a certain level of cultural appreciation to distinguish themselves from the earlier generation of agricultural laborers. In their understanding, urban and rural life are very separate: the first is about the present and the second about the past. They have urban lifestyles and therefore want services and infrastructures like proper *urban citizens* but at same time, they understand the rural and agrarian landscape through authorized notions of heritage which legitimize their identity as a class.

In these chapters, I have compared the process of heritage production pertaining at Villa Sarceno and Villa Caldogno, and addressed the contradictions of the social group of the Palladian Villa. In the following chapter, certain aspects of the conservation will be problematized for ICOMOS and The Landmark Trust, regarding the visual representation and musealization, of agriculture. Afterwards, some possible modifications to the World Heritage Site's conservation scheme will be suggested.

7. Visual representation and agriculture as heritage experience

In this Chapter I will discuss the visual representation of history used by the Landmark Trust, in accordance with the UNESCO conservation scheme and I will problematize the selectivity of the visual representation in terms of socio-historical contextualization. Especially I will consider the way in which rurality is constructed and the idea of the “masterpiece of creative genius” is reinforced. Afterwards, I will look at the musealization of agriculture for touristic purposes operated by the Trust. I will illuminate the lack of sustainability of the agriculture of the Renaissance as well as the contradictory relation between World Heritage and heritage commodification. In conclusion, I will evaluate the potential for changing the conservation scheme of this site in order to overcome the problems identified.

7.1 A selective visual representation of history

According to Jokilehto, visual integrity ensures that the “iconic image” of natural or cultural heritage is conserved and is about “assessing the extent to which the property includes all elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value” (Jokilehto, 2008, p.5). However, in the heritage studies discourse, the visual representation of heritage sites and landscapes has been identified as being a selective medium in some cases. According to Watson and Waterton, the visual representation of heritage is a powerful medium used to foster certain understandings of heritage and undermine others (Watson & Waterton, 2010). For each visual representation of heritage, we might ask ourselves, “who is making what or whom visible” (Wenk & Krebs, 2007 p.31). ICOMOS and The Landmark Trust, together with their enthusiastic visitors, are constructing these landscapes out of a nostalgic need for aesthetic consumption. However, this is accompanied by risk that Choay pointed out, that “the beauty has been slowly taking the place of the memory” (Choay, 1995, p.16).

In this subchapter, I will problematize the selective visual representation of history used by the Landmark Trust, in accordance with the UNESCO conservation scheme, by casting light on three main issues. The first concerns the narrative of the masterpiece of creative genius, the second, the Calvinist and capitalistic nature of the values behind the experts’

representation of this landscape, and finally, the English idealization of a pristine rural landscape.

7.1.1 The narrative of the masterpiece of creative genius

The aspect of World heritage Conservation addressed here concerns the use of an author's idea as employed in a work of art, like the villa, in the context of a regional landscape. The rural heritage landscape of the Palladian Villa has been depicted by art historians as well as by the ICOMOS experts, as the work of Palladio. This recognition of authorship by art historians is, in fact, the starting point for the definition of the landscape's values and therefore, the modalities of conservation. In the justification for the nomination, the experts stated:

“the extraordinary imprint that one single artist was able to leave on a territory”

“its work has deeply engraved the agrarian historic landscape of the Veneto so that it has become a real model to be protected” (Basili *et al.*, 2016)

How can the idea of an authored work of art be extended to an entire landscape? How can a landscape become a “real model to be protected”? How can an inhabited landscape be conserved as a work of art, or as a heritage object? If heritage means present-day people or institutions telling stories about the past and basing value on related objects in a contemporary society, and if we acknowledge that objective knowledge about the past does not exist, then it is possible to question even the most established knowledge. Art historians have been telling us the history of the Renaissance since the 16th century.

Even today, their writings are considered to be the *truth*. National and European history has been organized through museum exhibitions and other explanations, on the basis of this truth. Nevertheless, contemporary art history scholars question some aspects of Renaissance history, such as the idea of a progressive and linear interpretation of art history itself, or the recurrent idea of the “man” that may be investigated from a feminist perspective. I do not want to focus on these aspects, but I want to pinpoint one idea that forms the basis of western art history (Johnson, 2015).

This basis arises from an interpretation of Renaissance art and architecture, which is based on the idea of the author, or the “human creative genius” (ICOMOS, 1996). An author’s creativity and originality expressed through their work of art, is the reason why we value masterpieces. UNESCO also uses this idea as the first criterion for identifying a work of art as universal heritage. Therefore, this idea drives the conservation laws and policies that are being implemented in the Palladian villa today.

Johnson illustrates how the art historian Giorgio Vasari had a very great influence on what we know about the Renaissance today and how we tell *the Renaissance story*. The way in which we understand the art and art history of this and other periods, is still influenced by his stories about the lives of artists of the time. Today, we still believe that a work of art is primarily the product of its author, his creativity, and originality. We also tend to believe that art should be read in a chronological, linear way; the development of “the artistic progress” as museum’s exhibit art today (Johnson, 2015).

The authorship recognized by art historians is in fact the starting point for defining the landscape’s values and therefore, its modalities of conservation. I have been describing the historic Italian garden and agrarian landscape of the Palladian Villa. In the second case, the project has extended into the surrounding environment. This aspect might explain the shortcomings of this form of conservation, in that it extends the idea of authorship to entire, inhabited villages. The understanding of heritage as an object created by an author, is simply extended to the entire landscape, thereby ignoring the role played by the related community in producing this landscape throughout history, forgetting its complex socio-cultural interrelations and reducing it to an “extraordinary imprint”, or a brand.

I believe that the landscape was not only “the author’s”, Palladio’s, construction but that of Palladio and the community, together, over time. Once we recognize that it has been co-produced by different actors, such as the peasants of the past, the entire community might develop a stronger sense of ownership and responsibility, and be invested in the custodianship of its own land. The idea of an *authored landscape* might be practical for branding but it inevitably leads to distinctions between the genius and the community, as well as the experts who can decipher and explain the landscape as a masterpiece to the lay people who are living in it. Generally, I believe that the landscape is the product of its

own community through time, and that selecting a defined time and freezing the landscape at that time, inevitably leads to conflicts.

In the 16th century, during the time of Palladio, agriculture was still the main activity in the village of Caldogno. There were few land-owning families, while the majority of the population were peasants who slept in mud and straw houses. They worked on the influential families' land by paying with part of the results of their cultivation.

According to Cornaro, agriculture in the late Renaissance Venetian context included reclamation works which were as much a beautification of the landscape as the architecture was. The interest in agriculture of the time, then, should not be taken as indicating a growing respect for peasants or a decrease in the intolerable injustice they faced. Peasants and servants were excluded from the appreciation of the landscape framed by the Palladian villa. Peasants were thought of as dangerous animals, as they were much more numerous than the landowners and, according to the property owners, much "wilder". The living spaces had to be "beautiful", while the kitchens or peasants' rooms could be "ugly" (Moriani, 2008). As in the Venetian context, The Whig aristocracy was also involved in the agrarian revolution of the 18th century; the technological development of reclamation and rationalization of agriculture transformed the community-based system of open field cultivation into a system of private ownership, with enclosed walls, which left many farmers in poverty, thanks to state expropriations.

I am suggesting that the way in which the Villa Sarceno landscape is conserved denies the peasant community's contribution to shaping the land through the centuries. In this process, historical accuracy has been lost; the story of the peasants working in these fields until the first half of the last century, is not told. The story is decontextualized; we know nothing about the peasants of the time, and their stories remain hidden.

7.1.2 The English idealization of a pristine rural landscape

The rural landscape of Villa Caldogno, and here I am referring to all the sub-urbanized landscape of the Palladian villas, displays a high level of hybridity because it is also characterized by certain urban features. It has therefore been defined as *lost heritage* by intellectuals and the ICOMOS experts. Instead, the landscape in Villa Sarceno is visually

represented through a manicured rural background, with the aim of the conservation being to conserve the landscape as a masterpiece and display the style of Palladianism.

The landscape here is properly “rural” in English terms, and the urban aspects of the region’s sub-urbanization have been removed. The selection of the visual representation is about an attempt to represent the idea of Palladio’s landscape being related to intellectual *otium*, nostalgia, and romanticism.

The idealized rurality is also expressed in ICOMOS assessment reports, in that the words *urban* and *change* are related to *risk*, *threat*, and *pressure*. Suburbanization is seen as “messy and destructive”, affecting the “original relationship between city and countryside”, reducing the “spatial and visual relationship with the agricultural context” and leading to a “progressive loss of identity in the Veneto landscape” (Basili, *et al.*, 2016).

In 18th century England, there was a growing taste for rural scenery. During this time, the practice of landscape design was born. Influenced by Romanticism, the English garden is not about harmonic proportions and unity in composition but instead about nostalgia for the past and ruins. Therefore, many Palladian architects inserted little temples, like citations, into the landscape. The architects were looking for sensations and sensitive experience, and went beyond abstract beauty and symbolism (Rogers, 2001). Here, although Palladio’s architecture was about the functional translation of classicism into the architecture of everyday life, English landowners used its work to express a nostalgic and aristocratic approach to classicism.

The clients of this time, members of the Whig aristocracy, wanted landscape architects to create gardens for them which were free from the geometry and rigorous proportions of the classic Renaissance garden. On the other hand, they wanted to collect a lot of Renaissance pieces of art as *ruins*. Whig families treated Palladio as their heritage, considering England as a new Rome. The same kind of representation is depicted in the Landmark Trust website, as well as in UNESCO’s conservation scheme and the ICOMOS assessment reports.

The materialization of heritage of the Landmark Trust can be interpreted through a study from MacDonald, which looks at the formation of European Heritage from the rise of the EU onwards. She emphasizes that history is often used by politicians to foster a sense of

European identity: To unite the European countries' pasts, they attempt to create a homogeneous, generalized, common history of Europe around transnational events like Classicism, Christianity, Renaissance, European Humanism, Enlightenment, and the Holocaust (MacDonald, 2013). In this context, Palladianism can be seen as an attempt to create a *European* architectural style, as a model for architectural design, free from temporal and spatial peculiarities, just like the selection made by the Whig aristocracy's architects in the 18th century.

Nevertheless, the Palladian and Venetian villas served a fundamental role in defining Veneto's territory in topographic, social, and economic terms. As centers of agricultural management, they also provided work for the peasants in nearby rural villages, who worked on the properties by renting plots of land (Burns, 2012). At the time, many aristocrats, or *signori*, built their villas near smaller urban centers and rural villages. This ensured they had the security of the "city", while also providing the crisp air of the countryside.

