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IS THERE A FUTURE FOR TOURISM IN TERRACED LANDSCAPES? A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LANDSCAPE RESOURCES AND TOURISM CONSEQUENCES IN VALTELLINA (ITALY) AND LESVOS (GREECE)

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses the complex set of options and outcomes both for tourism and for terraced landscapes stemming from tourism development in such destinations, by focusing on the scenarios that develop from possible interrelationships between two compound variables: a) landscape resource consumption and b) tourism consequences, in two case studies: Lesvos, Greece and Valtellina, Italy. This comparative analysis is carried out with in-depth interviews of relevant stakeholders, leading to the construction of future scenarios for the specific case studies. The article closes with a discussion of these two compound scenario outcomes, as storylines, through which future change and sustainability may be envisaged and advocated in our two case study areas, as well as in other similar contexts.

Keywords: terraced landscapes, tourism, future scenarios, Valtellina, Lesvos

C'È FUTURO PER IL TURISMO NEI PAESAGGI TERRAZZATI? UNO STUDIO COMPARATIVO SULLE RISORSE PAESAGGISTICHE E SULLE CONSEGUENZE TURISTICHE IN VALTELLINA (ITALIA) E LESBO (GRECIA)

SINTESI

Questo articolo affronta la complessa serie di conseguenze, relative sia al turismo che ai paesaggi terrazzati, derivanti dallo sviluppo turistico di tali destinazioni, concentrandosi sugli scenari che derivano dalle possibili interrelazioni tra due variabili: a) il consumo di risorse paesaggistiche e b) le conseguenze del turismo. A tal fine, lo studio esplora due casi di studio: Lesbo, in Grecia e la Valtellina, in Italia. Questa analisi comparativa viene effettuata con l'ausilio di interviste approfondite ad alcuni stakeholders e porta alla costruzione di scenari futuri per ciascun caso. L'articolo si chiude con la discussione degli scenari emersi, visti come trame lungo le quali è possibile immaginare i cambiamenti futuri, nei casi considerati così come in altri contesti simili.

Parole chiave: paesaggi terrazzati, turismo, scenari futuri, Valtellina, Lesvos

INTRODUCTION

Landscape is indispensable to tourism, while tourism produces, reproduces and consumes landscape resources, in a variety of ways, imparting both desirable and non-desirable consequences on the landscape, the place and the society of a tourism destination.

After a brief theoretical staging in the context of contemporary tourism and landscape studies, the article explores the assets represented by terraced landscapes and the consequences of tourism development, based on a conceptual framework that will then guide the analysis of two case studies: the Valtellina Valley in Italy and Lesvos Island in Greece.

There is a growing attention, in the academic and institutional debate, towards terraced landscapes and especially towards analysis of the conditions for the future survival of their internationally recognized cultural and natural values (Tillman & Salas, 2016). Tourism is often proposed as a key variable in this terraced-landscapes-future equation, but much has to be done in order to understand, define and evaluate its feasibility and its concrete implications for the local ecosystems and socio-economic contexts. In other words, it is crucial to understand if there is a future for tourism in terraced landscapes, which is what this article seeks to explore.

In this research paper, we choose a scenario approach in order to analyze and compare the two case studies; scenarios are built through interviews with relevant stakeholders, thus complying also with the participatory perspective proposed by the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2000). This future-oriented approach is deemed especially helpful here, due to the large number of interlinking and interacting variables coming into play in an analysis of terraced-landscape tourism, i.e. mild-mass tourism; multifunctional-monofunctional tourism; external-internal challenges and threats; present assets, resources, problems and future potentials and challenges.

TOURISM AND TERRACED LANDSCAPES

On the basis of its mediational nature between an objective reality and a subjective construct, landscape represents the primary, ready and most enduring medium of contact between tourist and prospective or consumed place of travel. The tourism industry markets images, discourses, resources and uses of landscapes, through representations of their cultural signs. The tourist/ visitor, through processes of experiential re-interpretation of the signs, assesses and validates the meanings of the destination, while consuming its landscape, as well as landscape resources and services, within the predominant discourse (Cohen, 1979; Urry, 1990; MacCannell, 1992; Terkenli, 2014). Therefore, the relationships that develop between landscape and tourism or tourists may span the whole range from hosting vs consumption, to

representation vs performance, to pleasure and sensual fulfillment vs. cognitive experiencing of the physical context (Lorimer, 2005; Löfgren, 1999; Crouch, 1999; Rose, 1996). All of these variables come into play, when analyzing tourism in terraced landscapes, as in the present study, where they will be negotiated in a rather concise way, building on previous research (Terkenli *et al.*, 2019).

The past few decades have been witnessing the accelerated growth of scope (special-interest and alternative) tourism/ leisure, targeting specific niches of the tourism/ leisure market (Hall *et al.*, 2014; Rojek & Urry, 1997), signaling a distinction between ‘mass’ and ‘mild’ forms of tourism. Terraced landscape tourism may involve both of these types of tourism (and all sorts of combinations thereof), with very diverse repercussions both for the landscape and societies involved, as well as for the tourism industry.

Rural terraced landscapes, whether of ancient origins or more recent construction, tend to be connected to the ideal of the “campagna” (Rodewald & Liechti, 2016) and, generally speaking, to traditional pre-industrial agriculture (before the sector’s large-scale mechanization and industrialization), with different repercussions, in terms of both local development and tourism trends. Often, these rural landscapes suffer from abandonment, caused by marginality (mountain or island areas), by ageing populations, by modernization and mechanization of agriculture and by collapsing rural systems, when farmers’ incomes become too low. On the other hand, not only do they support subsistence systems or thriving agricultural economies around the world, they also create very original vertical landscapes, with spectacular views, which represent part of the local, national or even ecumenical cultural heritage. Thus, they acquire great value as cultural landscapes, witnesses of ancient practices in the context of humans’ interrelationships with their physical milieu. At the same time, they offer a long series of experiences that cater to various contemporary special-interest and alternative forms of tourism, such as agro-tourism, eco-tourism, gastro-tourism, adventure, history, culture, etc.

Terraced landscape resources and assets range from material products and sights to immaterial ones, such as relaxation or thrills. They cater to educational, spiritual, or other experiential motives; they include not only those poles of tourist attraction such as gastronomy and heritage, but also the requisite infrastructures for tourist hospitality and general accommodation. In the rest of the article, these will all be considered as landscape “resources”, used by and consumed through tourism, imparting a series of consequences on the destination landscape, which range from positive to negative and engender multiple spatial and socio-economic repercussions.

We may distinguish between different types of resource use by the tourists, at the visited terraced land-

scape destination: natural features, local food and drink, cultural values, leisure amenities, experiential stimuli, etc. (i.e. rural pilgrimages, hiking trails and cultural routes). Accordingly, milder (less intensive, alternative or resource-conscious) types of tourist activity tend to impart fewer adverse consequences (including negative impacts) on these landscapes, leaving a lighter imprint on them, thus contributing more to their sustainable function and development.

As regards its positive impacts and consequences, tourism is seen, from the point of view of the local community, as an economic activity able to curb terrace abandonment, increase local incomes and preserve both the cultural heritage and slope stability. Tourism, however, is neither an automatically or unequivocally positive solution for terraced landscapes, nor does recognizing the values of the terraces constitute a sufficient condition for tourism attraction and stimulation. For the supply side of tourism to become competitive and attractive, it also requires investment in various infrastructures, accommodation, facilities, transportation and communication, as well as appropriate management and marketing strategies, in order to contain its negative impacts and repercussions, such as environmental degradation, cultural erosion, agricultural abandonment, visual deterioration or standardization or spatial congestion. The latter usually come about as a result of overuse or over-exploitation of resources and neglect or under-rating of needs and problems. Appropriate management and marketing strategies are thus essential, and also apply to the cases in which the visited landscape is seen merely as a visual stimulus, a set of signs of a mere background of the visited destination (MacCannell, 1992), especially where tourism is not primarily motivated by or revolving around the terraces themselves.

