Re-awakening ‘Ghost Towns’, Alternative Futures for Abandoned Italian Villages

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Re-awakening ‘Ghost Towns’, Alternative Futures for Abandoned Italian Villages

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Abstract

Italy is a country with an enormous number of historical hamlets, rural villages and medieval walled towns affected by population decline, many of which were abandoned in the 1900s and today have become ‘ghost towns’. While neglected, and even shunned for the greater part of the twentieth century, a new wave of political and popular interest in Italy's ghost towns, coupled with an increasing number of initiatives to resuscitate them, suggest that the presumed destinies of Italy's small historic villages (of decline, ruin and oblivion), may be overturned. Contemporary interest in Italy's emptying towns is not an isolated phenomenon, but is related to a recent explosion of interest and action in abandoned sites throughout the world characterised by new ways of describing, perceiving and interacting with abandoned places; no longer as rubbish but as resources. The spread of ghost towns in Italy and the practice of re-awakening them have attracted the attention of popular spheres, yet have remained relatively unexplored in academia. Only a small number of studies in the architectural and anthropological disciplines prevail. The present thesis provides insight into these relatively unexplored phenomena and can contribute to a better understanding of the unique way that people are perceiving and interacting with abandoned places in the twenty-first century.

The first part of the thesis investigates the phenomenon of abandonment in Italy and includes a new census of Italian ghost towns. The census documents 267 deserted villages - including their names, locations, and the dates and reasons for abandonment. The second part of the thesis investigates examples of new political and popular interest in Italy's ghost towns and analyses cases of their re-awakening. A database of fifty-one re-awakening projects and ten exploratory case studies reveal the principal actors, locations and historical development of the phenomenon of resurrecting derelict towns in Italy. By comparing the historical reasons for their abandonment with the contemporary motives for their reuse, it was possible to generate causal hypotheses regarding the questions – 'why now?' and 'what has permitted contemporary investors and new inhabitants of previously abandoned towns to overcome the reasons that drove their original inhabitants away?' The detailed examples reveal that new technologies, the twenty-first century's heightened ecological consciousness and a recent positive rediscovery of sites marginalised by modernity and unscathed by 'supermodernity', mean that the historical reasons for abandoning small rural and mountainous villages (isolation, lack of employment opportunities, natural disasters and being excluded from modernity), are no longer such powerful obstacles to prevent their reawakening. While the number of villages at risk of abandonment in Italy is still growing, recent, more decisive attention from the Italian government, the increasing number of associations and networks that seek to prevent the abandonment of small historic towns, and the remarkable rise in the number of re-awakening projects after the turn of the current century, gives reason to believe that the practice of reviving ghost towns will increase.
A comparison of the different approaches to re-awakening (for tourism, for new communities, for new business or for social or cultural purposes), reveals that tourism is the preferred vehicle for bringing abandoned villages back to life in Italy although its implementation is not without controversy. Changing the form, ownership and function of historic towns for a fluctuating tourist market can encourage a tendency to promulgate nostalgic or aesthetic visions of Italy's complex and valuable cultural patrimony and risks transforming authentic expressions of cultural heritage into simplistic commodities. Another issue that arises is that the decontextualised nature of ruins can encourage contemporary spectators to interpret their alterity as permission to create exclusive worlds. Re-awakening projects which embrace this vision remove towns from their historical and territorial context and irreversibly sever the link between the town and its original inhabitants – the true custodians of site-specific knowledge and culture. Converting historical communities into exclusive commodities undermines their potential to inspire genuine reflection and connection and risks robbing them of the very values that we find attractive; authenticity, historicity, inimitability, complexity and a sense of community. What emerges from the study is that community-led projects, which seek to revive semi-abandoned villages are more effective at maintaining an authentic link between past and present than those led by ‘outsiders’ which resurrect long-neglected ruins. Locally-led projects express a more honest assessment of the strengths and shadows of historic villages and do not celebrate ghost towns for their alterity but for their value as authentic places - understood as dynamic and flexible rather than bounded or static. This finding suggests that traditions and culture must be continually reproduced and re-invented for historical villages to maintain their relevance in the contemporary globalising world, and to retain their value as sites of genuine community and authentic (living), culture.
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Certification

I, Kristen Elisabeth Sloan, declare that this thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the conferral of the degree Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Wollongong is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This document has not been submitted for qualification at any other academic institution.