Some of the villages were in clusters, each with gardens, walls, and their own properties. In Italy, it is hard to find completely open countryside, even in the vast Veneto region. There are thousands of interconnected villages, due to the historic Roman infrastructure. Therefore, the presence of smaller villages scattered throughout the countryside yet still connected with major centers, , makes it difficult to distinguish the urban centers from the rural countryside.

In Western Europe, like in England, the urban centers and countryside were heavily used but still clearly distinct, especially from the morphological and social perspectives. The countryside was made up of land properties and feudal *power houses*. Meanwhile, the urban centers were more dense, compact, and ruled by the mercantile classes. In Italy, especially if we consider the Veneto region, there is more continuity; small- and medium-sized towns and urban centers are sprinkled all over an entire region. In addition, the feudal power structures were combined with new capitalist professions in a way that gave rise to the mercantile countryside (Burns, 2012).

The owners of the new villas, especially in the Veneto region, came from the mercantile class, who invested their capital in agrarian activities. During this time, people could engage in professions and economic activities, for example, as doctors or lawyers but were only able to achieve a certain success by entering an aristocratic family. The new capitalist

society was, and maybe still is today, still dependent on aristocratic bounties. Italian capitalism did not lead to any social, economic, or democratic revolutions, in contrast to what happened at various times in the United States, for example (Sereni, 1961).

A second reason for an urbanized countryside is related to the settlements that preceded the villa, the castle typology. Many villas were realized by reconstructing former *castells* which were never isolated but close to rural villages or modest urban centers. The word *castello* does not only describe the building in isolation but also the entire rural village or small town enclosed by walls, that defended its population. As an evolution of the medieval castle, the villa was the product of a new moment in security defense systems, especially as they disappeared. However, some *castello* elements remained as parts of the villa, such as towers for doves (Moriani, 2008).

The word *villa* has a strict relationship with the rural land; in the 12th century, the villa was considered to be the portion of land where the house was also located (Burns, 2012). Palladio used to describe his projects as *case di villa*, meaning country houses located close to rural villages. In this sense, he followed the idea of the villa being a part of the land while also being a little town. The villa was about the land and its related rural village. In fact, in the case of Villa Maser in Maser, Palladio described the rural village of Maser as the villa and Villa Maser as the house. The term *villa* was used to include both the land and the rural village, because it was often part of the landowner's property.

These villas differed from their English counterparts located in the open countryside, in that they often faced the closest village's main square or street (Burns, 2012). If we think back and try to imagine what the landscape of the Palladian villa would have been like, we might have seen a landscape dotted with peasants working under a full sun and being overseen by the landowner. After a long day of working, we might have seen them walking back to their rural villages. The villa itself was composed of an urban and a rural part; the urban house and the rural structures (Ackermann, 1966; Moriani, 2008). As Ferrario points out, the mixture of urban and rural features that developed in the 1970s should be accepted as a peculiar aspect of this landscape (Ferrario, 2010). The landscape should also be maintained for its uniqueness, rather than being neglected because of an idealized sense of rurality.

In the case of Saraceno, the Palladian Villa's landscape has been decontextualized in order to appear purely "rural", neatly manicured, and without "urban" signs or people. Here the rural and the urban are strictly divided, with the first eliminating the second. Heritage is interpreted as a fixed historical value that cannot be changed or transformed. It is homogenous, fixed, stable, and ensured by the conservation of the visual.

In addition to the aesthetic point of view, religion also plays an important role here. Catholic religious practice has been shaping the village of Caldogno since pre-Palladian Villa times, when the parish borders defined those of the village. The Palladian landscape is generally perceived to be secular or at least Protestant, whereby civic values are expressed through religious symbolism. The legitimation of the Whigs' power was guaranteed by Palladio's civic architecture, which in comparison to the contemporary baroque style, used religious symbolism for civic purposes. This secular architecture was fitting for the Whigs' understanding of religion. In fact, some of Palladio's customers even followed Protestantism and Calvinism, as in Colen Campel's Stourhead House (1720-4). This became a model home for Whig families (Ackermann, 1966).

In fact, the legitimation of the Whig power was guaranteed by Palladio's civic architecture, because it used religious symbolism for civic purposes. This architecture suited the Whig understanding of religion, by embedding the idea that work, intended in the capitalistic term, has a spiritual value, according to Calvinism. Once again, the aspect that World Heritage conservation wants to save, namely, the protestant character of a landscape organized around a temple to work and production, the villa, is disappearing. In fact, the inhabitants have instead settled around the catholic church, both before and after Palladio's time. They perceive the church to be the center of their village, not the villa.

Detached houses, privately built in the 1970s, have compromised the view of the horizon from the Palladian Villa. This settlement of unruly, disorganized detached houses was part of the small-scale industrialization process. The families in the Northeast often settled around historic villages instead of cities, as they wanted to keep their pieces of land and be close to their religious communities. Even today, the inhabitants of central Veneto are still "maintaining strong relationships with the original family and previous friends" (Ferrario, 2010, p.132). In this subchapter I have considered two problematics related to the visual representation of the landscape as produced by the Trust and by UNESCO.

The first regards the idea of the masterpiece of creative genius and the second regards the English idealization of the landscape. In the next subchapter I will rather focus on the way in which agriculture is experienced in the musealized landscape of Villa Saraceno by stressing two problematics: the first regards the super productive model of agriculture of Palladio's time and the second regards the relation between World Heritage and heritage commodification.

7.2 The musealization of agriculture

The idea of conserving the visual representation of the landscape in the contemporary environment, which is implemented by the Landmark Trust, is like the idea of conserving an object in a museum. Of course, the object loses part of its meaning as soon as it is decontextualized.

We can see this heritage production process as top-down, namely creating what Halfacree defined as "congruent and unified" space (Halfacree, 2006 p.52), or the construction of the landscape as a museum. Museums tend to sever the relationship between the object and its original context, while outdoor sites are characterized by the interdependence of the heritage object and the site. Nevertheless, it is important to look at how each kind of agriculture is musealized through tourism and what kind of interpretation is channeled through tourism.

Chapters 5 and 6 were about the descriptions given by experts and the inhabitants of the Palladian villas landscape, and about their very different ways of experiencing agriculture in the contexts of Villa Saraceno and Villa Caldogno. I will now problematize the consequences of conserving late Renaissance agriculture through tourism, as the Landmark Trust is doing. First, I will reflect on the sustainability of the Renaissance model of agriculture and secondly, I will reflect on the relationship between World Heritage and tourism in this context.

7.2.1 Super-productive agriculture as a background

Today's contemporary concerns in the field of agrarian production in Veneto and internationally, are the abandonment of mixed cultivation and the increase in intensive farming. Agriculture has become increasingly specialized, rationalized, and industrialized in the "super-productive countryside" (Halfacree, 2007). This term describes the form of agriculture in which production is based on capital accumulation, which causes the loss of variety in crop typologies, loss of livestock, and loss of humid zones, the transformation of meadows into arable land to increase productive surface, and the loss of traditional irrigation systems and their land design.

As Tempesta points out, regional and European policies such as the European Common Agrarian Policy, seem to consider the agrarian landscape only as a good to be exploited. He suggests that the agricultural landscape should be instead seen as a common heritage, whose biodiversity and peculiar mixed cultures should be preserved. Meadows, livestock, hedgerows, and woods are disappearing in the Palladian villas' landscape. He suggests an extensive re-forestation process in the region, including the hilly and mountainous areas (Tempesta, 2017).

Many scholars have addressed the progressive loss of the agrarian attributes of Veneto's landscape from the 1950s onward. Today in fact, mulberries are disappearing, with the loss of silk production, the vineyard supports are mainly made of concrete, meadows are disappearing in favor of new, productive agricultural surfaces (Tempesta and Vecchiato, 2017). Tractors have been able to move freely on arable land since the 1950s. Therefore, roads are disappearing, as the productive surface is being enlarged. The trees in the *piantata veneta* today are often replaced by wood or concrete pillars. In addition, part-time agriculture has slowly been replaced by industrial greenhouses (Ferraio, 2011).

The agriculture in Villa Saraceno's landscape has been musealized for the tourist's experience, in order to reproduce the *landowner lifestyle*. It suggests a certain model of agriculture which is no different from the contemporary "super-productive countryside" (Halfacree, 2007). In fact, it is important to avoid an idealized representation of the Renaissance landscape: That approach to nature was unsustainable as it was based on slavery, monocultures, deforestation and capital accumulation.

I have seen that the agricultural elements which characterized the landscape during Palladio's Renaissance, were open fields without hedgerows and corn monocultures. Today, these very elements are considered to be aspects of the super-productive countryside (Halfacree, 2007).

Cosgrove describes the Renaissance as a starting point of the evolution from feudal to capitalist society. Castles were feudal settlements enclosed within high walls, whereas the villas had small fenced enclosures so that the owner could always be in control of the work taking place on the surrounding properties (Cosgrove, 1984). According to Cosgrove, the Renaissance painters of the 16th century aimed to capture the legitimization of the new bourgeoisie citizen of the Italian city-state and to symbolize the shift from the feudal organization of society to capitalism. The former was based on the idea of *value of use*; the land was a resource that fed its owners directly. For the latter, the land was a resource because of its *value of exchange*. The land became an object to be represented and shown as a status symbol.

That the Renaissance landscape is becoming World Heritage, is also thanks to its interpretation by Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson understood agrarian activities as a means of glorification, just like in Renaissance Veneto. At the beginning of the 17th century, middle class Europeans arrived in America from England, the Low Countries, and Rhineland. Everyone had access to an immense, fertile land of opportunity, and that also applied to people who had had nothing in Europe. According to Jefferson, America had to be a proudly agrarian society, organized and created by autonomous freeholders, in order to avoid centralization.

This is especially apparent in the colonial houses at the centers of plantations, like those found in Virginia and the Carolinas. In the newly born continent, away from the country estate life of husbandry and hunting, Jefferson understood agriculture as a social system of independent owners within an anti-urban aesthetic, living in a sort of pastoral golden age. He used Palladio's work to express agriculture's mechanization throughout the national territory. This was expressed in organized geometrical forms through mathematics and the cartesian system, with a non-hierarchical grid that thereby also organized its consumption (Rogers, 2001).

The manicured rural background created at Villa Saraceno wants to remind us of the extensive fields of late Renaissance cultivation. The land surrounding the villa and the suggested form of agriculture is very unsustainable, namely the capitalist agriculture of corn monocultures in the late Renaissance. The conservation of the landscape exclusively for its aesthetic and historic aspects, appears to hinder the conservation of a sustainable agriculture. I therefore suggest that the conservation of visual integrity in this context, might lead to the reinforcement of certain trends based on the exploitation of agriculture.

In contrast, agriculture is experienced as an everyday practice in the Villa Caldono landscape, as well as in the sub-urbanized Palladian villa landscape. A sustainable small-scale and part-time agriculture has developed in the suburbanized landscape where many areas have been changed from agrarian to residential.