ASSETS AND CHALLENGES FOR TERRACED-LANDSCAPE TOURISM: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Considering landscape resources is essential in the analysis of the terraces-tourism relationship, especially since the landscape approach encompasses material and immaterial assets and values in a multi-dimensional framework (Aitchison et al., 2000; Terkenli, 2014).

As well exposed by Hoefle (2016), presenting the case of rural and eco-tourism in the Central Amazon, global and EU rural politics and leisure trends are both converging towards the multi-functionality paradigm, as an answer to the post-industrial and post-productive changes in agriculture and tourism. As in the Amazon, also in the case of European terraced landscapes, we experience the loss of productivity of a certain agricultural system, based on traditional and often human-powered modes of production, which survives (or attempts to do so) solely by diversifying its functions. Although we consider the multifunctional scenario as the only one

compatible with terraced landscape sustainability, it is not without impacts on the environmental and socio-economic systems that it develops.

Bearing in mind these implications, we may outline the various resources that terraced landscape can offer to tourism, as assets for the development of multifunctionality (Wilson, 2010, 367) for the entire terraced system.

Firstly, there are material features characterizing terraced landscapes which may directly offer at least two types of resource on which to develop the supply of recreational and/or touristic activities: trails and food (including drinks). Compared to other agricultural milieux, terraces offer a network of paths, trails, steps and stairs, climbing and winding among the fields and offering panoramic views; originally built to facilitate working the land and maintain dry-stone walls, they are nowadays frequently (or potentially) used by hikers and cyclists. Moreover, the products of terraced agriculture may attract culinary tourists, as food is increasingly becoming a driver for tourism growth (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Mak et al., 2012).

These material features are closely related to their aesthetic and cultural values. These semi-natural rural landscapes offer to tourists spectacular views as well as cultural stimuli, ranging from traditional agricultural practices to religious and spiritual values attached to the environment of the terraces, often part of the world's cultural and intangible heritage (Bouchenaki, 2003).

Finally, concerning both material and immaterial resources, an experiential value may be attributed to terraced landscapes: distinct from other values, as it is mainly non-visual and refers to the physical structure of the terraces, the corporeal presence of human bodies in the landscape, subjective perceptions and emotions of the people involved (Quan & Wang, 2004). For example, whether "authentic" or not, rural hospitality, local accommodation and cuisine, have the potential to add values to the mere act of sleeping and eating; similarly, participating in the maintenance and process of building dry-stone walls or in harvesting activities is considered to be a fascinating, team-building and even mentally healing practice (Paterson, 2015).

In order to deepen the analysis of the interrelation between tourism and terraced landscapes, it is possible to apply two "*dimensions of uncertainty*" (Antrop & Van Eetvelde, 2017, 414): the level of exploitation of these resources (landscape resource consumption) and the consequences due to the presence of tourism. The first one is related to the type of tourism and specifically to the level of exploitation and consumption of landscape resources caused by tourism *within* the terraces (soil compression, incongruous construction, environmental/ ecological deterioration, water depletion, visual pollution, etc.). The second variable is linked to the capacity of the actors in the system (local or global actors) to acknowledge and face the long series

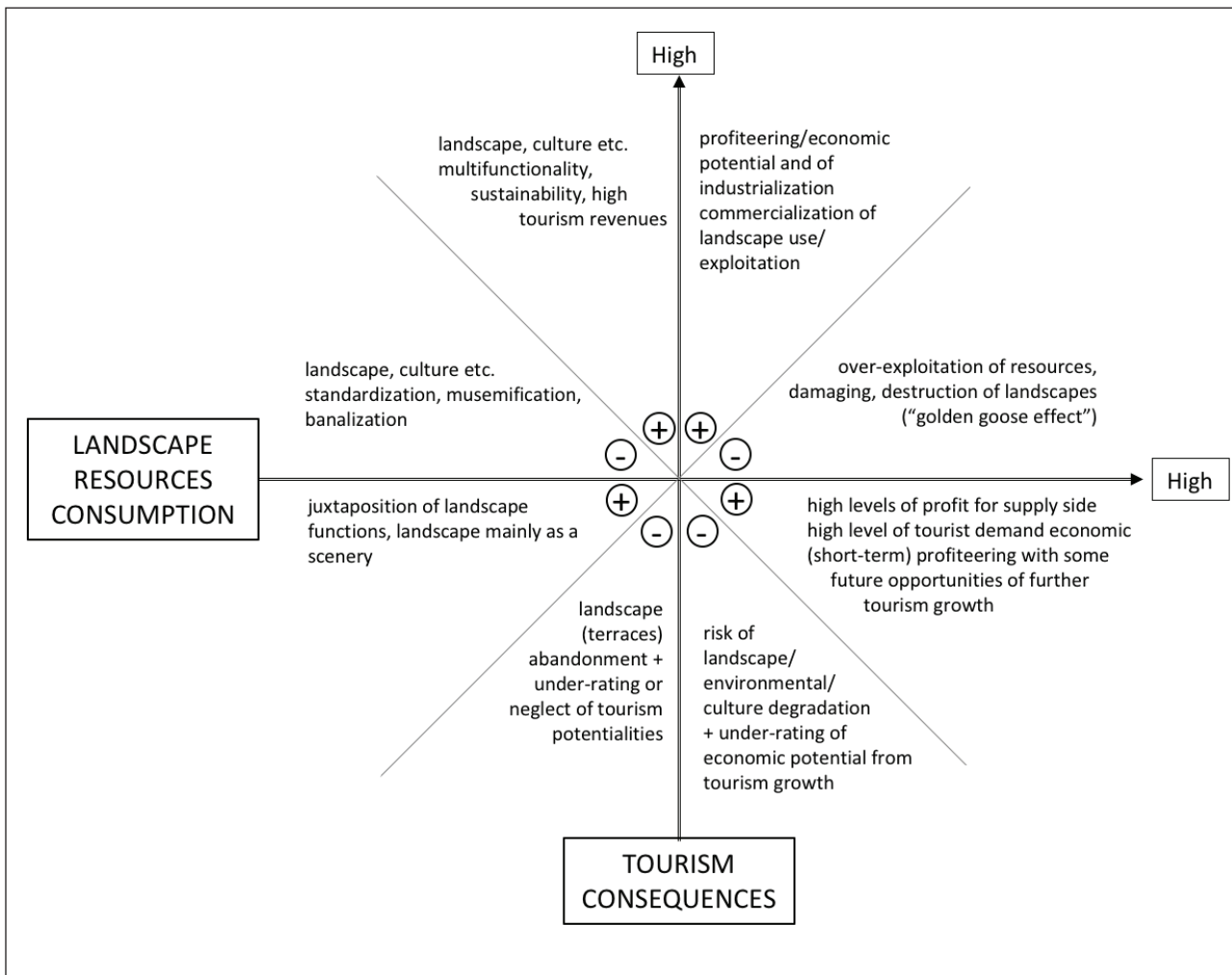


Figure 1: Types of interrelations between resource consumption and tourism consequences.

of interrelationships between terraced landscapes and tourism, identifying assets and defaults, and evaluating consequences in terms of risks, i.e. exodus, abandonment, gentrification, museumification/ banalization or opportunities (promotion of agriculture and craftsmanship, local economy development, community participation, local entrepreneurship, increased ecosystem conservation, etc).

