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Italian Studies on Quality of Life

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Italian Studies on Quality of Life

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Territories and Landscapes: Place Identity, Quality of Life and Psychological Well-Being in Rural Areas

Maria Gabriella Ferrari, Elena Bocci, Erika Lepisto, Paola Cavallero, and Leonardo Rombai

Abstract Different perspectives describe different characteristics related to the places of daily life: "territories" spatial-geographical areas with material and concrete dimensions, "landscape" environmental areas as perceived by the inhabitants, with cognitive, affective, social and aesthetical meanings. In the environmental psychology the term "place identity" means the aspects of the image of Itself in relationship to the meanings and in partnership values to a physical environment.

In the Central Italy there are historically and culturally recognized geographical areas, of rural-agricultural tradition, rich in natural landscapes and historical-

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cultural remembrances, like Lunigiana, Media Valle del Serchio, Crete Senesi and Maremma, these territories are considered traditionally marginal and disadvantaged. The study investigates to understand how "everyday landscapes" and the on-going processes of change are perceived by the inhabitants also in relation with Quality of Life. The results presented showed distinctions between different age groups examined: youth, adults and elderly.

Territory and Landscape

The terms territory and landscape, although applying to the same spatial units, refer to different perspectives and involve complex, multi-meaning concepts.

"Territory" denotes a spatial and geographical area which is subject to management and transformation measures in terms of living environment. In geography, territory refers to a space controlled and altered by the civilizations that lived and live in it and includes the idea of physical or administrative "boundaries" (Sack 1986). As to the specific natural and anthropic elements, territory can be defined as a "circumscribed space with a communitarian dimension" (Banini 2013).

The notion of territorial representation or image is similar to the concept of "landscape", a term used by the European Landscape Convention (2000) to designate parts of territory as perceived by their inhabitants. This also involves the conception of cognitive, affective and aesthetic meanings and importance for the quality of life (Council of Europe 2000).

The Italian territory is pervaded by geographical areas, predominantly rural, that are historically and culturally recognizable. They are composed of municipalities and share similar anthropological, historical and geographical characteristics (Rombai 2001; Regione Toscana 2015).

These territories are still mainly intact: mountainous fields, hilly and flat countryside or coastal and insular areas/regions. However, their physical characteristics and the morphological, hydrographical, climatic conditions related to animal and vegetable patrimony vary significantly. Moreover, historical inheritance of several ancient civilizations is evident in the smaller urban areas with rich civil and religious architectures. They reveal the archaeological and artistic heritages of the long period between ancient and contemporary times.

In the Central Italy, particularly in the central Tyrrhenian area – the ancient Etruscan and later Romanised region – there are landscapes that are rich of historical-cultural remembrances (historical-geografical rural areas). The focus of the present work is on such landscapes: the Lunigiana (high and middle valley of river Magra), Media Valle of river Serchio, Crete Senesi, Maremma of Tuscany (Grossetana) and of Lazio (Viterbese).

In the current society the geographical and natural characteristics, the historical-cultural elements, the urban and productive installations shape the look of the territories affecting the place attachment and, subsequently, the quality of life (Carta et al. 2012) and psychological well-being (Ryff and Keyes 1995; Ruini et al. 2003).

The multi-disciplinary research presupposes that the territory, described by geographers and aesthetically and symbolically appreciated by the inhabitants, may

be better understood if studied from a psycho-social perspective in relation to the quality of life of individuals and communities.

It is highlighted the importance of sharing the results of research not only in the academic sphere, but also with stakeholders of the territory, to outline together "possible futures" (Testa 2017).

Background

In "Person-Environment-Behaviour" (PEB) relationships, Ittelson (1973 pag.18) notes that: "man is never encountered independent of the situation through which he acts, nor is the environment ever encountered independent of the encountering individual". To understand PEB relationships means studying people, their place attachment, their future intentions as well as the physical settings in which they live and act.

From a psycho-social point of view, our focus is on quality of life and on psychological well-being in relation to the environment (Bonnes and Secchiaroli 1992; Twigger-Ross and Uzzell 1996) in rural areas by considering the importance of living in suitable environments, fitting needs and expectations (Zani and Cicognani 2000).

Consistent with the "biophilia hypothesis" (Wilson 1984; Kellert and Wilson 1993; Ulrich 1993) the literature provides ample accounts of the positive influence of natural environment on physical health (cfr. Inter alia: Ulrich, 1984; Cooper-Marcus and Barnes 1999; Velarde et al. 2007).

Also from a psychological perspective (Wohlwill 1983; Kaplan and Kaplan 1989; Kaplan 1995; Hartig 2003, 2004; Berto 2005; Lafortezza et al. 2009; Scopelliti et al. 2016; Carrus et al. 2017), contact with nature brings about positive psycho-physical effects. Indeed, as Grinde and Patil (2009 pag. 2335) pointed out, contact with nature seem to reduce stress and improve people's attention and mental state.