Kristen Elisabeth Sloan

28th March 2018
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Introduction

Contrary to many representations of the Italian peninsula, Italy is not only a nation of cities but also a country of small and medium-sized fortified towns, mountain hamlets and rural villages. These small centres are not only crucial for their role in presiding over and caring for the territory, but they are also treasure troves of culture, history, site-specific knowledge and traditions. While they should be an essential cultural and economic resource for Italy, today many of them lie in decline and abandonment. With the tremendous social and economic changes of the twentieth century, Italy’s medieval villages - built initially as compact fortresses in isolated and geologically fragile locations and dependent upon a small-scale agricultural and artisan economy - became a burden to their modern inhabitants who began to search for greater economic opportunity and more comfortable lifestyles elsewhere. After World War Two, the slow trickle of people moving away from rural and mountainous zones towards the plains and cities became a mass migration. This resulted in significant population decline in these areas and the neglect and ruin of many villages and towns. Frequent natural disasters, and the modernisation of Italian culture (which generated a sense of shame about rural lifestyles)\(^1\), quickened the process. Today there are thousands of small towns in Italy that risk abandonment. A recent study by Legambiente-Confcommercio identified 1650 small settlements that do not reach the minimum demographic, social economic and essential services ‘survival threshold’ and are destined to disappear.\(^2\) The greatest concentration of villages affected by abandonment is in the centre-south along the Apennine ridge, although the phenomenon of abandonment affects all of Italy’s regions to varying degrees. Migration away from small communities in Italy is still taking place today. A lack of public transport and other essential services, a sense of isolation and being poorly connected with the rest of the world, still characterise many burgs located in rural and mountainous regions. Persistent disadvantageous economic and living conditions in these areas and the daily challenges associated with isolation contribute to the decline and eventual abandonment of whole villages and entire zones.


\(^2\)
Recently, however, there has been a reevaluation of the worth and potential usefulness of Italy's medieval towns and rural villages. Increasingly recognised as the custodians of an invaluable artistic, historical, architectural and cultural heritage, they are slowly overcoming historical connotations of 'shame' and 'backwardness' and are assuming unforeseen leading roles in national discussions about sustainability regarding the economy, tourism and development. New positive perceptions of rural and mountainous zones and sites of purported 'minor' cultural heritage have led to many innovative initiatives to combat the phenomenon of decline and abandonment in small Italian communities. Recent interest and action in Italy's small villages does not only concern the struggling villages at risk of abandonment but also those that were abandoned in the past and today lie in a state of ruins and neglect; so-called 'ghost towns'. For much of history, ghost towns have been considered an eyesore, an abode for haunting memories and associated with disaster and remorse. Destined to be ignored, even feared, forms of human interaction with deserted and derelict spaces (labelled as "scars on the landscape" or 'wastelands' whose use-value has disappeared'), have been characterised as deviant, delinquent or retrogressive. Tim Edensor reminds us that ruined space; 'Bereft of the codings of the normative [...] is ripe with transgressive and transcendent possibilities.' Until recently, aside from recycling of its parts as building materials, a ghost town was expected to slowly disappear into nature until silence, looting, or the decay of time erased the physical reminder of the vibrant community it once housed. Over the last thirty years, however, an increasing number of groups and individuals have deliberately chosen these previously undesirable places as the sites for a variety of contemporary projects. Re-awakening projects subtract ghost towns from a presumed destiny of decay and disappearance and make them the unexpected protagonists of innovative social, environmental and artistic experiments. In Italy, we have witnessed positive new ways of interacting with abandoned towns including exploration and artistic experimentation, and the revival, renovation and re-use of many. Long-abandoned medieval villages have recently been resurrected as ecovillages, film sets, five-

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6 Edensor, *Industrial Ruins*, p.21
star tourist resorts, business headquarters, event venues, museums and more. These examples point to a significant historical change in the way that people perceive and interact with abandoned villages in Italy, no longer as ‘rubbish’ but as ‘resources’.