Crossing resource consumption and tourism consequences, it is possible to recognize four main combinations which may turn positive or negative, for the survival of terraced landscapes, resulting in eight different situations. Our conceptual framework (Figure 1) does not follow Antrop's & Van Eetvelde's scheme, but aims to combine what the landscape may offer to tourism and how tourism may rely on or gain from the landscape, more generally.

Under the circumstances currently prevailing in the Mediterranean region, where tourism activities are mainly located along the coastline (besides the main urban

destinations), the level of direct tourist consumption of terraced landscape resources is generally low, oftentimes leading to terrace abandonment or simple juxtaposition (symbiosis) of functions, especially when terraces are considered only as scenery, a detached background to tourists' activities (lower left part of the diagram).

Where local (and global) actors are cognizant of tourism-terraces interrelationships and tourism exploitation of terraced landscape resources remains low, there are hardly any negative impacts to the landscape, allowing for synergies between agriculture and tourism, landscape multi-functionality and the sustenance of terraced landscapes by tourism revenues. Less conscious appreciation and understanding of tourism consequences on the terraced landscapes runs the risk of a more superficial exploitation of the interrelationships tourism-landscape and higher standardization and museumification of the landscape, mainly for purposes of tourism consumption (upper left part of the diagram).

Uncontrolled *over-exploitation* of landscape resources driven by tourism causes impacts, such as overuse of natural resources (soil compression, atmospheric pollution, beach deterioration) or over-exploitation of cultural resources (visual clutter, monument destruction, noise pollution, etc.) and urban sprawl, which takes up high quality farmland and breaks up the landscape. If these trends are coupled with a realization of the high potential for economic gain from such forms of tourism, phenomena of high profiteering and intense tourism exploitation tend to ensue. Positive effects may, nonetheless, result in landscape exploitation, but only on the basis of a concerted, comprehensive strategy encompassing and managing both negative and positive consequences of tourism. If only positive impacts are taken into consideration, this may lead to a type of risk called “the golden goose effect”, whereby tourism is perceived as a magical source only of benefits for the landscape, whereas the reality lies in its over-exploitation, ending up in destroying the landscape resources which it once relied on (upper right part of the diagram).

Finally, there can be some situations in which the consequences of tourism are not fully explored, including both profiteering and various negative consequences to tourism development and terrace sustenance. The more positive aspect here represents limiting revenues to the short-term and exposing landscape to the risk of further degradation. This final part of the diagram (lower right) also represents the combination of the most all-around adverse consequences in the interrelationship tourism-terraced landscape: both the short-sighted opportunism of the supply side, which fails even to take advantage of most possibilities offered by tourism (under-rating the economic profit of such tourism), in tandem with the most adverse impacts on the local landscape, environment and culture.

This conceptual framework of standard situations may be useful to place specific cases and evaluate their possible future evolutions, as well as to identify some common trajectories.

RESEARCH DESIGN: THE SCENARIO APPROACH

In order to advance research towards full realization of the potential for further, mild, and participatory tourism development on the basis of sustainable, multifunctional, integrated and democratic terraced landscape stewardship, we turn to the scenario approach. The objective of this approach is simply the formulation of plausible future storylines. According to Makhzoumi (2017, 230-1), “the starting premise for scenario thinking is that several factors may combine in complex ways to create unexpected futures, which is the point of departure in scenario planning”. Scenario planning represents the development of a

framework for devising flexible, long-term development plans, especially applicable to facing the challenge of landscape change, recognizing the “*futility of linear, single-track analysis, opting instead for an integrative broad and dynamic outlook that considers a range of influences*” (Makhzoumi, 2017, 230). Different scenario approaches exist (Alcamo & Ribeiro, 2001), a common feature being their forward-looking approach.

Commonly, scenarios are developed to suggest or describe future situations, to help landscape strategists and planners to envision and visualize alternative futures for change (Van den Berg & Veeneklass, 1995; Wollenberg et al., 2000; Tress & Tress, 2003). Van den Berg & Veeneklass define scenarios as “*a description of the current situation, of a possible or desirable future state as well as a series of events that could lead from the current state of affairs to this future state*” (Tress & Tress, 2003, 162). Thus, two pitfalls are avoided: a) the precarious practice of future forecasting and b) conventional, ‘top-heavy’ statistical projections (Makhzoumi, 2017, 231). Making future scenarios would contribute to developing a positive approach to change by focusing where we want to go instead of what we are losing. This would emphasize the ‘process of landscape’ rather than ‘the product of landscape’ (Jørgensen et al., 2015, 53).

In our study, we aim towards scenario construction for two case studies, based on the assessments and opinions of relevant stakeholders, in order to gain more in-depth understanding of their situation and discuss challenges more comprehensively and effectively. The stakeholders do not evaluate pre-conceived scenarios but participate in and contribute to their construction, as a first step in a bottom-up participatory process. This article, then, does not proceed to scenario visualization or testing the resulting scenarios for any planning processes; it only addresses relevant scenario construction, on the basis of our two selected key variables: landscape resources and tourism-related consequences.

On this basis, we conducted a comparative analysis of two case studies in Italy and Greece (Valtellina and Lesvos), employing in-depth interviews with key relevant stakeholder categories, such as farmers, tourism entrepreneurs, local authorities etc. The goal of this methodological approach was to collect information and opinions/assessments on current and anticipated future landscape-tourism interrelationships in terraced landscape contexts.

The semi-structured interview questionnaire (Table 1) was constructed on the basis of a bibliographical review of scenarios pertaining to other case studies, with an emphasis on two variables: a) terraced landscape assets and resources, and b) tourism consequences and challenges, as well as the schematic model of their interrelationships (question 13). The

Table 1: Questionnaire structure.

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1	How would you describe the landscape(s) of this area?																																																																													
2	What values do these terraced landscapes carry, according to your opinion and to the position of your organization/union?																																																																													
3	What are their main products and the main services they perform?																																																																													
4	What type(s) of tourism is/are associated with terraced landscapes in your area/island?																																																																													
5	What is your role in landscape stewardship and transformation?																																																																													
6	What are other landscape-related activities, besides tourism, in the area?																																																																													
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9	According to your opinion and experience, which are the consequences of tourism in these sectors of the local socio-economic system: i) local economy; ii) society and culture; iii) spatial (land) management and planning																																																																													
10	Which landscape characteristics affect tourism and how?																																																																													
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12	What opportunities/threats do you see in such desirable future tourism development?																																																																													
Future scenarios																																																																														
13	<p>Is there a future for tourism in these terraced landscape areas, and which/how? Please, provide your opinion about future scenarios of tourism in the terraced landscapes of your area, using the diagram below (today, in 10 years, in 25 years).</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>TODAY/IN 10 YEARS/ IN 25 YEARS</p> </div>																																																																													
14	Which practices would be ideal and you would like to see developed and implemented for these particular landscapes?																																																																													
15	Is there anything else you would like to add?																																																																													