Due to the lack of political regulation since the 1970s, every house has a piece of land protected by hedgerows, with differentiated crop typologies. Small-scale agriculture is for the family or village's consumption. In this way, it reinforces biodiversity and a sense of neighborhood and limits the growth of professional farmers. Today, these are agricultural entrepreneurs and their activities are becoming ever more detached from natural limits and dependent on international financial markets (De Pin A., 2014).

Paradoxically, agricultural practice at the familial scale and its attributes, are being kept alive by the modalities of this suburbanization process. The suburbanization in Caldono shows its hybridity; it is composed of elements from the agrarian past, car transport services, and an unplanned distribution of self-built, detached houses in which everyone maintains a piece of land and vegetable garden. Several scholars have considered the region's suburbanization, or better the *città diffusa*, in the recent urban planning literature with a fresh perspective (Indovina, 2009; Secchi, 2005).

Two areas of rural land in Veneto are compared in the two pictures below. The first is without suburbanization, as the Villa Saraceno landscape, and the second is suburbanized like Villa Caldono. In the first picture, the area is still completely agrarian, and extensively cultivated fields, monocultures without hedgerows, and mechanized irrigation systems can be seen. As Ferrario puts it, "dispersed low-density urbanization seems instead to have carried out an action of conservation of the diversity of agricultural space" (Ferrario, 2010, p.142). According to Ferrario, land property fragmentation and these modalities of small-

scale land cultivation, are peculiar aspects of the Veneto countryside's suburbanization (Ferrario, 2010, p.142).



Figure 64 Completely agricultural area as in the case of the surroundings of Villa Saraceno (Bing)



Figure 65 Suburbanized area as in the case of Villa Caldogno (Bing)

The way in which vegetable gardens and many pieces of land are cultivated in the village of Caldogno, is very much closer to the agriculture practiced by monks, the elements of which were fields enclosed by hedgerows and production based on food supply. I therefore suggest that the suburbanized landscape has some points in common with the medieval one. In the comparison in the following Table, I want to show that the way in which the agrarian landscape should, according the historical sources and the conservation scheme, be conserved, is rather close to an agricultural typology which many scholars now consider to be unsustainable.

Table 6 Comparison between the suburbanized and medieval landscape and the late Renaissance's typology of agriculture (Torelli)

Suburbanized landscape in Veneto = medieval landscape	Renaissance landscape = properly conserved landscape
enclosed fields with hedgerows	Open fields, corn monocultures
production based on food supply	production based on profit

Tempesta notes that 50% of the agrarian entrepreneurs in Veneto have shut down their operations since 1990, due to increasing specialization and costs. The number of enterprises is decreasing, but the surface of each of them is increasing. Smaller agrarian enterprises still account for almost half of the total enterprise in the region. In this context, the conservation of small-scale agriculture is becoming increasingly important. Reminiscent of the monks' practice of enclosing pieces of land with hedgerows, the inhabitants, have evolved and continue to sustainably conserve agriculture. I am therefore arguing that the kind of agriculture which is conserved by the Trust and UNESCO is not a sustainable one. I am suggesting that the conservation scheme could be changed in order to consider the peculiar small-scale agriculture of the suburbanized landscape of Veneto. In the next subchapter I will reflect on the contradictory relationship between World Heritage Conservation and tourism in Veneto and focusing of heritage commodification.

7.2.2 Heritage commodification and the “countryside experience”

In a time of neoliberal governmentality, the *heritagization* of many places, especially in Europe, can be related to a rise in cultural tourism, a new form of economy in a post-industrial society. The *heritage boom*, which started around the second half of the 1970s and increased in the beginning of the 1980s, is fundamental to the academic field of heritage studies, because it generates a rich response and debate around heritage and its commodification, as expressed by Hewison, who coined the term *the heritage industry* (Hewison, 1987). *Heritage commodification* here means the process of transforming heritage sites, objects or rituals, into commodities through cultural tourism. The World Heritage phenomenon has been interpreted by several scholars as supporting the trend of progressive commodification of heritage objects and landscapes. Since the ratification of the World Heritage Convention in 1972, in fact, an enormous number of new site nominations have been requested by state parties.

The rise of heritage tourism relates to the growing wealthy European middle class's increasing mobility for leisure, and it is a response to the decline of the industrial economy. This will later be slowly replaced by the contemporary service and information society (Harrison, 2013; Smith, 2006). For rural heritage landscapes, this trend constitutes the rise of the rural tourism sector, in other words, “the countryside of today has gradually shifted from being a landscape of production to also being a landscape of consumption” (Dymitrow & Stenseke, 2016. p.1).

The enthusiasm for the countryside and its commodification, is therefore nothing new. If we look back to the second industrial revolution, about the second half of the 19th century, a “countryside cultural industry” was already developing in England, one of the most industrialized countries of the time (Short, 2006, p.135). As a response to problematic urban living, the upper middle classes started to consume the countryside through weekend stays and through the visual consumption of paintings and prints.

Bell's argument follows that the rural landscape can be an object of neoliberal consumption beyond heritage tourism, through consumerism and leisure in general. Today, the rural landscape is still packaged with healthy connotations for products like “television advertisements, clothing and dishes” (Bell, 2006, p.153). What makes the difference between the consumption of products and the consumption of heritage sites, is the

commodification of the “experience.” Unlike other products, heritage can be visited and is about the interpretation of the past.

Conservation projects aimed at urban regeneration and the relaunch of the local or regional economy, are increasing in North America and Europe (Graham *et al.*, 2000, p.61).

The increasing practice of adaptive reuse consists of defining new functions for otherwise abandoned, post-industrial or post productive areas. These areas no longer function and instead are becoming sites for recreation and memory experiences, thereby building new identities for their locations. Heritage today, is still being used as an economic answer to the global financial crises and the main consumers are of course, tourists and their “gaze” (Urry, 1990). Culture is then used as the background and commodified as a result (Harrison, 2013).

Heritage tourism, in relation to the Palladian villa landscape, has deeper historical roots. As Vallerani remembers the rise of the iconography and description of the Palladian villa landscape, it is as part of the context of the Grand Tours that date back to the 17th and 18th centuries. During fascism in Italy, there was an important revival of the rural landscape and the Roman features of the Palladian Villa were particularly suited for the dictatorship’s propaganda and the legitimization of the city of Vicenza’s urbanization. Several guides for tourists were produced during the fascist regime (Vallerani cited in Cosgrove, 1991).

With the spread of tourism in the Veneto region toward the 1980s, the Palladian Villa landscape was also perceived as an economic resource. The production of touristic guides increased during the 1970s and the 1980s, for example, the *Panorama Veneto* by Silvestrini. Through the editorial production of the Touring Club the countryside increasingly became an object of post-modern admiration, rather than being synonymously associated with hard work (Vallerani in Cosgrove p.9., 1991). Today, the public administration in the region still supports the production of foods deriving from communal territory, such as a pancake which is typical of the area, and folklore festivals about earlier agrarian life.

Many authors have pointed out the relationship between World Heritage and heritage tourism, whereby World Heritage supports tourism and the trend toward progressive commodification of heritage objects and landscape. We tend to think of tourism and conservation as two very distinct domains. However, the language used by UNESCO and the Landmark Trust is actually surprisingly similar. They both stress the importance of the

landscape's beauty rather than its historic complexities, in their descriptions of it. They both want beauty to be conserved against forms of suburbanization in a very modern fashion, fixed in time and space.

MacDonald points out that heritage, in comparison to memory, is characterized by *visitability*: Heritage as materialized in places or landscapes, can be visited. In this sense, MacDonald's idea of *past presencing* is particularly effective for describing what happens when tourists visit heritage sites (Mac Donald, 2013). I understand her idea as the embodiment of narratives of the past that shape people's behavior in certain ways, and *tourist consumption* in the way proposed by Urry, a co-construction of heritage involving the professional engaged in tourism and the visitor (Urry, 1990).

This relationship between heritage and tourism is often considered to be unproblematic and taken for granted by experts, as well as lay people in the region. However, we can already detect concern about the commodification of heritage for tourism in Lefebvre's writings:

"Signs of nature and the countryside, (are) delivered to consumption without an effective social practice enabling (...) to enter daily life"
(Lefebvre H., 2006, p.130).

According to Lefebvre, once a site becomes touristic and an object for consumption, it is detached from social life. According to this criticism, the *harmonic experiences* at Villa Saraceno and other villas of the region, can be related to the *postmodern spectacle* (Logan, 2019). The idea of the postmodern spectacle relates to the economy's shift from industrial to touristic: Historic city centers and landscapes are constantly being renovated and refurbished in order to support tourism and make heritage merely an object of commodification. The beautification of historic areas can be used as a form of expropriation: A void is created in historic city centers and the countryside, in order to create a heritage experience for tourists. The creation of the tourist experience reduces the rural landscape to a fiction and does not leave any space for formulating an idea of heritage "from the insider and for the insider". This means from and for, the community living within it (Selman, 2006, p.56).

In addition to the example of The Landmark Trust, many Venetian villas are owned by influential families, part of the new generation of urban services. Some of these families,

the richest, can afford the costs of restoration and are able to conserve the fabric and the gardens. Inevitably, by ensuring that the villas are physically preserved and protected, these families create enclosed spaces and visitors must buy a ticket to enter the properties and their landscapes.

Public access to the villa's landscape is therefore often limited and as Scott emphasizes, "dominant planning ideologies of rural preservation are producing socially inequitable outcomes and the creation of social and spatial segregation" (Scott, 2006). By focusing on visual aspects and therefore supporting contemporary tourism and restoration investment at the sites, the work of the ICOMOS experts empowers the legitimacy of the former and contemporary elites that control culture through the "safe spaces of spatial exclusion" that are scattered throughout the region.

The experts' idea of authenticity, and the domain of heritage commodification, might appear very distinct, but they are rather closely related, especially in the context of this study. This relationship has been already addressed by many scholars in the context of the heritage industry idea (Hewison, 1987).

Smith sheds light on the contradictory similarity of the heritage industry's approach and the Authorized Heritage Discourse of ICOMOS experts (Smith, 2006). In fact, heritage conservation experts generally see tourism, especially mass tourism, as a threat to the material conservation of heritage. However, in the context of the heritage boom, the inscription of sites as World Heritage has itself been supporting the rise of a "World Heritage brand", and has increasing the trend toward using heritage as a touristic resource.

Harrison describes World Heritage as a brand. He indicates that state parties, having realized the powerful effect of branding for attracting tourists on an international scale, started writing nomination proposals in order to increase site visits. Thus, for the state, its regional and local municipalities, site nominations then became the enhancement of heritage values, especially in terms of "picturesque aesthetic and historical importance." This included an obligation to follow a certain "set of regulation and conservation standards" (Harrison p. 88, 2013).