The research distinguishes between the satisfaction of living in rural/urban areas (Saporiti 2016) and focuses on the benefits of nature in the cities as an important component of urban inhabitant's attachment (Bonnes et al. 2004) and quality of life (Burgess et al. 1988). But it also highlights some ambivalent attitudes towards nature in the city in terms of "appreciation" and "devaluation" (Bonnes et al. 2011).

General preferences for rural areas seem associated with the cognitive and emotional bond of place identity (Proshansky 1978; Proshansky et al. 1983). By focusing on rural and mountain sites, Knez and Eliasson (2017 pag. 1) the attention is drawn to the fact that: "Definitions of landscape include not only objective natural characteristics (Turner 1989), but also subjective human views, perceptions, identifications and memories (Knez 2006; Knez and Thorsson 2008; Lewicka 2008)". In fact, the results of the study conducted by Knez and Eliasson (2017) in mountain communities have shown that residents have individually and collectively pinpointed their favourite sites in mountains to which they have evolved emotional and cognitive bonds. In this context, the subjects perceive and experience high levels of well-being associated with a cognitive and emotional bond of place-identity.

According to their results: “the stronger the attachment/closeness/belonging (emotional component of place identity) residents felt to favourite personal and collective sites the more well-being they perceived when visiting these places. Similarly, the more remembrance, thinking and mental travel (cognitive component of place identity) residents directed to these sites the more well-being they perceived in these places. In both types of sites well-being was more strongly predicted by emotional than cognitive component of place-identity” (Knez and Eliasson, 2017 pag. 1).

The importance of closeness has been emphasised by Hidalgo and Hernàndez (2001) by discussing the desire to maintain closeness to the object of attachment.

By incorporating closeness into the previous definition of place attachment (Shumaker and Taylor 1983) Hidalgo and Hernàndez (2001 pag. 274) state: “it could take the following form: a positive affective bond between an individual and a specific place, the main characteristic of which is the tendency of the individual to maintain closeness to such a place”.

Due to its multi-dimensionality, the place attachment has been synthesized by Scannell and Gifford (2010) in a comprehensive model, including many aspects into three dimensions: “Person–Place-Process” (PPP Framework).

In particular, the psychological process dimension refers to: the emotional component of place attachment (Hidalgo and Hernàndez 2001), the cognitive component – memories, beliefs, meaning, and knowledge – (Proshansky 1978) and actions to maintain closeness to places as indicated by Hidalgo and Hernàndez (2001).

The bond to lived places (i.e. emotional, cognitive and actions aspect) is challenged by the demands of the contemporary society as they affect the perception of the environmental changes.

Currently, many *non places* (Augé, 1992) surround urban areas so that mountain and countryside areas risk to become “new” places of uncertain destiny, if transformation does not respect valuable landscape elements and is carried out without considering sustainability and social sharing.

In these places, people and communities may not develop a sense of attachment due to the environmental transformations as they may negatively affect their historical and cultural settings. Subsequently, the places become less familiar (Mazza and Minozzi 2011) and may led to phenomena of deterioration and of abandonment.

Studying the bond with the territory, Castiglioni (2016) investigates the psychosocial relapse of the type of territorial management.

She highlights the differences (in terms of opinions, practices, but also attachment) among citizens of North-eastern Italian territories: “institutional landscapes” managed by institutions and experts, versus “everyday landscapes” managed by the whole community and continuously subject to transformations.

She finds that “institutional landscapes” produce a detriment to the creation of a sense of personal attachment, due to the fact that citizens are not involved; while the position of people as “insiders” in “everyday landscapes” results in a “sense of

belonging", "affective bonds" and "social relations" (strong place attachment), even if there is often little awareness.

Therefore, Castiglioni (2016 pag. 37) proposes that: "an increase of awareness of different sets of values existing in a landscape seems the most appropriate strategy to overcome the opposition between the two landscape ideas and the questions of landscape change, through a wide process of 'landscape literacy', focused to the acquisition of a way to 'look at' the landscape and to act responsibly on it".

Based on research findings mentioned above, the aim of this study is to assess the impact of "everyday landscapes" on place identity, quality of life and psychological well-being for the rural inhabitants of specific areas in Central Italy. These territories are characterized by that type of natural and historical-cultural landscapes that unite natural habitats, outstanding natural beauties, farming and forestry lands with historical and cultural traces (cf. inter alia: Sestini 1963; Sereni 1984).

In the last century, as a consequence of industrialization, these areas have also been experienced different degrees of urbanization which have not always respected the dimensions of landscape and historical-cultural.

Objectives

The research investigates at an exploratory level some rural areas in Central Italy, from hills to mountain and coastal areas in Tuscany and Northern Lazio, in order to understand how "everyday landscapes" and the on-going processes of change are perceived.