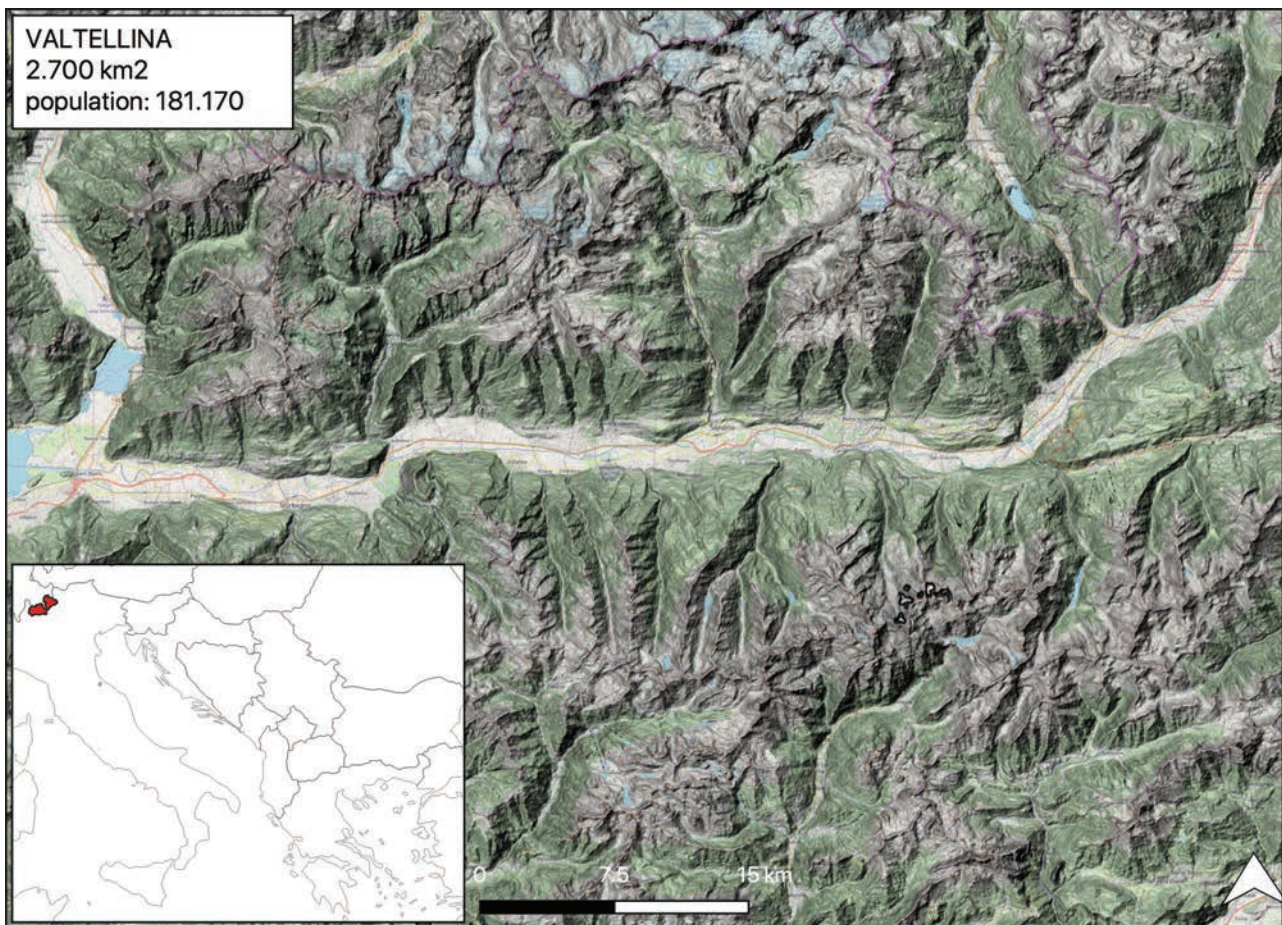


Figure 2: *The western and central sections of Valtellina.*

empirical part of the study ends with a compound analysis of all of the stakeholders' opinions and assessments on tourism assets, landscape resources, as well as problems and challenges facing these two destinations, leading to the construction of future scenarios for the specific case studies. We close with a comparative assessment of these scenarios between our two case-studies.

Finally, the rationale we employed in our stakeholder selection was a combination of a) their direct involvement or intervention in local terraced landscape transformation and b) their high position in their organization, association or company, enabling to them to offer opinions and assessments either more generally (and not just their individual views), or as broadly representative of such organizations etc. (key informants). The stakeholder categories selected, in both case studies, were: 1) farmers (or farmer cooperatives/associations), 2) tourism industry (entrepreneurs' unions, associations), 3) local public administration/government (municipalities, provinces, prefectures, etc.) and, finally, 4) NGOs, or other local non-profit local associations/ institutions.

EMPIRICAL STUDY: THE CASES OF VALTELLINA AND LESVOS

Valtellina: sustainability through cooperation and training

Valtellina is a portion of the upper valley of the river Adda, north of the Lake of Como, in Lombardy (Northern Italy). It is about 120 km in length and entirely encompassed in the Province of Sondrio, at the border with Switzerland. This long alpine valley runs from west to east, offering a variety of landscapes ranging from the lake's shoreline to the peaks of Mount Bernina (higher than 4.000msl). Its western and central sections (Figure 5), especially on the right bank of the river opposed to South, are characterized by the historic presence of terraced slopes, mainly planted to vine and formed with dry-stone walls. This landscape is the result of a collective work started around 1000 CE in relation with the exportation of wine to Switzerland (Canton of the Grisons) and developed thanks to a particular land lease system, which allowed to rent unproductive land for a symbolic fee. Therefore, mountain hardship became an opportu-

nity (Alberti & Mattiuzzo, 2016). From 6500 ha of maximum extension during the 19th century, the terraced surface dropped to around 900 ha nowadays (Bonardi & Varotto, 2017, 59–60). Today vine is the dominant cultivation, while in the past, it was also buckwheat, chestnuts and other minor cultures.

A total of 6 interviews were conducted, in May and June 2018, with key stakeholders representing the Province of Sondrio, the cultural association SEV (*Società Economica Valtellinese*) and Fojanini Foundation, the Middle Valtellina Tourist Consortium – Upper Terziere (*Consorzio Turistico Media Valtellina – Terziere Superiore*), the association of ethical tourism AltRaValtellina, the Valtellina Cultural District (Distretto Culturale della Valtellina) and, finally, the ProVinea Foundation.

Resources, values and types of tourism

According to the interviewees, Valtellina is a multifaceted valley, where wilderness meets highly anthropic landscapes, with a strong cultural and historic built heritage. The “*variety of landscapes*” is a common hint in their answers, except for ProVinea, where the emphasis is posed exclusively on the vine-terraces as the main feature characterizing the area. Landscape is unanimously considered as a resource for the agri-food sector of the economy, as well as for the tourism sector. Some stakeholders (Cultural District), highlight hydrogeological stability as an important service, while others (AltRaValtellina) list mobility (the railway and the main road that crosses the valley), among the main landscape-related services. The Valtellina landscape carries strong environmental, cultural and traditional values for all the stakeholders, while economic values are clearly recognized only by the Cultural District the Province and AltRaValtellina (connecting the value of the presence of water to the development of the economy). Aesthetic value is cited only by ProVinea, though directly connected to the environmental and traditional ones. This valley is in-between two mass tourism destinations: the Lake of Como and the ski district of Bormio and Livigno in the upper valley, but, within the terraced altitudinal zone (below 800msl), the presence of an emerging different type of tourism is recognized. Although the area is perceived by the stakeholders to be rich in cultural and heritage attractions (suitable for cultural tourism), they acknowledge that the main driver for tourism here are the outdoor/recreational opportunities (primarily cyclo-tourism) and, secondarily, the wine-food related attractions (canteens, restaurants and festivals). Tourism on the Valtellina terraces is generally viewed as mild and sustainable, although the definition of what is sustainable varies among the stakeholders and is not always coherent.