As Bodo observed in the early 2000s, in the context of the increasing production of goods and services, cultural policies have acquired an important role, and allowed the state to

regain control over heritage resources. In addition to the production of services and goods, tourism played a primary role in the institution of the Ministry of Heritage, Cultural Activities and Tourism, constituted in 2013 (Bodo C. and Bodo S., 2016). The Italian law n.77/2006, concerns the conservation of World Heritage Sites and states:

“the UNESCO sites, basic elements of the representation of our country internationally. (...) for each of them must be created a Commission responsible for Management Plan as well as for the related local touristic system (MIBACT, 2010).

The ideas put forward here are that the primary function of a World Heritage Site is to represent the country to the world, and that this representation happens through local tourism systems. Tourism is then seen as a way of locally implementing the internationalization of Italian heritage.

Nevertheless, I want to point out that heritage tourism should not be considered as merely a form of commodification. In this respect, I want to express my position in relation to the heritage industry discourse pioneered by Robert Hewison, which has been developing since the 1980s. According to Hewison, the heritage industry is about the recasting of historic events or historic sites for economic purposes in the present. Following his interpretation, Urry writes about the “touristic gaze,” or the way a tourist sees. The touristic gaze is a particular experience in an “authentic other” place, and createa a divide between the viewed and the viewer; it is often constructed artificially by professionally re-shaping places to attract visitors (Urry, 1990).

Smith states that, in this sense, tourism with a purely aesthetic visual consumption is obscuring a possible knowledge process and tourists are becoming passive consumers. She sums up Hewison’s “heritage industry critique” with the idea that, “tourism reduced heritage to simple entertainment, with the derogative motif of theme park” (Smith, 2006, p.33).

Generally, the commodification of heritage or the heritage industry, is seen as the reason for a loss of the site’s historical reliability and authenticity. I do not believe that heritage practices lose their authenticity when intertwined with economic ones. I take the position that, apart from economic consumption, tourism is a product of heritage in a very particular way. Furthermore, it supports certain ideology about what history is and what culture is

about, and therefore heritage tourism is worth investigating as a product of heritage. The relevance of tourism for cultural studies was also emphasized by MacCannell: "Tourism is not just an aggregate of merely commercial activities; it is also an ideological framing of history, nature, and tradition; a framing that has the power to reshape culture and nature to its own need" (MacCannell, 2002, p.1).

Drawing on MacCannell's vision, I consider tourism to be a serious heritage practice, which in this case shapes the UNESCO representation of World Heritage. Watson and Waterton analyzed how The National Trust and English Heritage use tourism and visual methods to construct ideas of heritage and nationhood, thus ensuring a "timeless and permanent sense of national identity evidence in the materiality and age of the objects displayed" (Watson and Waterton, 2010, p. 85). In the English country houses area of heritage tourism, a sector which employs visual representations to a massive extent, as Watson and Waterton point out, the National Trust or international heritage authorities often depict rural heritage images which are completely empty of people. The tourist then sees a usual selection of national heritage that obscures alternative representations of the rural past.

Watson and Waterton believe that the social dynamics of heritage creation are hidden in places without people, harmonic and peaceful. Therefore, they state that tourism is not just about heritage commodification, it is also a very powerful medium that makes enormous use of visual methods to transmit specific heritage ideologies. According to this interpretation, power determines what is made visible through tourism marketing and advertising. It is therefore important to subject the aesthetic qualities of heritage to critical inquiry and observe how they influence heritage interpretation (Watson and Waterton, 2010). In this subchapter I addressed two problematics related to the way in which agriculture is experience in the landscape of Villa Sarceno. The first one regards the model of agriculture which is transmitted which is a rather not sustainable one and the second regards the risk of heritage commodification.

In the next chapter I will suggest some ways of changing the conservation scheme by reporting best practices of inclusive heritage conservation for what regards the socio-historical contextualization and suggest changing the conservation scheme of the site into "a continuing cultural landscape" to overcome the problems of musealization of agriculture. The scheme represents the contemporary tendency of using of the "World heritage brand" at the private scale.

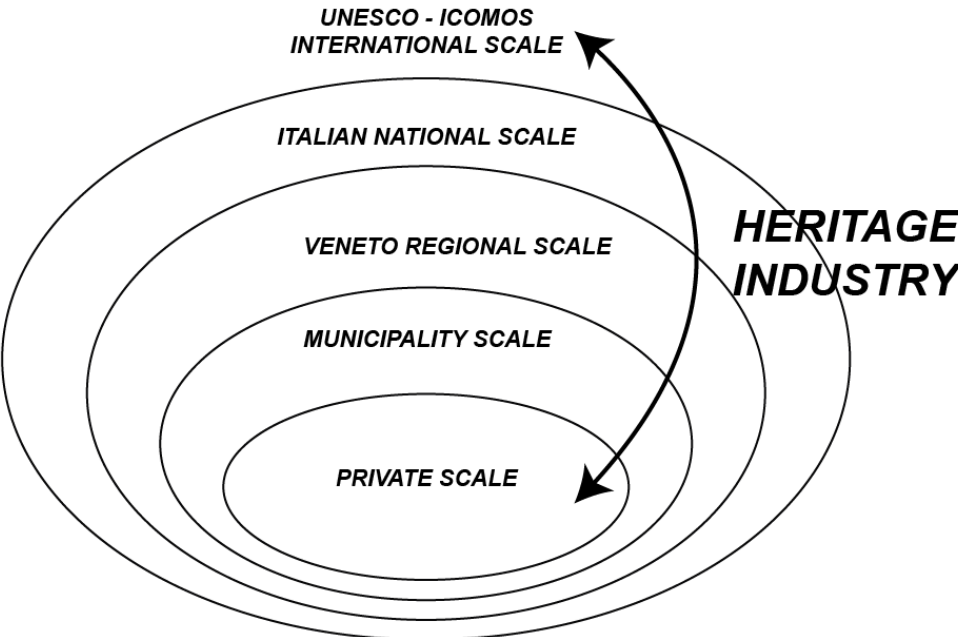


Figure 66 Use of the “UNESCO brand” for the legitimization of the heritage industry at private level (Torelli)

7.3 Reframing or renaming the conservation scheme

The ICOMOS experts and the Landmark Trust produce heritage according to a very “authorized” understanding. The Palladian villa landscape is intended to be exclusively that of Palladio and his landowners, the landscape that celebrates colonialism over the land and over the peasants, the landscape that is a safe respite from the region’s suburban areas. The heritage experience is very much about the reproduction of Renaissance power asymmetries. In the last subchapter, I addressed two main problems relating to World Heritage Conservation in my studied contexts: the selective visual representation of history and the musealization of agriculture for what regards Villa Saraceno and similar villas’ landscape. I will try here to draft a possible reframing or renaming of the World Heritage Site’s conservation scheme.

The first change is the reframing. With reframing I mean changing the conservation scheme of the World Heritage Site by integrating the way in which the inhabitants understand the landscape and its visual attributes. In this case the focus of the conservation scheme remains the visual integrity. The second change is about renaming. With renaming I mean changing the UNESCO category of the World Heritage Site. The site is now named as “ensemble of buildings” and the most important aspect to conserve is the view from the building on the surroundings. I suggest change the conservation category into “continuing cultural landscape” by focusing on the preservation of the peculiar small-scale agricultural practice I have described in the last chapters. In this case the focus is not the visual integrity but rather the conservation for this agrarian practice as according to the UNESCO “cultural landscape” idea.

7.3.1 Best practices of inclusive heritage conservation

According to Smith, we should engage with “the new and different ways that constitute ‘heritage’” to gain a “more holistic understanding of the uses and nature of heritage in contemporary societies” (Smith, 2006, p.15). My concerns are about what is shown in the visual representation and what is excluded, and about how agriculture is experienced in these two contexts. This question concerns the visual representation dimension of the landscape. I wonder about what is shown and what is not shown, what is the selection about and considering the visual representation of the landscape as a medium that is often

used to determine what heritage “is” or should be; visual conservation is often based on a legally defined list of “inherent and aesthetic values” (Watson & Waterton, 2010).

I would like to emphasize that from a socio-historical perspective, the current visual representation of this landscape in the UNESCO conservation scheme has been de-contextualized. The inhabitants have a different visual representation of the landscape which includes different attributes. I therefore suggest that the “local” visual representation and its attributes, should also be taken seriously by the experts. Here, I will suggest a possible way to obtain a more inclusive visual representation and a more flexible understanding of attributes.

Certain heritage conservation practices undermine very important functions that should be performed by heritage in democratic societies, for example, the experts and institutions’ tendency to recount conflicted history as if it were no. The villa and its properties are represented, but nothing is said about the peasants who lived there, their living conditions, how they worked in the cornfields, and how their villages form part of this heritage. The visual representation’s selectivity is problematic because it hides conflicts in the landscape’s history. It tells the story from an elitist perspective, whereby the landscape is treated as unproblematic and the peasants’ suffering is ignored.

The role played by slaves in shaping the landscape is often overlooked, particularly in the case of the rural historic landscape of the English country house (Smith, 2006). It could be important to use a socio-historical approach in response to this issue. The social history movement, which is based on a new, inclusive approach to heritage interpretation, has been fundamental in re-working the *museum object* by contextualizing it with materials about the everyday lives of common people (Aitchison, Macleod, and Shaw, 2000). I believe that the same process could be applied to historic buildings and landscapes.

At this point, I will describe a recent project by a site manager project at Monticello in Virginia, depicted in Fig.60, that might inspire some changes in the UNESCO conservation scheme, as well as in The Landmark Trust’s practice, and serve as an example of a socio-historical approach to conservation. Thomas Jefferson’s house, Monticello, was inspired by Villa Capra, *La Rotonda*. The third America president believed that agrarian activities would elevate the new American colonists. Having been through the War of Independence and created a new republic, America needed to legitimize a national ideology with its own

iconography. Classical humanism became the perfect vehicle for expressing the mentality of the “free independent landholders.” As Leo Marx states:

“With its passionate defense of a rural society, the image of the rich, rugged, but largely undeveloped, terrain of Virginia has been firmly embedded in our minds. It helps to make credible, as no abstract argument could, Jefferson's feeling for the singular plasticity of the American situation” (Marx, 1964, p. 118).

