

Rural sacred landscape valorisation in North East Italy: lessons from the past and future directions

Luca Simone Rizzo, Raffaella Gabriella Rizzo, Filippo Smerghetto

Luca Simone Rizzo

Università degli Studi di Padova (Italy)

lucasimone.rizzo@unipd.it;

raffaelagabriella.rizzo@unipd.it;

filippo.smerghetto@gmail.com

As is well known, Veneto is the most-visited region in Italy. The extremely rich heritage literally insinuates itself even into every nook and cranny of its territory and reflects a notable variety of cultures. Religious heritage is an important part of it: it represents a privileged witness of local identities that, over the centuries, have shaped particular areas; one that needs to be better promoted to develop – via appropriate valorisation strategies - a type of tourism that is slow, rooted, sustainable and special.

In the Veneto, however, land use patterns have become unsustainable. In rururban territories in particular, from the '70s onwards socio-economic pressures along with a severe lack of territorial planning have led to a frenetic growth in building and road construction, with consequent problems of congestion and disputes over land use. More efforts are required, thus, to study the exploitation of religious heritage as tourist resources according to an integrated perspective, tourism-related as well as of territorial and landscape planning: of what landscapes are they part? Have they been subject to change? Land planning and management were sufficient to encourage the preservation not only of heritage sites but of landscapes that together with them can be exploited tourism-wise?

Adopting a mixed research approach (qualitative, quantitative and GIS-based), we aimed to address such questions (also methodologically). If territories wish to promote models of development that rest on the scenic quality of areas rich in (religious) heritage to be leveraged as a distinguishing factor of attractiveness, development strategies must overcome the past's incapacity to design integrated policies. Reflections on such links will, we trust, contribute towards enriching current debates.

Key Words: religious heritage; sustainable tourism; landscape and land use change; integrated policies; GIS

- 1) Rizzo, L., Smerghetto, F., Lucia, M. and Rizzo, R. (2017). Sprawl Dynamics in Rural–Urban Territories Highly Suited for Wine Production. Mapping Urban Growth and Changing Territorial Shapes in North-East Italy. *Sustainability*, 9(1), 116.
- 2) Luc, M., Somorowska, U. and Szmańda, J. (2015). Landscape analysis and planning. Heidelberg [etc.]: Springer.
- 3) Timothy, D. and Boyd, S. (2009). Heritage tourism. Harlow [u.a.]: Prentice Hall / Pearson Education.