The objective is to investigate how the inhabitants of Lunigiana, Media Valle of river Serchio, Crete Senesi and Maremma express their place identity, including its cognitive and emotional components:

- cognitive component: knowledge of the specific places of the territory and their history, local dialect and values attributed to the everyday landscape elements as well as to elements of degradation;
- emotional component: attachment/belonging/closeness.

As Knez and Eliasson (2017) the cognitive and emotional components of place identity are considered in relation to quality of life and psychological well-being about "everyday landscapes".

Historical-Geografical Rural Areas Research Context

In almost all the Italian, and particularly Tuscan and Lazio extra-urban or rural territories, the physical and natural elements are strongly linked to the historical and cultural ones. Traces, identities, material and immaterial memories are the result of

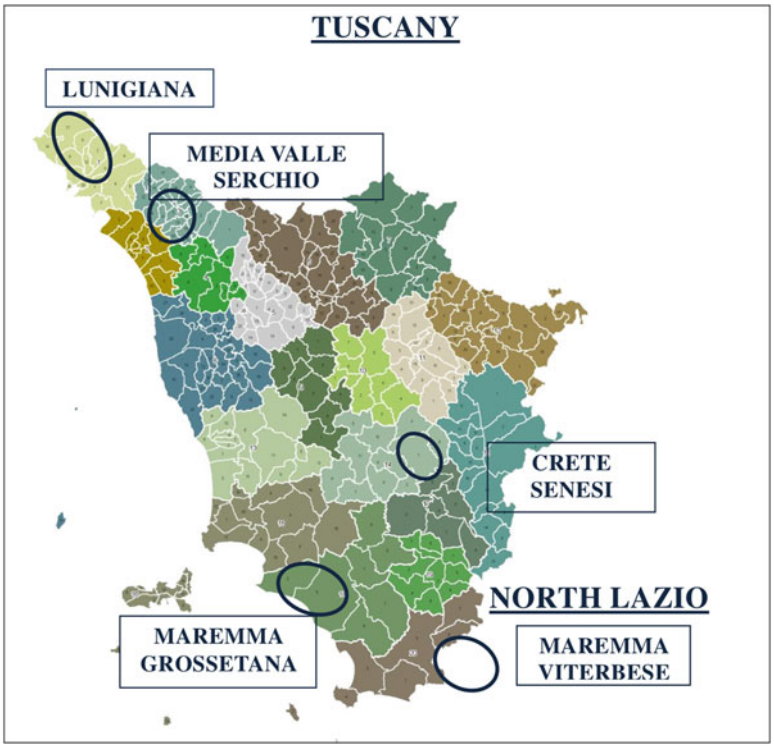


Fig. 1 Tuscany region and North Lazio: historical-geographical areas under study. (Adapted from the Regional Landscape Plan of Tuscany, 2015)

three millennia of human history and the high influence of urban pressure that have shaped environments of unquestionable landscape value (Fig. 1).

These rural areas are high nature-value territories and they preserve the historical heritage of infinite civilizations from prehistory till today. But although they are not immune from the risks and degradation.

LUNIGIANA (LUN): – The northernmost part of Tuscany, a mountainous area in the province of Massa Carrara, on the border between Emilia and Liguria, and extending between the Tuscan-Ligurian Apennines, and the high ridges of the Tuscan-Emilian Appennines and the Apuan Alps, is crossed by the valley of the river Magra, coinciding with the ancient Via Francigena. It includes parts of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines National Park and of the Regional Natural Park of the Apuan Alps, an area of very high naturalistic interest with sharp peaks, just a few kilometres from the sea. It is also characterized by ancient villages and medieval castles and villas and houses of the eighteenth century. In the lower valley of the river there are some industrialized areas, but no large commercial areas.

MEDIA VALLE of the river Serchio (MVS) – On the border with the Lucchesia–mountain, wooded and hilly area of the province of Lucca, flanked to the south by the city of Lucca and to the north by the Garfagnana, in between the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines and the Apuan Alps. It stretches along the banks of the river Serchio. Downstream there are some recent industrialized areas.

CRETE SENESI (CRETE) – Tuscany's geographical area in the south-east of Siena. It is difficult to point out its exact limits because the administrative boundaries do not coincide with the specific physical-natural features of the clay area. It means that some parts belong to nearby territorial areas. The name "Crete" comes from clay – or argil – component of the area's soil, which gives the landscape its characteristic colours depending on the season. The economy benefits from farming and family farm activities. The landscape is intact and healthy as there are no industrialized or commercial areas.

MAREMMA – The geographical area of Maremma extends for approximately 5000 sq. Km covering southern Tuscany and Northern Lazio, and is divided into Maremma Grossetana and Maremma Laziale, mosaic of environments and colours due to the variety of landscapes.

MAREMMA GROSSETANA (MAR.GR.) – Hilly, flat and coastal area of southern Tuscany overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea, in the province of Grosseto. It extends from the Gulf of Follonica to the north to the border with the Lazio region. From the coast the southern islands of the Tuscan Archipelago are visible. Ancient villages are present in the inland such as Pitigliano or on the coast like Castiglione della Pescaia. Some industrial and commercial areas are located in the north.