The idea contained in the visual, that of the control of the land and the slaves working it, is therefore re-used in the context of a new Renaissance Italy by expressing the “white” power of Europe’s colonization of the New World. Americans felt invested in the role of transforming a wild land and its native communities, into a new rural landscape. The example of Thomas Jefferson’s house, Monticello, in Virginia and its recent re-structuring is very useful when considering how visual representations of landscapes can be selective and historically inaccurate. “Monticello and the University of Virginia in Charlottesville” has been nominated as World Heritage solely because of its architectural significance and neoclassical style. The justification for the inscription reads as:

“Jefferson's use of an architectural vocabulary based upon classical antiquity symbolizes both the aspirations of the new American republic as the inheritor of European tradition and the cultural experimentation that could be expected as the country matured” (UNESCO webpage, 2019)

The house, inspired by Villa Rotonda, is located on Monticello Hill, which afforded Jefferson a view of his extensive properties. Although Jefferson at times condemned slavery in his public life, he supported it in his private life. During his lifetime, around 600 slaves worked for the president on the hill and its surroundings. The site managers have recently started to interpret and discuss the history of slaves at Monticello. Following in-depth research on the topic, they organized a reconstruction of the former slaves' houses, as they were mainly made of fragile and flimsy materials like wood and hay, and located on the slopes of the hill. Jefferson’s slaves lived under untenable conditions on his tobacco plantations, a parallel to the peasants’ conditions on Venetian landowners’ corn fields. Although the stories of slavery and peasant sharecropping (mezzadria) at the beginning of the 20th century are two very different experiences, I believe that an attempt to represent history in a more inclusive way could also be beneficial in the context of the studied case.



Figure 67 Vernacular houses of peasants of hay and mud in Veneto around 1920s-30s (Zanetti, 2014)

In an historical accurate intervention, the team at the World Heritage Site decided to show what this slavery landscape looked like by reconstructing the slaves' homes. Visitors state that the creation of these spaces is fundamental to discussing this topic that has been hidden away for so long. In the very harmonic landscape of Thomas Jefferson's Palladio-inspired Monticello, the dissonance is revealed through its deeper complexity, contradictions, and suffering, recognizing that slavery is a foundational aspect of the American Nation (Monticello.org).

In the case of Villa Saraceno's landscape, as well as in the many villas throughout the region conserved with the same modalities, it would be very interesting to see some aspects of peasant life being shown within the home, or by the reproduction of former houses in the vicinity, or simply a collection of stories on the web page. Slaves' houses were not too different from peasants' houses at the beginning of the last century in Veneto we see in Fig.69.

I believe this would be significant, not only for remembering peasants' conditions during the Renaissance, but also their living conditions as recently as early 1900. Some members of the community living in the nearby village of Agugliaro, could be descendants of such peasants from the last century. Researching and displaying their history might be a way to capture local attention and interest. The trust's manager has already expressed her desire to involve the community, and this might be a starting point for a community involvement strategy.

The UNESCO conservation scheme could include these aspects in the visual integrity by collecting the visual representation of inhabitants. Rather than following the present prescriptions, the ICOMOS experts should try to challenge their existing idea of visual integrity by integrating it with that of the villages' inhabitants. I see the inhabitants' representation of the landscape in the context of Villa Caldogno, as a powerful way of looking at this landscape from a new perspective. Through the visit to the site and many interviews in the Villa Caldogno landscape, I realized that the inhabitants do not understand the landscape in terms of visual integrity. The experts measure visual integrity by photographing the villa and the surrounding environment; the villa is implicitly considered to be the center of the landscape.



Figure 68 The village of Caldogno represented by its inhabitants: in the background the clock tower (Quaderni Caldonesi, 2015)

In this picture drawn by an inhabitant and published in the village book, it can clearly be seen that, for them, the centrality is located in the clock tower and the church. The centrality of the church and the clock tower in representations of the landscape, is surely a common element of many Palladian Villas located close to villages. This reveals dissonance between the Calvinist Palladian architecture and the Catholic territory in which the villa is located.

Having identified the problem of socio-historical contextualization deriving from the selectivity of the visual integrity idea, as expressed in the conservation scheme, I have suggested some ways in which it might be reframed by adding those attributes identified by the inhabitants. In the next chapter, I will suggest changing the conservation scheme of the site into “a continuing cultural landscape” to overcome the problems of musealization of agriculture.

7.3.2 A “continuing cultural landscape”

I have previously addressed two main problems deriving from the musealization of the landscape for touristic purposes. The first one is the unsustainable model of agriculture which is conserved and the second the risk of heritage commodification. The peculiar small-scale agriculture which I have shown through the pictures of the village of Caldogno and similar villages might be conserved as a “cultural landscape”, as a category defined by UNESCO.

I am convinced that agriculture should be conserved as a practice and not just as a painting. Rural heritage landscapes are not paintings, they should not be a value of exchange, and should not foster elitism, but should be about value of use and about a shared relationship of care with the land. The conservation of the landscape as a bare visual representation leads easily to focus on aesthetic qualities, easy to be commodified. The cultural landscape idea could embrace the protection of the *value of use* over the *value of exchange*, by overcoming the focus on visual aspects. With this stance, I am adopting the idea of a “continuing cultural landscape” and in doing so, I will try to reflect on the potential for using this idea for the conservation of the Palladian villa landscape as a World Heritage Site.

I suggest the use of this term because I believe that it might be useful for changing the modalities of conservation toward a more complex approach, rather than merely focusing on visual aspects. The visual aspect is one that easily leads to commodification of the land, while shared use of cultivated surfaces is a very contemporary conservation idea that might be helpful for facing the environmental and social challenges of our time.

In this section, I will describe UNESCO's idea of *cultural landscape*, as well as the *continuing landscape* category and reflect on the possibilities and limits of its application to the Palladian Villas World Heritage Site. I will also consider the possibility of the studied landscape eventually being conserved according to this category. The idea of continuing cultural landscape is more than a definition; it simultaneously defines what a rural heritage landscape is and how it should be conserved. The definition of cultural continuing landscape implies that the conservation is focused on a certain particular use of the landscape, or on a practice, rather than a set of harmonic views.

As Harrison emphasizes, by claiming to be "universally applicable" the World Heritage Convention has had to recognize several criticisms of its conservation philosophy and had to define new approaches, new ways of naming and conserving heritage according to the requests of those representing indigenous understandings (Harrison, 2013).

The idea of landscape based on visual conservation, is strictly Eurocentric and its implementation at the World Heritage Convention level has been criticized by representatives of non-monumental cultures. This led to the Convention being revised by the introduction of a new concept of landscape to overcome the culture-nature distinction, such as the adoption of the idea of Cultural Landscapes in 1992.

Of the state parties with a non-Western understanding of heritage, Japan in particular has been pushing for a more complex definition of authenticity (Von Droste, 2011). The idea that a monument should remain in its original state, it did not work for Japan architecture which is mainly made from wood and clay and constantly being rebuilt.

In addition to the idea of authenticity of monuments, the idea of landscape has also been complexified. Even at the European level, there has been an attempt to better define what a landscape is "Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors" (Co, E., 2012, pg.31). In a recent project, the European Commission attempted to introduce the ideas of

heritage by designation and heritage by appropriation: The first refers to “all cultural objects that are listed, institutionalized and labelled by experts” and the second, “the social, or ethnologic heritage that includes landscapes, townscapes, living places and non-exceptional building ensembles” (Dupagne, 2004, pg.11).

The idea of cultural landscape that UNESCO introduced into the field of conservation derives from the work of Carl Sauer. The human geographer and father of the cultural landscape concept, expressed it in his book *The Morphology of Landscape* (1925). He stated that “the cultural landscape is fashioned out of the natural landscape by a cultural group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape is the result” (as cited in Mitchell, *et al* 2009, p.15). The cultural landscape is a social group’s creation and therefore tells us something about the meaning that this group gives to the material elements of its environment. The cultural landscape is about the way a social group creates its habitat from the limits imposed by the geography of its habitation.

Carl Sauer created a clear distinction between the disciplines of geology and geography, thus contributing significantly to the identification of cultural groups in landscapes (Mercatanti, 2014). The concept of the “relationship of the social group with nature” although very generic, drastically distances itself from the idea of the landscape as visual representation, scenery, panorama, or view. The cultural landscape idea deals with the way in which actors transform their environments and could be a field of sociological and even anthropological, endeavor. The cultural landscape is therefore not a painting: A painting is the product of one author from a singular perspective and with professional control of the aesthetic outcomes (Tramontana, 2012). The World heritage Site’s conservation scheme represents the landscape as a masterpiece, a piece of art, the object of one single author, namely Palladio. But the cultural landscape is the unconscious product of an entire community. This idea focuses on the social aspect rather than the visual, or on the social group instead of the “creative genius.”

The site is still inscribed under the “ensemble of buildings” category and I wonder whether in the context of the studied landscape, the concept of cultural landscape might be helpful for shifting the focus from the *value of exchange* to its *value of use* instead.

The cultural landscape can be also described through Claude Raffestin’s idea of territory of, whereby territory is the labor of the human through the relation with nature (Raffestin,

1984; Klauser, 2012). This idea implies the need for research into the ways in which different actors construct their representation of the place where they live, and to explore how people produce identity through places, whether foreigners, tourists and locals (Tramontana, 2012). According to Taylor, the WHC has addressed relationship, social nature of heritage and interaction by defying the Cultural Landscape typology:

“the value of the cultural landscape is based on the interaction between people and their environment; and the focus of management is on this relationship (...)” (Taylor, K., *et al*, 2015 pg.7).

Through this description, it becomes clear that the definition of a site as a “cultural landscape” also implies a shift in heritage management’s focus. The cultural landscape idea is therefore operationalized in new conservation modalities which might embrace the protection of the *value of use* over the *value of exchange*. Of the three categories of World Heritage cultural landscape conservation adopted in 1992 and defined in Paragraph 39 of the 1999 Operational Guidelines, I am considering the second for implementation at the chosen World Heritage Site:

(ii) An organically evolved landscape results from an initial social, economic, administrative, and/or religious imperative (...)

They fall into two sub-categories:

- a) a relict (or fossil) landscape
- b) a continuing landscape (Fowler P.J, UNESCO, 2003 pg.18)

The cultural landscape can therefore be a lens for understanding how a social group understand itself and makes sense of its environment.

Nevertheless, although this term and modality of conservation recognizes that a cultural landscape is about a social group and its relationship with its environment, therefore valuing its material elements and also fostering this transformation in its own way, the idea also suggests that there is a need for this relationship to be managed, implying that it is again a matter for “experts”. There is always the risk that the use of this concept for UNESCO conservation schemes could lead to it losing its very meaning and becoming one of the many existing categories used by this institution to control heritage materiality and experience.