Consequences of tourism

All the stakeholders recognize tourism as a source of positive consequences, such as income generation and in-

tegration of farmers and job creation. Two out of them (the Province and SEV) also highlight some negative impacts, such as the low economic profits of second-home tourism and the reduction of interest in other economic activities (e.g. agro-forestry), which are fundamental for the maintenance of landscape diversity, on which tourism is partially based. From a social and cultural point of view, tourism is seen as a positive factor of encounter between cultures and of rediscovery (community awareness) of local heritage and landscape, even though some actors report signs of commodification (such as “tourists’ pizzerie”) and conflicts among areas included and those excluded from the tourism business. Finally, regarding land management, in the last decades, tourism has driven the development of second homes without specific controls, applying pressures on the landscape, especially in the upper section of the valley and creating mobility issues along the entire stretch.

Strengths/weaknesses – opportunities/risks

Answers to the question regarding the strengths of the territory are quite varied: some stakeholders (Distretto Culturale and AltRaValtellina) emphasize the quality of the wine and of the terraces, from a cultural but also an economic point of view; others (SEV, Fojanini Foundation and the Tourist Consortium) consider nature and wilderness as a strength of the area. A different answer is given by ProVinea, explicitly considering the history of the valley, the aesthetic value of the terraces and the “people” as a strength. On the other hand, there is more uniformity in the acknowledgment of weaknesses, as concerns the cost of terrace maintenance, and their consequent abandonment due also to the generational change.

Sustainable, ethical agro- and eco-tourism are considered as an opportunity from the tourist-side stakeholders (both AltRaValtellina and the Tourist Consortium) and from the Province, SEV and Fojanini Foundation. Some of the stakeholders also focus on the agricultural side of the issue, considering training courses on building and maintenance techniques (AltRaValtellina and ProVinea) and the new UNESCO application “Art of dry stone, knowledge and techniques” developed by Cyprus, Croatia, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Slovenia and Switzerland (Distretto Culturale and Province) as opportunities for the future of terraced landscapes in Valtellina. For the majority of stakeholders, threats stem from the standardization and banalization of material and immaterial heritage, due to uncontrolled tourism growth and un-managed agriculture. Finally, mobility is another issue related to tourism, considered as a risk for the quality of life in the valley.

Scenarios

The connection between types of tourism and state of the terraces has been a rather difficult combination for all the stakeholders interviewed to conceptualize, especially in envisioning future evolution. Nevertheless, there seems

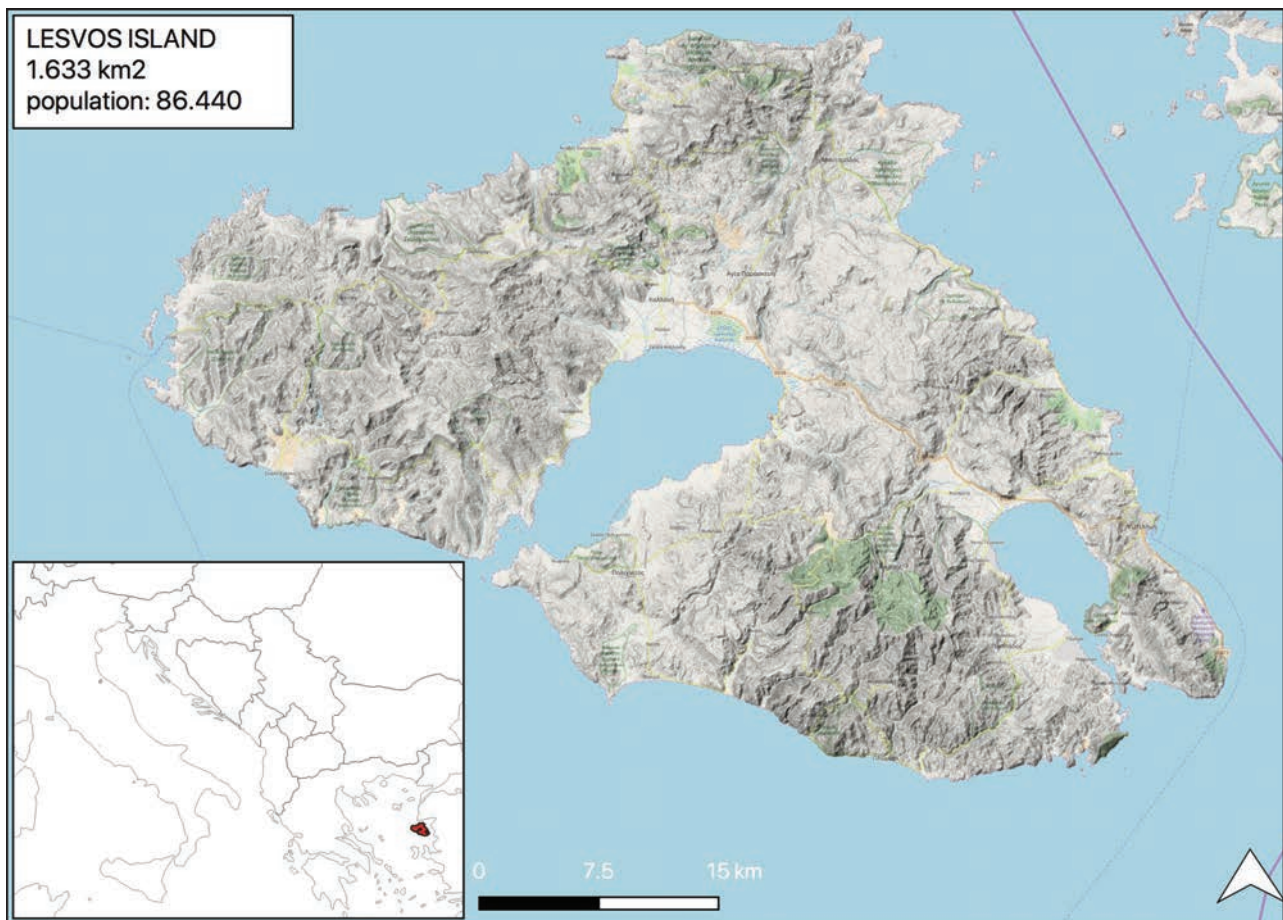


Figure 3: *The Island of Lesvos.*

to be a common feeling regarding the development of tourism in terraced landscapes. Abandoned terraces do not host any type of tourism and, according to the interviewees, there is no chance for their tourist use even in the future. Today, mainly recreational alternative tourism (trekking and cycling), concerns productive terraces, thanks to the presence of thematic routes (“Via dei Terrazzamenti” and “Strada del Vino”) and of dedicated sport events (“Valtellina Wine Trail”), strongly related to the terraced vineyards appeal. This kind of tourism is considered to be in expansion, along with a softer version of a more conventional type of tourism, driving towards a possible recovery of declining terraces. Mass tourism is not foreseen as a probable future for terraced areas, because tourism in these particular landscapes is considered to be inherently “soft” and “of quality”.

Key factors in the definition of a desirable future for terraced landscape in Valtellina seem to be: a) the maintenance of dry-stone walls (through national, communitarian and also private funds) and the conservation of local techniques and savoir faire (through training courses for young people and the valorization of this intangible heritage); b) landscape-minded winery stewardship, in concertation

between local players; and c) a clearer definition and management of sustainable tourism, in order to ensure beneficial effects and reinvestment of tourism revenues in the local socio-economic system. A special mention finally goes to the attention towards women’s empowerment which, especially according to ProVinea, could be a lever to support the combination of agricultural and tourism activities with landscape stewardship.