MAREMMA VITERBESE (MAR.VT.) – The northernmost area of Lazio at the borders with Tuscany, in the province of Viterbo. Valentano is located in the Volsini mountain chain, near the Lake Bolsena and about 30 km from the Tyrrhenian Sea. The surrounding natural environment is still intact, with important prehistoric testimonies of the Bronze Age and the small lake of Mezzano. The economy of the area is still predominantly based on agriculture and livestock farming, with an emphasis on ancient agro-food productions. Industries and businesses are poorly developed.

Methodology

Procedure, Tool and Data Analysis

The data collection took place in the period 2015–2016, with an anonymous and self-administered *ad hoc* questionnaire (Ferrari et al. 2014). In each territory, it was asked to consider the historical-geographical area of belonging. The questionnaire is divided into four sections in order to investigate:

A. cognitive component: knowledge of the specific places of the territory and the history, local dialect and value attributed to the everyday landscape elements as well as to the elements of degradation;
B. emotional component: attachment/belongingness/closeness;
C. quality of life and psychological well-being;
D. socio-demographic data.

As to the types of items referring to different territories, the cognitive component was explored: the knowledge and awareness of "everyday landscapes" including multiple choices items (for example: Thinking about your Territory how much do you think you know it? Not at all/slightly/somewhat /much/very much) and single items on a scale from 0 to 10.

For the evaluation of the emotional component, at first the single item method with dichotomous answer was used (Trentin 1991): Do you identify "..." as your geographic territory of belonging? Yes/No with subsequent request to specify the reasons – open question – (for example: Are you able to synthetically motivate your choice of answer, why you feel or do not you feel bound to this territory?).

Later, for psycho-social constructs related to place identity: for place attachment/belongingness a series of 30 items was applied, on a 5-point Likert scale, from "0 = strongly disagree" to "4 = strongly agree".

These items were adapted from two studies. The first evaluated attachment to the neighbourhood (Fornara et al. 2010), through 8 items related to rooting, personal identity and social identity. Some examples of these items are: "This is an ideal territory for me", "I would find it difficult to leave this territory", "I recognize myself in the people of this territory".

Additional 22 items were derived from the model of Raymond et al. (2010), which identifies the connection with the place of belonging in natural and rural contexts. Some examples of these items are: "This is the best territory for the activities I enjoy", "I feel that this territory is a part of me", "The friendships developed through sporting activities in this territory are very important to me".

Moreover, in order to assess the tendency of the individual to maintain closeness with the place of daily life, participants were asked about the intentions of future residence. This was done by using the single item followed by the open question on the motivations: "I would like to spend the rest of my life in this territory: No/In part/Yes. Can you synthetically motivate your choice of answer?"

Answers to open questions have been categorized through semantic categories, following the method of content analysis (Losito 2002).

Descriptive analyses were performed; the subjects were compared by the four territorial areas, and by age group using test chi^2, ANOVA test and post-hoc tests.

Structure and reliability for the two dimensions of place identity: "place attachment" and "belongingness" were tested by item analysis, some exploratory factor analyses (Principal Component Analysis) and Cronbach's alpha test.

Item analysis eliminated some non-discriminant items, and with the principal component analysis and the reliability analyses, for the place-attachment scale a 6-item scale was obtained (KMO index = .854; explained total variance = 55.352% and Cronbach's Alpha reliability = .821).

For the belongingness scale a 13-item scale was obtained (KMO index = .880; explained total variance = 55.858% and Cronbach's Alpha reliability = .783).

From these procedures, a measure for place attachment and one for belongingness were obtained through average scores (with range 0–4).

The Sample

The study sample consists of 366 inhabitants of the four territorial areas and subareas (Table 1). Data collection was performed in municipalities in the following areas:

1 – LUNIGIANA (n = 125) – High Valley of river Magra (LUN HVM): Pontremoli, Filattiera (n = 58) and Middle Valley of river Magra (LUN MVM): Aulla – (n = 67),
2 – MEDIA VALLE of the river Serchio (MVS): Borgo a Mozzano (n = 15),
3 – CRETE SENESI: Asciano (n = 86),

Table 1 Research sample (n = 366): inhabitants of historical-geographical rural areas, research context

Variable	Modality	f	%
Gender	M	179	48.9
	F	187	51.1
Age years: M=43.2 ± 21.5			
Age classes	Youth (14–24)	110	30.0
	Adults (25–64)	173	47.3
	Elderly (>65)	83	22.7
Territories	1 – Lunigiana (n=125)		
	High Valley of Magra	58	15.8
	Middle Valley of Magra	67	18.3
	2 – Media Valle of Serchio	15	4.1
	3 – Crete Senesi	86	23.6
	4 – Maremma (n=140)		
	Grossetana	37	10.1
	Viterbese	103	28.1
Place of birth	Native	289	79.0
	Non native	77	21.0
Total		N = 366	100.0

f frequencies; % percentage

4 – MAREMMA (n = 140) – grossetana (MAR.GR.): Grosseto, Castiglione della Pescaia (n = 37) and Maremma viterbese (MAR.VT): Cellere and Valentano (n = 103).