Although the concept can be a valuable lens for academic research, it reveals contradictions, conflicts and weaknesses when it is employed in the realm of heritage conservation for the naming and conserving of World Heritage. The aim of this concept is therefore to ensure the conservation of certain aspects, such as “the social structures and ecosystems”, the “interaction people environment” and “the focus of management on this relationship”. Rather than offering the potential to have a different understanding of conservation in the Western context, the approach instead seems to be related only to the sphere of the “underrepresented regions”, as Taylor states, the use of this concept is important (...) toward a better representation of the heritage in underrepresented regions” (Taylor, K., *et al*, 2015 pg.7). Indeed, in recent years, many cases of mere visual conservation and assessments carried out by ICOMOS experts, have been implemented through the idea of cultural landscape in European contexts (Basili 2007; Lizinskin, 2012; Kloos *et al.*, 2006).

The musealization of places is often related to tourism and the need of create an attractive environment for consumption, however, I believe that the conservation of agriculture should be articulated around a sustainable idea of current agrarian practice for the cultural conservation of nature, as an approach for caring for nature, rather than using it as a background or a stage for touristic experiences. The picture shows an example of informal cultivation close to an abandoned villa. In the next chapter I will describe my theoretical, methodological and empirical outcomes in the next chapter, together with my conclusion to the work.



Figure 69 Informal cultivation in the vicinity of Villa Capra Barbaran, Santa Maria di Camisano Vicentino (Malesani, 2017)

8. Theoretical and methodological contributions

In Chapters 5 and 6, I have interpreted two cases using the theory and methodology described in Chapters 3 and 4. I have observed how the production of the rural heritage landscape at the UNESCO level lacks socio-historical contextualization in its visual representation and that conserving the agrarian attributes of the late Renaissance or emulating late Renaissance agriculture, might suggest a very unsustainable type of agriculture. I have described how the conservation of agriculture is staged by The Landmark Trust, and the tourism experience creates a rather exclusive space and suggested some ways of reframing the World Heritage Site conservation scheme in relation to these aspects, as well as considering the potential for re-naming the World Heritage Site under the UNESCO category of cultural continuing landscape.

In this Chapter, I will describe my contribution at the theoretical, methodological and empirical levels in relation to the disciplines of heritage studies and rural sociology, and to the use of grounded theory. In the context of the empirical contribution, I will shed light on the methodology of constructivist grounded theory. Thereafter, I will draw some conclusions by reflecting on the changing approach to agriculture from premodernity to late modernity.

In this last part of the work, I refer to my epistemological, theoretical, and methodological positions in order to reflect on this research's contributions to the fields of rural sociology and heritage studies. By explaining my position within the discipline of rural sociology, I clarify how the research can contribute to framing *culture* within the critique of political economy, in order to embrace the heritage approach. I explain how introducing culture into this critique influenced my theory, methodology, analysis, and practical outcomes, by using concepts of *scale* and *value*.

8.1 Theoretical contributions to rural sociology and heritage

studies

In addition to the heritage approach, my theoretical and methodological position is driven by the Marxist critique of political economy. Therefore, I will also consider aspects such as the risk of the agrarian land being commodified through tourism, and the lack of biodiversity conservation due to the homogenization of its features. Through these questions, I will address specific criticisms of the modalities of rural heritage landscape production in the process of World heritage visual conservation. In this subchapter, I will shed light on my position within the field of urban and rural sociology, and explain how I will fill the research gap regarding the rural question, and how I connect this discipline to the domain of heritage studies.

Rural sociology, in comparison to urban sociology, does not have an established system of theoretical and conceptual research tools or tools for informing planning and policy practices. Rural sociology scholars often work in many different disciplines, for example, agrarian studies or environmental planning. The field of rural studies, compared to that of urban, lacks organic theorization and conceptualization. In urban sociology, the idea of urbanity is always at the very core of each debate. In contrast, research in rural studies is often done without rurality having been clearly defined and consideration of its definition being an aim of the work (Cloke, 2006).

Rural sociology is a developing field and its research is often framed by accepting urban centered dictates. I use *urban centered dictates* to refer to the fact that research in the rural field is depoliticized. Generally, it is considered to be non-existent or worthy of contemporary political and socio-spatial research. If we consider the work of prominent urban sociology scholars, there is a tendency for the rural to be referred to *non-urban* or as an *operational landscape*, in which the infrastructures needed for cities' development are constructed.

The urban is defined by having a center, periphery, and direction of active expansion. The rural is often understood as an area without a center, that is somehow "outside the urban" and is becoming urbanized. This divide implies that the urban is active and the rural is

passive. When we move to rural areas, we are “urbanizing” the rural. However, when we move to cities, we are changing our lifestyles, beliefs, and fashions.

According to Brenner, it is difficult to define the “boundaries of an urban(izing) territory” in this urbanized world (Brenner & Schmid, 2014). The landscapes that we still identify as being rural, natural, or wild are actually “operational landscapes”, or non-urban areas which facilitate the capitalist urbanization process (Brenner, 2016). According to this view, the rural seems to be disappearing due to industrialization and modernization. Both phenomena are generally related to the urban domain.

I follow Brenner’s view, although I differ in two main points. My first point is that, especially in Europe, the rural is still actively being produced by institutions and individuals, through heritage sites, discourses, and certain agricultural practices. In other words, the rural is not over. It would be worth doing research in this field to better understand how the concept of rural is being transformed in contemporary society.

Moreover, the urban domain still easily relates to industrialization and modernization as it has unfolded over the last century, and to common patterns of development across the world. It is often used in a way that avoids cultural historical differences by stressing socio-economic generalizations.

The rural as heritage, involves the past, or the past as it was before industrialization and modernization. Therefore, the differences and peculiarities of place becomes crucial for analysis. Any production of knowledge concerning rural heritage landscapes must also address the cultural dimension. In addition to anthropological studies in the rural domain, rural sociology has long been anchored in the critique of political economy, especially regarding agricultural studies. From the 1970s onward, the cultural turn has been radically changing the fields of social science and rural sociology. Rural sociology’s focus has been moving away from a purely socio-spatial and economic nature to the study of culture (Cloke, 2006). Since the 1970s, rural research has been “investigating representations of rurality” and “discourses of rural experience and imagination” in the production of rural space (Cloke, 2006, p.23). Cloke views the cultural turn in rural sociology positively.

In order to add cultural aspects to Lefebvre’s critique on the political economy, I have used the work of the rural sociologist Halfacree. His work is fundamental for inserting culture into

Lefebvre's theory of space production. Lefebvre's critique was mainly based on the way in which bureaucrats and planners tend to quantify and *conceive* space through Euclidean geometry. Halfacree's critique overcomes this understanding of *conceived* space and discusses the "representations of the rural." Representations go beyond the quantification of the space and are also about meaning-making, or certain ways of understanding rural space. This interpretation is important for my work because I want to go beyond a critique of the heritage industry (Hewison, 1984) and explore heritage meaning formation in ICOMOS conservation practices.

I am critiquing the regulation and meaning-making of World Heritage conservationists by the way I use the concept of scale. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, I am only considering the local scale and the global scale. My choice is justified by Brenner's idea of rescaling. Brenner suggests that scales of governance are not stable, but, especially from the 1970s onward, have been re-arranging themselves through the decentralizing power of the nation-state, the loss of the fixed order of scales, and the rise of new supranational forms of governmentality and subnational production cores (Brenner, 2000).

Brenner's idea of rescaling is considered from a socio-economic perspective, whereby the nation-state's power modifies its structure and new forms of governmentality at lower or higher levels are responsible for producing space. The production of the rural heritage landscape differs from that of of space because, in addition to its socioeconomic aspects, it also involves the production of meaning, and the understanding of culture. I am following Brenner by saying that heritage governance and the political economy are changing. However, I see at these new levels—namely the local and the international—as producing different values.

On the one hand, I see the progressive globalization of heritage governance. On the other, I also see a progressive localization. By *localization of heritage governance*, I am referring to the tendency of localities, local institutions, or even private investors, to use "heritage" for their own economic development. This includes the tendency for communities to be active and request proper participation regarding heritage governance (Graham., *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, local institutions and international heritage authorities are often "formatting power behaviors and dynamics of empowerment of disempowerment between actors" (Lähdesmäki *et al.*, 2019) through regulation and meaning-making.

I am considering how institutions involved in heritage conservation are making meaning through the visual representation of the rural heritage landscape. As my background is in architecture and not in sociology, I am exploring the construction of the expert's sedimented values by using visual content analysis instead of critically analyzing discourses. The process of heritage governance internationalization and localization is not only about the formation of new modalities of neoliberalism and regulation, it is also about the development of new meanings of heritage. The ICOMOS experts' actions are therefore influential, not only in terms of behaviors and social practice, but also on the way people make meaning in a cognitive way.

New meanings for rural heritage landscape are produced at these scales, the international and the local. However, as soon as a site is subject to World Heritage conservation, they tend to be conflictual. The values produced by the World Heritage Convention are in fact "universal" and the duty of conserving them has to be shared by humankind "as a whole" (Jokilehto, 2006). If we consider that, even at a single site, there might be different groups who value their environment as heritage in different ways, then of course the utopic idea of "humankind as a whole" could lead to certain dissonances when applied to the real world.

The attempt to insert a cultural element into Lefebvre's critique on political economy is related to the attempt to bring the two epistemological approaches of postmodernism and Marxism together. In the theoretical chapter, I drafted my epistemological and theoretical position and stated that it is between Marxism and Postmodernism. I have used the works of Lefebvre and his scholars, i.e. the disciplines of social geography and urban and rural sociology as informed by Marxist positions, to analyze how distinct groups produce heritage in different ways. As Marxist positions tends to focus on politics and economics by ignoring the cultural components that are nodal aspects when working with heritage production, I need to distance myself from a pure Marxist position. The definition of my standpoint here is important because it influences both the theoretical and empirical outcomes of this research.

I consider the production of the rural heritage landscape to be a practice that involves (visual) representation, materiality, and experience. As has been emphasized previously, the cultural representation of the rural landscape influences the way that heritage is materially produced. As my background is in architecture and urban planning, I am very

enthusiastic about observing the visual representation, its attributes, the shape of the landscape, and its materiality.

I believe that the visual representation, as well as that of the landscape, is a materialization of discourses, or ideologies about what heritage might be. According to Harrison, objects beyond language should be analyzed in order to take the “material effects” of heritage discourses into consideration (Harrison, 2013, p.112). The discourses on heritage conservation are indeed producing the materiality of the landscape and that materiality is a powerful way of shaping the experience or the social practice, that happens at these places.

I believe that it is impossible to analyze political economy in the field of heritage governance without also considering its cultural outcomes. I have observed heritage being used as an economic resource through agrarian tourism in the harmonic landscape but I also interpret it as cultural production.