Lesvos: underrated and under-exploited tourism resources and potential

Located in the NE Aegean Sea, Lesvos is the 3rd biggest island in the Aegean (1,632 km², 320 km of coastline). The local economy is based on agriculture, while a large proportion of the population also deals in trade, public administration, and tourism services.

Lesvos features a ‘typically Mediterranean’ climate, a variety of geological/ geomorphological units (including the ‘Petrified Forest’), climatic conditions and landscapes of semi-natural forests, scrubland and agricultural land. The island’s bedrock is dominated by volcanic rocks and crystalline schists and is rather hilly (slopes > 18 % are

dominant, covering 63 % of the island). The island's vegetation, although significantly altered by human activity, is composed of classical Mediterranean units.

The most important agricultural land uses of Lesvos consist of olive plantations and grazing lands for sheep (Kizos & Koulouri, 2006). Land cover/use changes have been mostly due to human activities and interventions in the urban, agricultural and natural environment, manifesting in various ways, such as through the rapid expansion of settlements at the expense of the fertile cultivated land, the development of transportation infrastructures, fires, degradation of the vegetative cover and deforestation, the penetration of cultivations into natural vegetation zones, land abandonment, overgrazing, and the appearance of serious erosion phenomena, leading to desertification. The slow but stable shift to tourism-related activities and consequent spread of infrastructure has important implications for the economy, in turn leading to increased urbanization, in complicated coexistence with agriculture (Marathanou et al., 1999).

Tourism on Lesvos is mostly run by small family businesses and small hotels; there is an attachment to the 3Ss (sea, sand, sun) model of mass tourism (Spilanis, 2016). Despite its variety of natural and cultural resources, Lesvos is characterized by limited, seasonal tourism activity of low income, insufficient infrastructure, and poor quality of services—now further exacerbated through the staggering refugee 'crisis'. Tourism and agricultural development both suffer from a lack of comprehensive action strategy and an integrated approach to agricultural policy, land planning and tourism development, marketing of agricultural products, cultural and environmental conservation and management, etc. (Pavlis, 2017).

Though difficult to date, terraces on Lesvos have been documented since the Neolithic times, having once covered the whole extent of the island (Makis Axiotis, personal communication, June 21st 2018). Others talk about many million terraces on Lesvos (Zagorissiou & Giannoulellis, 1995, 218), some exhibiting intriguing forms and patterns, some stemming from the famous ancient "Lesbian stonemasonry". According to Axiotis, all in all, terraces ('σέτια' in the local dialect) represent a historically uninterrupted practice; in some cases they weave almost as if out of the rock, making it difficult to discern where the bedrock stops and the terrace begins. In the antiquities, it seems that they served mostly construction support purposes, whereas today they serve mostly agricultural purposes and almost exclusively olive-tree cultivation (Makis Axiotis, personal communication, June 21st 2018).

Terraces are found in almost all land uses and landscape zones (80% in the western part of the island, 92% in the eastern part and 86% in the intermediate part), especially in olive plantations and grazing lands, in the eastern part of the island. Agriculture is still quite important in terms of the jobs and incomes it provides, especially in rural areas. The olive plantations constitute, in their greatest part, a homogenous landscape, very characteristic of

Lesvos and part of its local identity, with most trees lying on small, hilly or mountainous and sloping fields.

A total of 8 interviews were conducted, in June 2018, with key stakeholders representing farmers' associations in Skalochori (Συμβούλιο Σκαλοχωρίου) and Anemotia (Αγροτικός Σύλλογος Ανεμώτιας); the tourism office of the Prefecture of Northern Aegean (Περιφέρεια Β. Αιγαίου), Tourist Agents of Lesvos and Board of Directors of HATTA (Τουριστικοί Πράκτορες Λέσβου και Διοικητικό Συμβούλιο του HATTA); the Municipality of Eressos-Antissa (Δήμος Ερεσσού-Αντισσας) and the Municipality of Kalloni (Δήμος Καλλονής); as well as local NGOs, such as the social cooperative company MODOUSA (ΜΟΔΟΥΣΑ), the Center of Letters of Kalloni (Πνευματικό Κέντρο Καλλονής), the Green Party of Lesvos ('Πράσινοι' Λέσβου) and the Photographic Club of Mytiline (Φωτογραφική Λέσχη Μυτιλήνης). Parts of these interviews will be quoted in the paragraphs below (due to the protection of interviewers rights, their personal information will not be provided).

Resources, values and types of tourism

Though most of the interviewees considered the terraces of Lesvos to be an indispensable part of the economy and culture of the island and most emphasized their ecological and agricultural functions (soil retention, water containment, sustenance of cultivables and wild flora and fauna), most did not address the full array of resources and services provided by terraced landscapes. The only exception was the MODOUSA representative, who also delved into the mythological, spiritual and aesthetic provisions of these landscapes. The responses we received ranged from the most positive to the most negative. For instance, care and consideration for the terraces of Lesvos was considered paramount, since they are mostly in a good state (by the Greens informant), vs. a former mayor declaring that no one cares about them, since they are viewed as abandoned landscapes. Olive oil, olives, orchard crops and some wine were the most listed products of the terraces, whereas the services they were accounted to perform were overwhelmingly ecological and agricultural, with one scant reference also to recreation (by the Greens informant).

As regards tourism on the terraces, two respondents basically reported none (a farmers' association representative and a former mayor of one of the terraced villages). The possibilities for agrotourism, ecotourism and various other thematic types of tourism in the terraced landscapes of Lesvos (i.e. birdwatching, religious tourism and pilgrimages) were highly appraised, though hardly so far explored—with the exception of one or two tentative recent initiatives. The Greens informant (also representative of the Photographic Club of Mytiline) viewed very positively the possibilities of conventional (3Ss) tourists being attracted by the terraced landscapes of the island. The tourist agencies' representative, however, put the prospects of terraced landscape tourism on the island in a more well-rounded and realistic outlook: "*possibly*

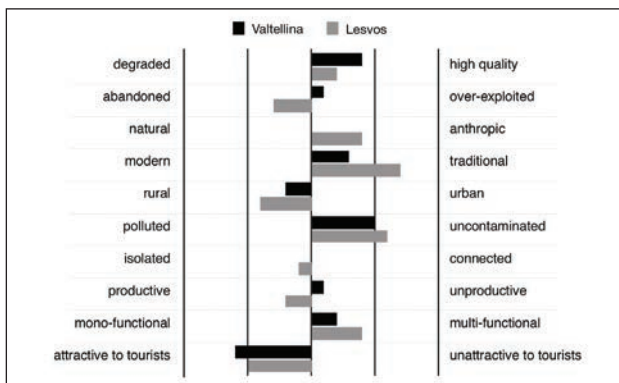


Figure 4: Synthesis of landscape characteristics according to interviewees (question 7), compared average values.

agrotourism, but the agrotouristic enterprises developed so far are anything but [...]. There could be real agrotourism products and services here, but people do not have visions for the future and are all focused on fast, short-term gain". No other activities, besides tourism, some terrace construction and restoration, and primary sector economic activities (including a bit of timbering and rudimentary processing of rural products), were reported on the terraces.