48.9% of the respondents were male and 51.1% female. The age was in between 14 and 88 years, mean 43.2 (sd = 21.5), of which 30.0% young adults, 47.3% adults, 22.7% elderly people.

79.0% of the participants are native of the place, in each territory: Lunigiana 90/125 (72.0%), Media Valle of the Serchio 15/15 (100.0%), Crete 67/86 (77.9%), Maremma 117/140 (83.6%).

Results

Section A. Cognitive Component

A medium-high level of knowledge of the territory is highlighted in the answers provided by the total sample: knowledge of the territory, its history and local dialect, as well as high appreciation of the natural and historical-cultural elements (Table 2). Regarding the responses for the individual territories it is noted that:

Table 2 Cognitive component: knowledge of the specific places of the territory and the history, local dialect and territorial differences (chi^2)

Cognitive component	Total (n=366)	Lunigiana (n=125)	Media Valle Serchio (n=15)	Crete (n=86)	Maremma (n=140)	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	Chi2 (df; p)
Knowledge of Territory						
Very much-Much	171 (46.7)	54 (43.5)	3 (20.0)	36 (42.4)	78 (55.7)	
Somewhat	162 (44.3)	61 (49.2)	10 (66.7)	40 (47.1)	51 (36.4)	
Not at all/slightly	31 (8.5)	9 (7.3)	2 (13.3)	9 (10.6)	11 (7.9)	10.879 (6; .092)
Knowledge of territorial history						
Very Much-Much	83 (22.7)	30 (24.0)	3 (20.0)	19 (22.1)	31 (24.0)	
Somewhat	167 (45.6)	71 (56.8)	5 (33.3)	29 (33.7)	62 (48.1)	
Not at all/slightly	105 (28.7)	24 (19.2)	7 (46.7)	38 (44.2)	36 (27.9)	18.939 (6; .004)
Local Dialect						
Very much-Much	113 (30.9)	29 (23.0)	3 (20,0)	36 (41,9)	45 (34.9)	
Somewhat	87 (23.8)	27 (21.6)	2 (13.3)	21 (24,4)	37 (28.7)	
Not at all/slightly	155 (42.3)	69 (55.2)	10 (66.7)	29 (33.7)	47 (36.4)	17.913 (6; .006)

Table 3 Cognitive component: evaluation in average values of landscape elements (natural and historical–cultural) and territorial differences (ANOVA)

Evaluation elements	Total (n=366)	Lunigiana (n=125)	Media Valle Serchio (n=15)	Crete (n=86)	Maremma (n=140)	
	m (SD)	m (SD)	m (SD)	m (SD)	m (SD)	F(df); p
Natural (range 0–10)	8.7 (1.3)	8.6 (1.2)	7.9 (1.8)	8.8 (1.3)	8.8 (1.0)	F(3.362) = 2.453; p=.063
Historical–Cultural (range 0–10)	8.1 (1.7)	8.1 (1.5)	7.5 (1.4)	7.6 (1.9)	8.5 (1.5)	F(3.353)=5.43; p=.001

m mean; *SD* standard deviation; *F* ANOVA

for the knowledge of the specific places of the territory, the participants claim to know the territory "Very much", "much" and "somewhat" in Lunigiana 92.7%, in Maremma 92.1%, in Media Valle 86.7%, in Crete 89.5% (p = N.S.);

they affirm to know the history of territory "Very much", "much" and "somewhat" in Lunigiana 80.8%, in Maremma 72.1%, in Crete 55.8%, in Media Valle 53.3% (p = .004);

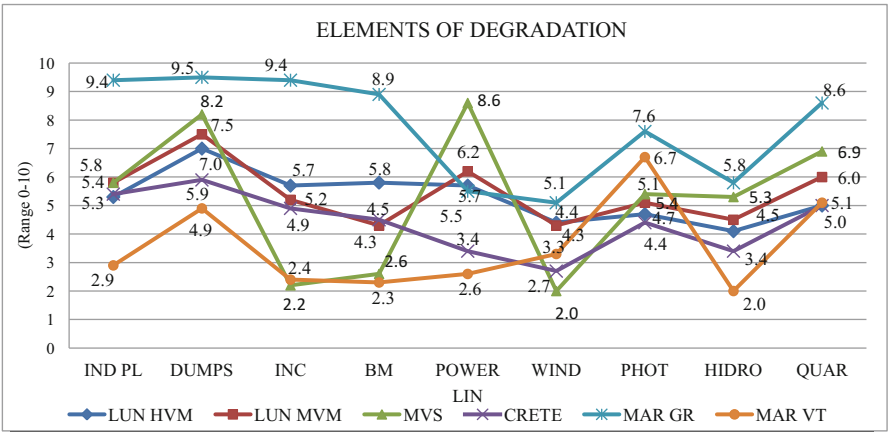
about the local dialect they claim to know it: "Very much", "much" and "somewhat" in Crete 66.3%, Maremma 63.6%, Lunigiana 44.6% and Media Valle Serchio 33.3%. Furthermore in Media Valle 66.7% and in Lunigiana 55.2% they speak it Not at all/slightly (p = .006).