On the one hand, institutions, as well as international organizations, allow heritage to be commodified through the regulation of heritage conservation by enabling and legitimating capital fluxes; on the other hand, institutions also define what heritage is about. We should therefore consider framing the critique on both levels. On the one hand, it is about regulation, the definition of spaces, access, and property. On the other, it is about how stories are told and how knowledge is constructed. As complete consensus is never reached, institutions need to create pressure, which means attempting domination. In this sense, World Heritage conservation generates domination and certain local institutions dominate through regulation. This conservation practice reinforces sedimented ideas about the rural landscape as heritage.

Regarding regulation, Jessop stresses that there are always “interstitial, residual, marginal, contradictory elements” in every regime “that escape any attempt to identify, govern and stabilize” (Jessop, 2010, p. 344). Smith emphasizes that dissonance in heritage studies is about “contesting and challenging a range of (...) values and meanings” (Smith, 2006, p.82). Dissonance results when attempts at regulation and hegemonic meaning-making fail, or as in my case study, when World Heritage conservation is not working.

In order to better make my point, I will look at Jessop's work and his idea of cultural political economy (CPE) (Jessop, 2010). If Marxist narratives tend to look at the way governments shape social spaces, regardless of historical peculiarities and cultural aspects, then according to Jessop, cultural political economy is based on the belief that culture is fundamental to the understanding of the social world. He positions himself between Marx's work regarding the critique of political economy and that of Foucault regarding the analysis "truth regimes" (Jessop, 2013, p.3).

According to the CPE approach, knowledge systems are never complete. Therefore, research must be produced according to historically specific contexts and not based on universal or positivist narratives. Jessop and Smith (Smith, 2006) position themselves close to postmodernism, by considering how knowledge is produced through disciplines with "scientific imaginaries, communities of scientists, methods and techniques" and how this system of knowledge production leads to the creation of "knowledge brands" (Jessop, 2013, p.6). This stance is very close to Smith's work; she is looking at the production of knowledge around normative definitions of heritage through the philosophies of professionals, including architects, archeologists, cultural managers, and ICOMOS experts, and through conservation schemes, conventions, recommendations, and international laws.

From an ontological perspective, CPE examines how complexity is reduced. The world is complex and therefore needs to be simplified so that it can be understood. Governmental institutions create structures but also make meaning, regulate, and impose methods, in order to reduce complexity. Institutions' actions are therefore not limited to their structure, but also to the creation of meaning. According to this institutional framework and its categories, we articulate the way in which we understand ourselves and our relationships with the social and natural world, and we make sense of the political and historical time and space we live in.

This process of meaning-making is not linguistic, but rather "cognitive and with pragmatic consequences" (Jessop, 2013, p.3). According to Jessop, using CPE as a lens enables us to examine the cultural and the social without superimposing them. In terms of methodology, CPE uses complex concrete categories with "basic mechanisms, tendencies and countertendencies" being observed (Jessop, 2013, p.7), instead of abstract categories.

As Jessop points out, ethics also play a large role in CPE. In the framework of a critique on ideology, CPE observes how ethics and morality are created to legitimize domination. These aspects were also addressed by Smith who stated that, while being interviewed, visitors at English country houses expressed feelings of moral duty regarding the conservation of the national heritage (Smith, 2006).

CPE scientists believe that a utopian world is impossible, and that domination is inevitable, unlike postmodernists who take a relativist stance. At this point, I would suggest that CPE seems to believe in historically situated knowledge and “solutions.” According to this approach, the process of meaning-making is a process of complexity reduction. The process of rural heritage landscape production can be interpreted as the way in which institutions are controlling individuals’ lives through meaning production. Conservation schemes regulate how our environments change and provide a certain interpretation of the environment that we tend to passively accept. Conservation schemes regulate our relationships to certain environments and tell us in what ways these places constitute heritage. The following figure represents the intersection of the epistemological and theoretical perspectives I used.

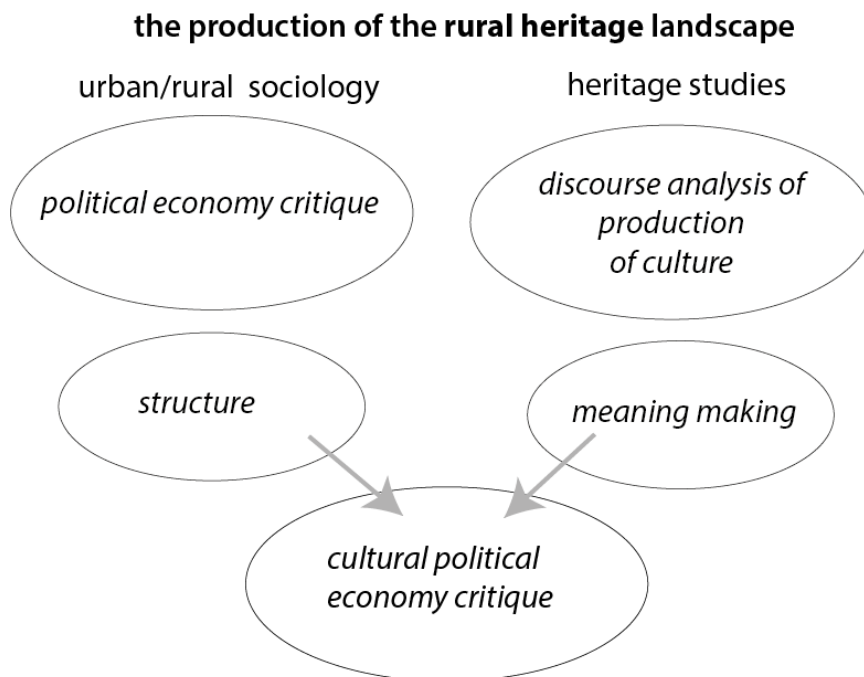


Figure 70 Intersection of epistemological and theoretical perspectives (Torelli)

My theoretical contributions are therefore related to the attempt to bring together two epistemologies and theoretical approaches that are usually divided or work separately. I believe that the theory of rural heritage landscape production might be a significant contribution to the field of heritage studies, especially for scholars who need to connect disciplines related to material culture and other disciplines that consider language instead. Rural heritage landscapes are very complex. To interpret them, it is necessary to look at their physical transformation and how institutions regulate them by controlling the inhabitants' behaviors. However, as soon as we discuss heritage, a simultaneous process of meaning-making is in play. The CPE approach is useful for framing my combination of rural sociology theories with those employed in heritage studies. It helps to justify the methodology as having a background in material culture studies with a focus on sociological discourses. In the next chapter, I will frame my contributions from a methodological perspective.

8.2 Methodological contributions to socio-spatial analysis

In this sub-chapter I will explain my methodological contribution in the field of constructivist Grounded Theory. This will regard the use of this methodology in the field of heritage studies and the use of this methodology in relation to the theory of space production.

As I have mentioned in Chapter 3.1 my methodological framework is based on the Grounded Theory approach and the related tools have been theoretical sampling, selective coding, content analysis and ethnographic field work. This methodology has been particularly intuitive for me because is inductive and deductive, based on an iterative process between the field and the desk which is very close to the design process I learned in architecture and planning studies.

I located the research within constructivist Grounded theory (Charmaz et al., 2018). The use of social constructivism as epistemology brought me to reflect on my research positionality. I have been interacting with inhabitants of the villages chosen as well as ICOMOS experts evaluating impacts on the site. On one side I am part of the group of inhabitants' because I have been living in the Veneto region during my childhood and on the other side as I have been teaching in a Master Program based on the training of professional in World Heritage conservation, I am part of the group of conservationists as

well. This position enabled me to have access to both systems of understanding, representing and experiencing the rural landscape as heritage.

The methodological framework is related to my interpretation and development of the theory of space production, the theory of the production of the rural heritage landscape. As I mentioned in the last sub-chapter, I am interested in the way in which certain sedimented notions of heritage are shaping the environment and the heritage experience of inhabitants. Nevertheless, I am interested in the way in which local heritage values are materialized in certain different attributes as well as in different experiences. I am therefore very much interested in heritage values, but I do not research them through language, as scholar employing AHD would do, rather, I am looking at how these values are becoming object, material culture and social practices or experiences.

I have been using selective coding for the analysis. Selective coding is very important because it is about the way in which I labelled the text I got when re-writing interviews or by looking at assessment report produced by ICOMOS experts. To understand my use of selective coding is necessary to go back to the research question. The research questions were:

- *How is the landscape of Villa Saraceno and Villa Caldogno visually represented and through what attributes?*

For what regards this first question I have been focusing on the category of the rural landscape as heritage and the visual representation. These have been the core categories I considered when rising questions to interviewers and when looking for visual material. In this phase I have been mostly looking at how the landscape was visually represented and described. The visual representation is something mental, it is not about behaviors, therefore I am using here interviews and content analyze. The second research question:

- *How is agriculture experienced as heritage in the landscape of Villa Saraceno and Villa Caldogno?*

For what regards this second question I have been focusing on the category of agriculture as heritage. In this case I have been looking at people's behavior rather than doing interviews. The experience is physical, about bodily behaviors. I am looking at how experts'

values of heritage are materialized in conservation projects and in experiences as well as at how inhabitants' values are translated into material attributes as well as in experiences.

With my first research question I look at how experts and inhabitants visually represent the landscape by giving values to certain attributes. With my second research question I look at how experts and inhabitants are shaping the landscape and interacting with it according to certain heritage values. In the first case I consider how objects become significant and in the second case how people interact with objects by following certain significance.

In the following picture the scheme of the rural heritage landscape production is represented. Through the representation of two arrows from the visual representation to materiality and experience I intend to express that I have been interpreting how values are embedded in certain experience as well as in certain attributes. This way of interpreting values is valid for ICOMOS as well as for inhabitants. ICOMOS experts based on certain values such as Palladianism and the masterpiece idea are creating a scheme which is implemented in the material conservation of the site by the Landmark Trust. Once again, these values, shared by the group of the "new generation of urban services" are embedded in their experience at the Villa Saraceno. For what regards inhabitants their values are materialized in the attributes they see as important in their landscape, in the agrarian attributes they conserved as well as in the experience of agrarian practice that they keep alive.

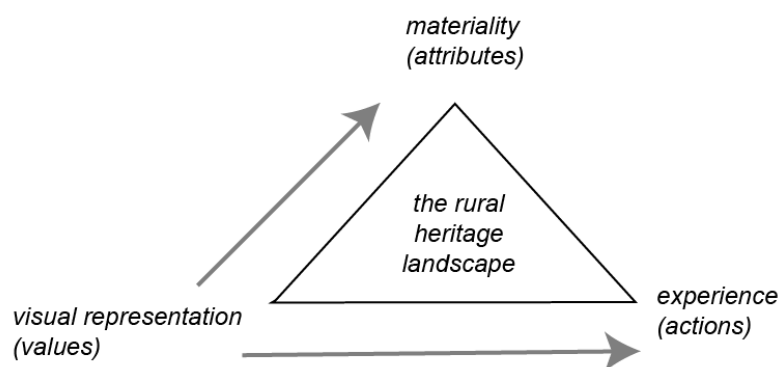


Figure 71 Analysis of the visual representation (values) through the materiality (attributes) and the experience (actions)

The study of values or better ideologies of heritage, in the study of Postmodern scholars is done through the AHD, through the critical analysis of discourse. In this research, as I mentioned by citing CPE, the ideologies on heritage as well as the alternative understanding of heritage are researched through the study of material culture and behaviors. Material culture, behaviors, action, social practice, object of study of Marxists scholars are fundamental to understand the ideologies of heritage behind tourism consumption as well as the alternative ideas of heritage behind the local process of conservation of agriculture.