Consequences of tourism

As no types of thematic tourism have yet essentially been developed on the island, including the exploitation of existing networks of walking trails, tourism has had very small consequences for Lesvos and minimal ones for its capital city of Mytilene (a former mayor). Generally speaking, tourism acts complementarily to the other income-raising activities for the local population, although, in some cases, it represents the only income. Some of our respondents, however, also cautioned against the possibility of mass tourism growth, which, according to another former mayor, adversely affects the economy and society. Mass tourism, however, is not foreseen as a realistic possibility for the terraces of Lesvos, while the whole outlook for future consequences of tourism growth is, again, succinctly put by the Greens informant: "Obviously, tourism contributes economic revenue to the local society, either directly or indirectly, by creating employment; luckily, it has never become 'mass' on Lesvos, so there have been no negative impacts on the landscape. Tourists' presence on the island has made locals more open-minded, but not enough so. Since it represents 'easy money', it becomes negative to some people's social image and personal cultivation. Our culture has not been affected much, as tourism is low-intensity on the island—similarly, tourism pressures on land use have been small". Accordingly, as regards its impact on spatial planning and land uses, "the story here is very sad, there is nothing: there ought to be planned urban growth, taking in mind best practices from elsewhere" (the

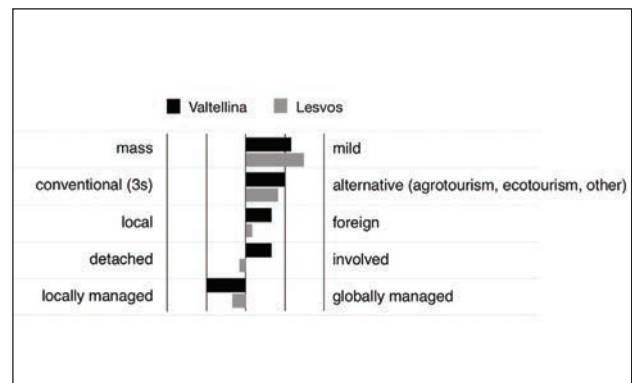


Figure 5: Synthesis of tourism characteristics according to interviewees (question 8), compared average values.

tourist agent's representative); the development of a better road network and the banning of grazing were quoted as necessary steps in that direction.

Strengths/weaknesses – opportunities/risks

All landscape features may potentially affect tourism, according to the Prefecture tourism representative; furthermore, most of these landscapes are visible and accessible from the road systems of the island, which is both their strong and weak point. A long series of strong points for terraced landscape tourism development were laid out by almost all of our respondents, except for one negative perspective stating that Lesvos terraced landscapes may not attract tourism, due to their largely abandoned or destroyed state: "beaches and secondarily trails may only constitute poles of tourist attraction" (former mayor of a terraced region). Both natural and human-made or perceived aspects of these landscapes were offered as their strengths, revolving around landscape diversity, aesthetic harmony, stunning geomorphology, environmental quality, local products, culture and tradition, and biodiversity/ uniqueness. The MODUSA representative succinctly summarized these landscapes' weaknesses in inducing tourism growth: terrace deterioration and restoration problems, diminution of agricultural practices and production, olive-oil trade impediments, out-of-plan construction, aesthetic pollution, littering, lack of landscape management and controls, poor landscape marketing and branding.

The tourist agents' representative described the current state-of-affairs as follows: "*the visitors who come here do so consciously: the landscape itself affects tourism, it attracts tourists accordingly*". A mayor and farmer's union representative viewed these landscapes as 'virgin places', pure and unadulterated, traditional, while a former mayor stated that the Lesvos terraces create an absolutely unique landscape architecture, the olive-grove landscape of Lesvos. Finally, concerning opportunities and threats, a former mayor declared "*We can do it, but we need financial support for mild tourism development (i.e. 200.000 EURO*

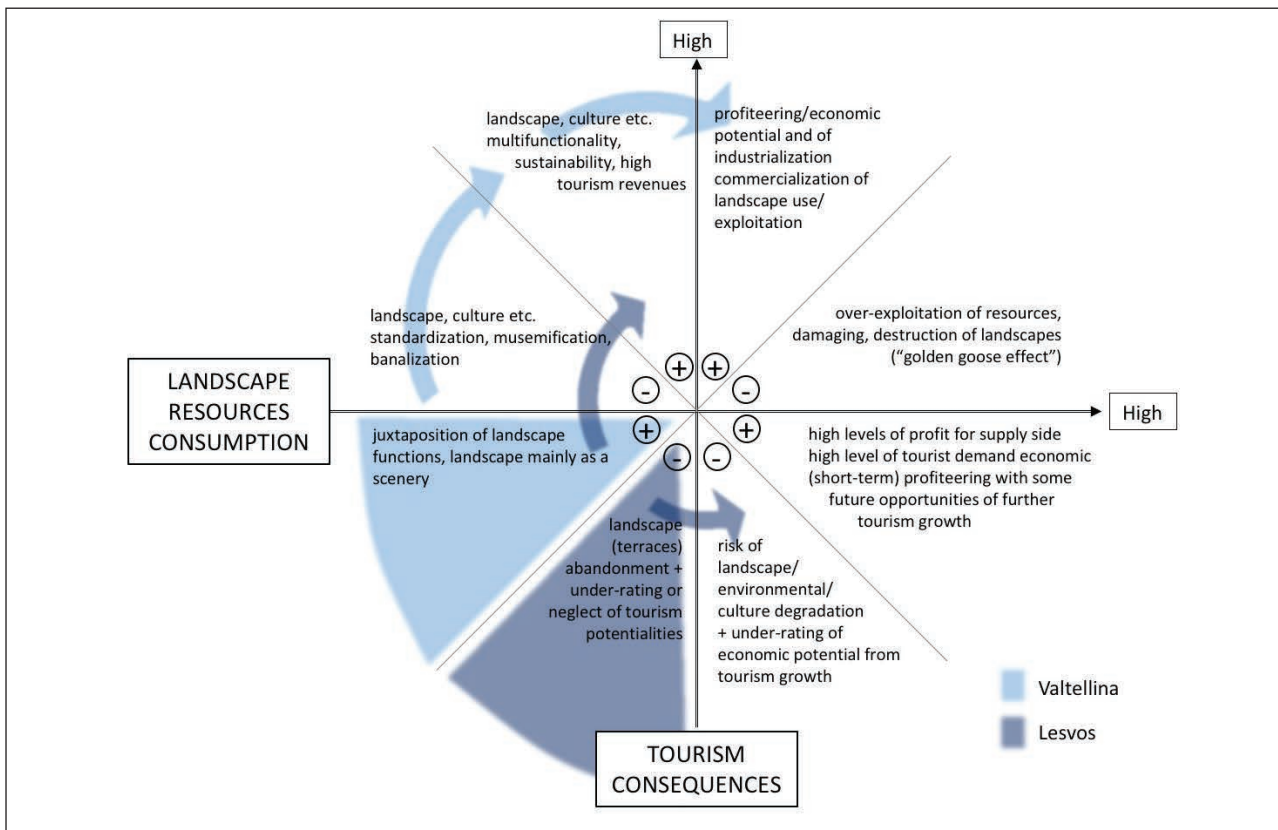


Figure 6: Possible scenarios in Valtellina and Lesvos.

would be sufficient for 1.000 hectares)". Generally speaking, our informants claimed that, under circumstances of mild, sustainable tourism, they only see positive potential – no dangers or threats. The farmers' cooperative representative was pessimistic about the future, due to the widespread devaluation of local culture and traditions. He reported that whatever initiatives tend to be undertaken are by big companies and business entrepreneurs. However, he believed that, if agrotouristic or other cooperative unions or farmers turned their attention to and tended the terraces, there could be mild tourism uses of them, especially if, besides personal investment and labor, the farmers could receive state financial support to preserve the terraces, as used to occur in the past. Besides dependence on state funds, grants, and fast-track investments, other general threats mentioned were the deep economic crisis, corrupt practices, desertion and abandonment of the rural terraces, intensification of agriculture and out-of-plan construction.