Increased interest in abandoned places in Italy is not an isolated phenomenon. Recently we have seen an unprecedented peak in global interest regarding the topic of abandonment and abandoned places. An explosion of academic publications, newspaper articles, television programs and documentaries regarding abandoned places, as well as the birth of practices such as urban exploration and ruin photography, challenge the notion that abandoned places are not of use or interest to contemporary society. Previously ignored abandoned buildings, towns, railways, industrial zones and other long-neglected sites have suddenly become icons; worthy places for exploration, relationship and celebration. While abandoned places – especially ruins and archaeological sites – have experienced bouts of popularity in the past, the current phenomenon of interest is different because it is characterised by practical action. In fact, a rapidly evolving global movement to reuse abandoned or unused elements of the built environment has accompanied this growth in interest. In the last ten years, hundreds of projects have appeared across the world involving mapping and ’re-purposing’ or ’re-awakening’ abandoned places. An increasing number of ghost towns have been catapulted from oblivion to become cinematographic icons, sites for exploration and experimentation and the locations of innovative reuse projects and campaigns.

There are still many gaps in our knowledge about repurposing entire villages in Italy. While the spread of ghost towns in Italy and the practice of re-awakening them have attracted the attention of popular spheres, they are relatively unexplored phenomena in academia with only a small number of studies in the architectural and anthropological disciplines. The issue of re-awakening abandoned villages in Italy has also received very little attention from the international academic community and is almost exclusively dominated by data and literature written in Italian. To date, there has been no sustained analysis of either individual cases or the phenomenon of re-awakening abandoned villages in Italy in
English. This is a shame because the revival of long-abandoned towns is not only a fascinating topic in itself, but its study could also contribute to the broader interdisciplinary discussion regarding contemporary interest in abandoned places across the globe. The language barrier prevents easy comparison and, perhaps, future collaboration between similar experiences throughout the world. One of the aims of this thesis is to share the Italian experience of bringing ghost towns back to life with the English speaking academic community and insert the practice of re-awakening abandoned villages into the broader global context. The second aim is to approach the phenomenon from a historical point of view documenting and analysing the historical development of the practice of re-awakening ghost towns in Italy, its origins and evolution. The historical analysis demonstrates that – aside from some pioneering experiments in the late sixties and early seventies – the idea of bringing ghost towns back to life was only a niche practice until the beginning of the nineties with a dramatic increase post-2000. The historical perspective - which recognises that this practice signals a dramatic shift between past and present treatment of abandoned villages in Italy - generates new questions such as ‘why now’? And ‘what has permitted contemporary investors and new inhabitants of previously abandoned towns to overcome the reasons that drove their original inhabitants away?’ By comparing the historical reasons for abandonment with the contemporary motives for reuse and by identifying the elements considered pivotal to the success of cases, we can begin to speculate about the causal features driving this new way of interacting with abandoned villages. This knowledge is essential to make projections about future possibilities for prevention and resurrection of other neglected communities.