Regarding the dissonant case study of Villa Cadogno, I have observed the behavior of inhabitants in relation to their environment as a production of meaning. The production of the rural heritage landscape is indeed a way to observe discourses of heritage through participant observation of behaviors of actors in space, and through the interpretation of the materiality of the landscape. The disregard for visual integrity shown by the local administration and inhabitants is actively expressed as a processual way of redefining this landscape since the 1970s, rather than through language. Nevertheless, as I have positioned myself in the postmodern belief that small-scale reforms, different for every context, can make a better society, therefore, I suggested changes at this very specific World Heritage Site rather than overall solutions.

In this sub-chapter I made clear the contribution I gave to the field of heritage studies for interdisciplinary research design, namely, to develop a sociological research with a background in architecture. I explained that I created a connection between the way in which research question are formulated and the theoretical background, namely, the focus on language and notions and then the focus on actions.

8.3 Conclusions and outlook for further research

In this research, I started by explaining the relationship between heritage studies and sociological research. I then introduced the ideas of heritage preservation, conservation, and finally the heritage approach and its mission for what regards social inclusion, power asymmetries, historical accuracy. I have defined my position within the heritage approach and through theory explained what I mean by heritage dissonance.

I have interpreted dissonance as a positive outcome of a certain freedom of action between the control of institutional places and individuals' reactions. I have also addressed the complexity of the group of inhabitants which I divided between (late) modern new generation and old generation with still premodern behaviors. I have reconstructed the story of the Palladian Villa's transformation from the 1950s until the 1990s, tracing its mechanization, small-scale industrialization, and suburbanization in order to explain what the "loss of visual integrity" perceived by ICOMOS experts, a nodal point of the work. The visual aspects for rural landscape as heritage in the context of heritage conservation in Italy and Europe, have been since the rise of the nation-state a means for heritage conservation, as well to identify the landscape itself.

I have problematized the visual integrity of the chosen World Heritage Site because of its selective representation of history. As Watson and Waterton explain visual culture is becoming the "predominant (heritage) discursive medium" in the heritage discourse and visual representation of heritage is often used to tell what heritage "is" or should be (Watson & Waterton, 2010, p.85). I have addressed the tendency of ICOMOS experts as well as local institutions following the same modalities of conservation, to represent an idealized "rurality" although urban elements such as the villages, the church and the villa itself have always been part of the landscape of the Palladian villa. Moreover, I have addressed how the conservation of the agrarian landscape of the Palladian villa with its capitalist social organization, corn monocultures and deforestation practices seems less socially sustainable than what ICOMOS conservationist let us think.

ICOMOS experts and local institutions are producing heritage through World Heritage conservation and rural tourism while inhabitants have been producing heritage by conserving certain aspects of their pre-modern life in a certain peculiar way. Through the interpretation of the production of the dissonant rural heritage landscape I am suggesting a semantic shift to inform the way in which landscape conservation and planning strategies are framed in World heritage Sites.

As Brenner defines territory as state-space, namely "a site for contested processes, projects, and strategies" (Brenner and Elden, 2009), so could we define the UNESCO conserved heritage rural landscape as an arena of dissonance. Especially regarding the World Heritage Convention, some scholars have been wondering if international

conservation practices can be used by local authorities as a space to negotiate heritage meanings. In the case study I have been looking at, this is not happening.

The World Heritage Convention is still based on very sedimented ideas that are hindered through discourses around public participation, democracy, and social inclusion. Further research is needed about the conflicts deriving from the implementation of the World Heritage conservation, the distribution of heritage power and the use of culture ideologies in the decision-making of ordinary heritage practice and conservation (De Cesari, 2012).

Regarding the debate about how our environment should aesthetically change, a statement from Amendola is relevant. He argues that beauty today is about the effect that the environment produces on citizens (Amendola, 2010). The debate about the aesthetics of public space is challenging and involves questions at the interdisciplinary, theoretical, and practical levels. I believe that a lot of work regarding the deconstruction of ideas like “landscape as a masterpiece” or “authored landscape” is needed in order to avoid the idealization of rural landscapes and its aesthetics.

I believe that tourism holds a certain ideology about what history is and what culture is about, and therefore heritage tourism is worth investigating as a production of heritage and not only through the critique of commodification. I have addressed the contradictory relationship between World Heritage conservation and heritage tourism. The touristic musealization of the agrarian landscape is detaching more than ever the new generation of inhabitants from agriculture as heritage. I am arguing that this practice increases the loss of agrarian knowledge while the every practice of agriculture of the old generation is an interesting form of resisting modernization and keeping agrarian knowledge alive.

Sedimented notions of heritage are visible also in the words of many local inhabitants in fact, they are influenced by the Authorized Heritage Discourse and are reproducing it. In the words of the people I interviewed, the world “heritage” is too often directly linked to tourism, as the quantity of tourism would be an indicator of the importance of the heritage objects themselves. Moreover, heritage is often perceived as something whose maintenance “only rich families can afford.” In this sense heritage is accessible for tourists and rich families but is not about constructing a sense of community and identity.

Heritage is too often considered about high culture, accessible only for heritage experts, and drastically detached from everyday life and from our own past as individuals. This believe is based on a sedimented distinction between the pride of the cultural and the shame of the non-cultural, as the agrarian practice, between the internationally known and the local experience.

As I mentioned in the last chapters the World heritage Convention and its implementation in the context studied seems to reinforce sedimented modern notions of heritage. The social group of the Palladian villa seems, at least partially, to resist these notions. I shed light on the relation between the two social group I have identified, new and old generation, and the changing approach to heritage from premodernity to late modernity. I am have shown that the changing relationship of these two groups with the rural landscape might suggest the evolution from pre-modernity to late modernity.

Modernization is also about the development of heritage professional as a specific field of practice, involving also the conservation of the rural heritage landscape. In the time of late modernity, international heritage professional develops, formal heritage panning, and controlled landscape development. The way in which heritage is understood by the experts, by the new generation can be defined as Urry states, “one boundary disconnects the idea of heritage from the present and present-day values and aspirations so that it becomes something confined to ‘the past’” (Urry as cited in Smith, 2006, p.12).

Expert’s and authorized definitions of heritage boundaries present a clear contrast between past and present. This creates boundaries between “treasure and trash,” what is worth to be conserved and what can be forgotten, particularly reinforced by the idea of visual cones and visual integrity (Harrison, 2013). According to Harrison, heritage conservation is based on modern ideas and practices of “classification, ordering and cataloguing” (Harrison, 2013, p.28). Often, modern classificatory systems—in this case, the UNESCO management plan—are using world like “heritage” and “rural landscape” in an operative way and translate into action and then come into conflict or dissonance with social practices from below. As Escobar stresses, planners as well as conservationists look at the city like an object and eradicate “irrationalities” (Escobar, 2010 p.145).

According to Escobar, “the concept of modern planning embodies the belief that social change can be engineered” (Escobar, 2010 p.145). Modern planning is based on

rationalism and functionalism, with zoning being one of the key aspects. This encompasses the definition of space, where to build residences, where to build industries and work, where to do agrarian practices, where to conserve the cultural heritage, and where to consume culture. Creation of these categories denies any mixing of landscape's functions.

As this research shows, paradoxically, practices of institutionalized heritage conservation cannot conserve agrarian practices and the landscape in its socio-historical context as on the old generation have been able to do through time. Modern conservation especially in the framework of this World heritage Site is still based on the idea that the rural landscape is heritage when it is defined as masterpiece, when it is manicured and without "urban" traces, when respect a selective visual integrity, when is properly physically and temporally divided from the present and embedded in the touristic experience.

Too often, debate about heritage does not face the semantic analysis of the meaning of the word "heritage" itself. The word "heritage" in relation to the rural landscape is too often related to a set of pre-assumptions. The naturalization of the idea of rural landscape as heritage needs to be overcome. The question is therefore how to recover the rupture created by modernity and how to recover the continuity between the rural and the urban, the past and the present in our way of living, doing research and even conserving heritage?

I believe that in this research my contributions in this sense has been simply the choice of naming as "heritage" something which is usually not named as such. None of the actors of the old generation speaks about "heritage" when describing their garden or agrarian experiences. The word "heritage" has been firstly employed by the nation-state and therefore new alternative ways of making heritage might be "unconscious". Contrastingly, the rural landscape of Villa Saraceno is consciously designed as heritage and all the actors involved use the term "heritage" when engaging with it. In other worlds, groups engaging in heritage making might not define themselves as engaged in heritage matters.

I am arguing that heritage might be also an unconscious selection of cultural fact and so might be its process of conservation. Actors of alternative production of rural heritage landscape might not define themselves as engaging with heritage or doing conservation, as this word is still used for what is institutional and coming from the top. In order to recognize alternative practice of heritage-making there is a need to study dissonances in process of institutional heritage conservation. This idea inevitably deconstructs of the idea of heritage as it is embedded in what is beautiful, magnificent, big, aristocratic and

universally known. Additionally, this suggests that heritage might not fit the conventional aesthetic canons, be less visible, be produced by lower classes through time and be known only at the local scale.

I believe that the most important aspect is to change the way we speak about heritage, especially to overcome “the objective evidence-based interpretation of canonical art historical information to the understanding of heritage in terms of product of social debate and engagement” (Renes *et al.*, 2014). I believe that rural heritage landscapes are not paintings, should not be value of exchange, should not foster elitism, but, as according to Harrison is time to understand heritage as a “regime of care” (Harrison, 2013, p.208). The modernization of our society brought to a simplification our relationship with nature, loss of social ties and agrarian knowledge and through research we might recover a complex understanding of the world we are living in. Today rural interdisciplinary research should come to terms with a “reconceptualization of nature – society relations” (Cloke, 2006, p.23) especially for what regards the understanding of the rural landscape as heritage, by overcoming the “the modern relation with nature rooted in Enlightenment, Christianity and Capitalism” (Uggla, 2010).



Figure 72 Last signs of the ancient worship of plants in the region (Tempesta, 1989)

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