The value attributed to the everyday landscape's natural and historical/cultural elements and to the elements of degradation was also examined (Table 3).

regarding the evaluation of natural elements on a scale from 0 to 10, Table 3 shows that the levels are very high in all territories, in particular in Maremma (M = 8.8, SD = 1.0), while they are slightly inferior in Crete (M = 8.8, SD = 1.3) and in Lunigiana (M = 8.6, sd = 1.2). The lowest values, albeit always high, have been found in Media Valle Serchio (M = 7.9, SD = 1.8) with no significant difference among the four territories (F(3.362) = 2.453; p = .06).

For the historical/cultural elements the highest values have been found in Maremma (M = 8.5, SD = 1.5) and slightly inferior in Crete (M = 7.6, SD = 1.9) and in Lunigiana (M = 8.1, SD = 1.5). The lowest values, albeit always high, have been found in Media Valle Serchio. (M = 7.5, SD = 1.4). A significant difference among the four territories has been found (F(3.353) = 5.43; p = .001), post-hoc test: Crete/Maremma (p = .001).

By providing the respondents nine categories (on a scale from "0 = no degradation" to "10 = maximum degradation"), i.e. the main ones considered as sources of pollution and environmental degradation, very complex results were obtained as shown in the Graph 1.



IND PL - industrial plants	WIND - wind turbines in mountain ridges or natural areas
DUMPS – dumps	PHOT - photovoltaic panels in agricultural lands or natural areas
INC - incinerators	HYDRO - hydroelectric stations on rivers
BM - biomass power stations	QUAR - quarries of mineral resources or other materials
POWER LIN - Power lines	

Graph 1 Perception of the elements of landscape degradation. (Lunigiana High an Middle Valley Magra; LUN HVM and LUN MVM); Media valle Serchio MVS; Crete Senesi: CRETE; Maremma grossetana: MAR GR; Maremma Viterbese: MAR VT)

In this graph the territorial subdivision among territorial areas has been maintained: Lungiana: high and middle valley of Magra river and Maremma Grossetana and Maremma Viterbese to explore the experience of the specific elements of degradation, derived by different industrial plants in the sub-areas.

Respondents are most concerned about the factors already present in their area and the inhabitants of the Maremma Grossetana are those who worry the most.

Moreover, elements of degradation are extracted from the open question: "Do you believe that other elements of environmental or sanitary risks may increase in your territory? If yes, can you specify which?" Some answers have pointed out further elements of environmental worry: land abandonment, hydro-geological instability, land consumption, pollution, overbuilding, coastal erosionn and sea pollution, increased use of herbicides and pesticides.

Section B – Emotional Component

The emotional component has been assessed through two different methodologies: the single item method with dichotomous answer (Table 4) and the Likert scale (Table 5).

Table 4 Emotional component: specific place, sense of belonging and territorial differences (chi^2)

Emotional component	Total (n=366)	Lunigiana (n=125)	Media Valle Serchio (n=15)	Crete (n=86)	Maremma (n=140)	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	Chi2 (df; p)
Sense of belonging						
Yes	338 (92.3)	118 (94.4)	14 (93.3)	72 (83.7)	134 (95.7)	
No	28 (7.65)	7 (5.6)	1 (6.7)	14 (16.3)	6 (4.3)	12.071 (3; .007)
Specific place						
Yes	322 (87.9)	113 (90.4)	13 (100)	71 (82.6)	125 (89.9)	
No	41 (11.2)	12 (9.6)	-	15 (17.4)	14 (10.1)	5.465 (3; .141)

Table 5 Emotional component: place attachment and belongingness in average values and territorial differences. (ANOVA)

Emotional component	Total (n = 366)	Lunigiana (n=125)	Media Valle Serchio (n = 15)	Crete (n = 86)	Maremma (n = 140)	
	m(SD)	m(SD)	m(SD)	m(SD)	m(SD)	F (df); p
Place attachment (range 0–4)	2.9 (.87)	2.7 (.82)	2.7 (.85)	2.7 (1.04)	3.2 (.71)	F(3.365) = 8.113;p <.000
Belongingness (range 0–4)	2.6 (.72)	2.5 (.67)	2.5 (.96)	2.5 (.79)	2.9 (.65)	F(3.365) = 8.704;p <.000

m mean, *SD* standard deviation, *F* ANOVA

According to the answers of the single items the respondents perceive the territory in which they live as a place of belonging in the 92.3% of cases. The largest percentage is recorded in Maremma 95.7%, followed by Lunigiana 94.4%, Media Valle 93.3% and the Crete 83.7% (p=.007).