Scenarios

When all of the above were framed in terms of scenarios linking future tourism growth with terrace conditions, our respondents' attitudes were equally divided (in those cases where we received responses to this part of our question-

naire). Mild and sustainable tourism, with small-scale infrastructure development, was considered possible by the optimists who stated that it could follow a growing curve, i.e. 2000 people could easily be touristically accommodated, in total. The pessimists, on the other hand, saw no future for tourism in these areas. Indicatively, according to the Prefecture tourism representative, if development proceeds in the proper ways in order to avert destruction, only opportunities exist in promoting landscape and the nature of Lesvos, through tourism, no dangers or threats, i.e. there is potential for guided walking routes, demonstrating local agricultural practices. Conversely, according to the tourist agents' representative,

Lesvos cannot develop touristically too much, like other Greek islands. There are not many accessible beaches, no big hotels are ever going to be built, and the largest part of the island is under NATURA 2000 protection. I must say that the exploitation of the terraces for tourism purposes is a great idea. There could be mild tourism development here, with bungalows interspersed in the landscape, with small swimming pools, small-scale development, tourists seeking calm and quiet, as well as rural images and sounds, but I do not believe it will happen, as people here have no visions for the future.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The methodology adopted for our analysis led to both lights and shadows. On the one hand, the conceptual framework and the scenario approach proved to be useful in considering existing and expected interconnections between tourism and landscape resources. On the other hand, the stakeholders found it difficult to sketch future representations, probably due to at least two orders of reasons, in need of further investigation in future research contexts: a) our decision not to provide a pre-conceived set of different scenarios and b) the way in which we presented the uncharted scenarios framework in the questionnaire.

Moving to the results, the comparison of our two case studies clearly demonstrates that Valtellina and Lesvos stakeholders consider terraced landscapes under different lenses; synthesizing, a functional (but not yet multi-functional) approach seems predominant in Valtellina, with an emphasis on cultural and touristic values, while an ecological and agricultural one seems to be prevalent in Lesvos.

As shown in Figure 4, in both areas, terraced landscapes are considered of quality, even though abandoned in Lesvos, while slightly over-exploited in Valtellina. Compared to the urbanization of the valley bottom and of the surrounding areas, the Valtellina terraced and forested slopes appear more natural, therefore the average value between the adjectives *natural* and *anthropic* is neutral; while in Lesvos human intervention on the landscape is more recognized. Both landscapes are perceived as traditional, rural and uncontaminated (with more accentuated values in Lesvos), confirming the strong connection of terraced landscape with traditional pre-industrial agriculture and their attractiveness to tourists (which is more emphasized in Valtellina). The perception of isolation in Lesvos is greater than in Valtellina, although not significantly so. Interestingly, Lesvos landscapes are perceived to be more productive and multi-functional than the Valtellina ones, even though in the pair of adjectives “abandoned/over-exploited” the average answers were opposite.

Despite disparities in the volume and in the development of the tourism industry in the respective terraced landscapes, the perception of the tourism characteristics is similar, in both case studies (Figure 5). Tourism is considered to be mild and alternative, mainly foreign but locally managed, especially in Valtellina. The only divergent values regard the type of tourist experience, which tends to be more involved in Valtellina, possibly due to the various immersive activities offered to tourists (cycling, hiking, wine-tasting, etc.).

In both cases, there is a common conviction that the “landscape itself attracts tourists accordingly”, as stated by one Lesvos informant, therefore tourism in terraced landscape is automatically considered sustainable and soft, with only few interviewees recognizing threats in banalization, pollution or terrace deterioration due to tourism increase.

Building scenarios of possible interrelations between tourism development and the condition of the terraces has proven to be a rather difficult task and, when feasible, it seems to rely on three factors: a) availability of public funds for maintenance and tourism services (e.g. walking routes), b) long-term strategies and cooperation between local agriculture and tourism stakeholders and, finally, c) a recognition of the farmers’ socio-cultural role in terrace preservation, (i.e. perhaps through the diffusion of training courses dedicated to the construction and the maintenance of dry-stone walls.

According to the analysis of the case studies here presented, we may conclude that, in these terraced landscapes, there is neither risk of high landscape resources consumption leading to the destruction of the landscapes on which tourism depends (“golden goose effect”), nor, however, the possibility of high levels of tourism demand and profits for the supply side (Figure 6). Valtellina seems geared towards an increased multifunctionality of the landscape, though risking museumisation and commoditisation processes. On the contrary, Lesvos, is currently under-rating tourism consequences and could, alternatively, either worsen its situation or shift toward increased tourism revenues (if turns its attentions toward potentialities offered by its terraced landscapes).

In conclusion, despite the fact that not all assets and resources were equally acknowledged by the key stakeholders of our two case studies, it is obvious that there was a general agreement as to the roles, values and services offered and played out by terraced landscapes, in this part of Southern Europe. The case of Lesvos simply represents such a tourism destination still at the stage of discovery, whereas the case of Valtellina seems to represent a more advanced stage in terraced landscape tourism development: benefits and opportunities seem to be taken advantage of, while threats are barely beginning to materialize. Thus, the latter case could be seen as a further developmental stage in the life-cycle of such a destination; the former case is poised either to follow a similarly successful evolution, or to miss out on such a positive development, due to an under-estimation and neglect of its potentialities (Figure 6). In either case, under clearly and well-defined sustainable and locally-managed tourism initiatives, as both of our case studies illustrate, only all-around gain and benefits are expected to result from mild tourism development in such terraced landscapes, under the condition of safeguarding, protecting or reinstating the long-standing links and complex interweavings between ecological/ environmental wealth, robust rural livelihoods, social well-being, preservation of cultural traditions and heritage and intricate webs of family and community histories, while fulfilling alternative recreational experiences.

ALI IMA TURIZEM V TERASIRANIH POKRAJINAH PRIHODNOST? PRIMERJNA ŠTUDIJA POKRAJINSKIH VIROV IN POSLEDIC TURIZMA V DOLINI VALTELLINA (ITALIJA) IN NA OTOKU LEZBOS (GRČIJA)

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POVZETEK

Članek obravnava različne vidike odnosa med turizmom in terasiranimi pokrajinami in sicer z osredotočanjem na scenarije, ki se razvijajo iz morebitnih medsebojnih povezav med dvema sestavljenima spremenljivkama: a) rabo pokrajinskih virov in b) posledicami turizma, v dveh študijah primerov: na otoku Lezbos v Grčiji in v dolini Valtellina v Italiji. Primerjalna analiza je bila izvedena s poglobljenimi pogovori z ustreznimi deležniki, na podlagi katerih so bili oblikovani prihodnji scenariji za specifične študije primerov. Članek se zaključuje z razpravo o rezultatih teh dveh sestavljenih scenarijev v obliki zgodb, na podlagi katerih je mogoče predvideti prihodnje spremembe in vzdržnost terasirane pokrajine. V skladu z analizo študij primerov in ocenami prihodnosti turizma v terasiranih pokrajinah, ki so jih opravili anketiranci, ni tveganja za visoko porabo pokrajinskih virov, ki bi vodila v uničevanje terasirane pokrajine, in tudi ni verjetnosti o zelo intenzivnem turističnem povpraševanju oziroma masovnem turizmu na območju terasiranih pokrajin. V obeh primerih se v okviru jasno in natančno opredeljenih trajnostnih in lokalno upravljanih turističnih pobud pričakuje samo tisti dobiček in tiste koristi, ki so posledica blagega razvoja turizma.

Ključne besede: terasirane pokrajine, turizem, prihodnji scenariji, Valtellina, Lezbos

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