Moreover, for the sense of belonging to a specific place, the majority of people (87.9%) expresses a feeling of belonging. In particular: Media Valle 100%, Lunigiana 90.4%, Maremma 89.9%, Crete 82.6%. (p = N.S.).

The motivations of belonging refer to concepts like: "place of birth and childhood", "origins, generational roots", "I live, choose to live there", "well-being, I am fine", "beauty, nature charm, uncontaminated landscapes", "tranquillity and healthiness", "natural", "attachment bond", "belongingness, it is my land", "memories and affections, place of childhood and adolescence", "family ties", "social relationships, valid social context", "rich in history, traditions and culture".

Those who do not express a sense of belonging (7.65%) give reasons such as: "it is not my place of origin", "disagree with environmental management policies", "land of poverty, suffering and migrants".

Through the Likert Scale the following results for the constructs of place attachment and belongingness were obtained (Table 5):

Table 6 Emotional component: closeness operationalized as intentions of future residence: "In this area I would like to spend the rest of my life" and territorial differences (chi^2)

Closeness: "Intentions of future residence"	Total (n = 366)	Lunigiana (n = 125)	Media Valle Serchio (n = 15)	Crete (n = 86)	Maremma (n = 140)	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	Chi2 (df; p)
Yes	166 (45.6)	67 (54.5)	10 (66.7)	26 (30.2)	63 (45.5)	
In Part	157 (43.1)	41 (33.3)	5 (33.3)	41 (47.7)	70 (50.0)	
No	41 (11.2)	15 (11.2)	-	19 (22.1)	7 (5.0)	28.676 (6; .000)

Note: not all subjects answer to all questions

for place attachment (from 0 = extremely low to 4 = extremely high) the highest values have been found in Maremma (M = 3.2, SD = .71), in Crete (M = 2.7, SD = 1.04), in Media Valle (M = 2.7, SD = .85) and in Lunigiana (M = 2.7, SD = .82); ($F_{(3.365)} = 8.113$; $p < .000$) post-hoc test: Maremma/Lunigiana ($p < .000$) Maremma/Crete ($p = .003$);

for belongingness (from 0 = extremely low to 4 = extremely high) the results are: Maremma (M = 2.9, SD = .65), Lunigiana (M = 2.5, SD = .67), Media Valle (M = 2.5, SD = .96) and Crete (M = 2.5, SD = .79); ($F_{(3.365)} = 8.704$; $p < .000$) post-hoc test: Maremma/Lunigiana ($p = .001$) Maremma/Crete ($p < .000$).

The closeness was assessed as "intentions of future residence" in the specific territory (Table 6). We found that: 45.6% is willing to stay, while 43.1% intends to remain only "in part" and the remaining 11.3% wants to leave (Chi^2: $p < .000$).

The details of the three response choices showed that people wanting to stay correspond to the following percentages: Media Valle 66.7%, Lunigiana 54.5%, Maremma 45.5% and Crete 30.2%. The answer "In part" was recorded respectively: in Maremma 50.0% and in Crete 47.7% and both in Lunigiana and Media Valle 33.3% (Chi^2: $p < .000$).

In relation to the closeness as intention of future residence, the relation between age and closeness was further investigated. By verifying the answer by age, as regards future intentions of residence, the majority of the elderly (53.0%) intends to remain, followed by adults (48.3%) and then young people (35.8%). As to the "in part" answers, the percentages are: adults 48.8%, elderly 44.6% and finally young people 33.0%. It is also noted that young people are rather evenly distributed along the three response options and that they do not take for granted a future departure from the place of origin.

It suggests that young people who do not foresee a future residence in the area, are willing to go away not because they dislike where they live, but because they feel the need to experience other places and other opportunities. This is supported by the high percentage of young people who report their sense of belonging (88.2%),their medium-high level of attachment (M = 2.56, sd = .95) belongingness (M = 2.36,

sd = .72), and the value they give the natural (M = 8.37, sd = 1.35) and cultural-historical elements (M = 7.42, sd = 1.86).

The motivations expressed by those who wish to reside in the territory are consistent with their stated sense of belonging; the motivations for wanting "in part" to stay reveal a conflict, particularly in young people, between living in a loved and valued place, looking for new jobs and relational opportunities or wanting to travel and make new experiences. Finally, the motivations reported by the few subjects who do not intend to stay refer to: lack of job opportunities and relational difficulties in the social community.

Section C. Quality of Life and Psychological Well-being

As to the quality of life the results are "Very much", "much" and "somewhat" Maremma 98.6%, Lunigiana 92.0%, Media Valle 86.7%, Crete 84.9% (p < .000).

For the psychological well-being "Very much", "much" and "somewhat" Maremma 98.6%, Lunigiana 94.3%, Media Valle 93.3%, Crete 87.2% (p < .001) (Table 7).

Consistent with the findings of recent studies (Knez and Eliasson 2017) the results of the present study suggest that the cognitive and emotional components of place identity play an active role in the quality of life and psychological well-being.

In fact, in this section the results were coherent with the those previously presented in sections A and B.

Table 7 Quality of life, psychological well-being and territorial differences (chi^2)

	Total (n = 366) 1	Lunigiana (n = 125)	Media Valle Serchio (n = 15)	Crete (n = 86)	Maremma (n = 140)	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	Chi2 (df; p)
Quality of life						
Very much-Much	250 (68.3)	90 (72.6)	9 (60.0)	43 (50.0)	108 (78.3)	
Somewhat	86 (23.5)	24 (19.4)	4 (26.7)	30 (34.9)	28 (20.3)	
Not at all/slightly	27 (7.4)	10 (8.1)	2 (13.3)	13 (15.1)	2 (1.4)	27.131 (6; .000)
Psychological well-being						
Very much-Much	257 (70.2)	96 (77.4)	9 (60.0)	43 (50.0)	109 (79.0)	
Somewhat	85 (23.2)	21 (16.9)	5 (33.3)	32 (37.2)	27 (19.6)	
Not at all/slightly	21 (5.7)	7 (5.6)	1 (8.7)	11 (12.8)	2 (1.4)	30.096 (6; .000)

Note: not all subjects answered to all questions

Considering the differences already highlighted between Maremma and Lunigiana, in both territories elevated values have been found regarding knowledge of the territory and the history together with belongingness. This is consistent with the high values registered for quality of life and psychological well-being.

The same coherence has been noted for the territories of Media Valle Serchio and Crete, presenting less elevated levels of quality of life/psychological well-being and less elevated levels in both the cognitive and emotional components of place identity. However, on the whole a general appreciation for "everyday landscapes" was found.

Finally, the quality of life and psychological well-being associated with the cognitive and emotional components of place identity were assessed.

In fact, in the total sample (n = 366) positive correlations are highlighted between: attachment and psychological well-being (rho = .534; p <.01), attachment and quality of life (rho = .407; p <.01), belongingness and psychological well-being (rho = ,551; p <.01); belongingness and quality of life (rho = .460; p <.01).

Interestingly, the inhabitants of Maremma have the highest scores in place identity, quality of life and psychological well-being, but they, especially the inhabitants from Maremma Grossetana, are also the most concerned about elements of degradation.

In other territories the concern is more associated with present elements or new industrial installations, but it is generally expressed with smaller intensity.

This emphasises the importance of sharing this kind of research findings not only in the academic environment but also directly with stakeholders of territory as it may help to increase awareness of territories and landscapes and the collaboration of outlining "possible futures" (Testa 2017).

Conclusions

The results of the research show that in the examined rural areas the inhabitants mainly associated psychological well-being and a good quality of life with motivations related to the pleasant environment that is suitable for their needs.

These data draw attention to often marginal and disadvantaged realities where the inhabitants still perceive a strong attachment as a psychological dimension that is correlated with psychological well-being and quality of life.

Following Saporiti (2016) from Report COOP 2016, based on studies ISTAT, in relation to the environments of the province (that often corresponds with the rural areas) in which the inhabitants perceive relational and social psychological well-being (Saporiti 2016): Italians living in small municipalities are on average more satisfied than city people, i.e. who lives in urban centres up to 2.000 inhabitants feels more satisfied than who lives in big cities. Thus, it seems that territories that combine natural and cultural elements, derived from history and tradition and aspects of modern life, have more resources than urban areas to increase their inhabitants'

psychological well-being, through a good integration between natural elements and community contexts.

In details, Maremma and Lunigiana slightly more than Crete and Media Valle.

Rural areas are comfortable both for adults and elderly people, who find in their "everyday landscapes" suitable dimensions for their material and psycho-social needs. This is also the case for young people who, even though they may decide to leave, still regard it as a valid and pleasant place to come back to if they wish.

These territories, also subject to depopulation – as pointed out by ISTAT – are mostly abandoned because of the lack of job opportunities rather than for discomfort toward the physical or psycho-social "everyday landscapes".

These contributions can explain the reactions of the inhabitants of other similar rural areas of Central Italy, recently devastated by earthquakes (2016–2017). In an interview, the Mayor of Norcia (Perugia), Nicola Alemanno, in line with the respondents of the present research, said with determination: "...Here we are born, here we have built our future, no one will move from here", in the hope that it will be possible to rebuild the village and that citizens can reconstruct community life, without being forced to emigrate (Cecchi 2016).

It is essential that the involvement of the local population in environmental reconstruction, change and transformation does not increase the risk of disrupting the "everyday landscapes" and transform then in "new" places of uncertain destiny.

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