The analysis of key features revealed three prominent themes which emerged in nearly all cases as pivotal to the development and success of projects to reawaken ghost towns. These elements could be considered causal factors behind the new way of perceiving and interacting with Italy's ghost towns in the twenty-first century. The first is the development of new technologies that have shortened distances and altered the way that we interact with places and people offering new opportunities in areas that were previously neglected because of their isolation. The second is a growing sense of ecological urgency which popularises the multifaceted principle of sustainability and the practice of
reusing existing resources as a means of conserving the natural environment. And the third is a positive rediscovery of places that were marginalised by modernity and apparently unscathed by supermodernity including Italy’s sites of so-called ‘minor’ cultural heritage; small historic communities in rural and mountainous zones. A wide-ranging body of literature suggests that this apparent longing for ‘authenticity’ in the twenty-first century is sparked by a concern that in the globalising, super modern world we are losing connection to authentic experiences and places and that the remaining ones need to be protected and enjoyed. This has led to new forms of tourism in formerly ignored regions and a small, but growing migrant population of ‘new rurals’ who choose to settle in these locations, attracted by the perceived high quality of life. The cases suggest that the historical reasons for abandoning small rural and mountainous villages (isolation, lack of employment opportunities, natural disasters and a sense of being excluded from modernity), are no longer such powerful obstacles to prevent their reawakening. In many cases, it seems that the factors which drove the ex-inhabitants to abandon the village in the past; especially factors of isolation or rurality have today become the key attractive features leading to their reawakening. While the number of villages at risk of abandonment in Italy is still growing, more decisive, recent attention from the Italian government, the increasing number of associations and networks that seek to prevent the abandonment of small historic towns and the remarkable rise in the number of re-awakening projects after the turn of the current century, gives us reason to believe that the practice of reviving ghost towns will expand.

The map of re-awakened abandoned villages in Italy is composed of a range of diverse projects each with distinct actors, goals and methods. Another objective of the present thesis was to identify and evaluate the different approaches to reawakening. New historical data sheets and detailed examples help to paint a detailed picture of the phenomenon. Historical comparative analysis of cases is used to analyse and evaluate the different methods adopted, considering the positive and negative implications of each. Examination of the principal approaches to re-awakening – for tourism, for new communities, for new business or social or cultural purposes – revealed that tourism is the preferred vehicle for bringing abandoned villages back to life in Italy although its implementation is not without controversy.
The analysis of different approaches demonstrated that some significant issues arise when changing the form, ownership and function of historic towns. It is not within the scope of this thesis to thoroughly investigate the ethical implications of this practice although emerging issues are identified, and possible paths for future study in this area are discussed. The results warn against the current tendency to promulgate purely nostalgic or aesthetic visions of Italy's complex and valuable cultural heritage, arguing that the conversion of historical communities into exclusive commodities can undermine their potential to inspire genuine reflection and connection. They also suggest that profit-driven modalities for resurrecting ancient towns risk depriving them of the very values that we find attractive - authenticity, historicity, inimitability, complexity and a sense of community. Perhaps by focusing on prevention rather than resurrection, we can better exploit new opportunities provided by the contemporary era while permitting a degree of historical and cultural continuity in small communities.

An extensive literature review at the beginning of the thesis contextualises the current study in the history of ideas and research relating to the topic of re-awakening abandoned villages in Italy. An introductory theoretical chapter expands upon two subjects that emerge in the literature review, namely 1) abandonment as part of the wider phenomena of migration and development and, 2) the advantages and disadvantages of repurposing historical architecture for contemporary use. Following the introductory chapter, the thesis is divided into two main parts. The first investigates the widespread phenomenon of abandoned villages in Italy and the second examines examples of their revival. Chapter one presents a brand new census of Italian ghost towns. The uniqueness of this census is its well-defined parameters, the national scope and the complexity of its datasets documenting the names, locations, the dates and the reasons for abandonment of 267 deserted villages. Thirteen new historical data sheets, which document the history and characteristics of Italy's most iconic ghost towns, add case-specific evidence and detailed insight for qualitative analysis. Chapter two provides a qualitative historical examination of the phenomenon of the abandonment of small communities in Italy using the census and detailed examples as a foundation for analysis. It questions the underlying
motives behind such a large number of derelict historically valuable towns in the Italian peninsula, analysing the historical, socio-economic and geological reasons for extreme population decline in small communities. An evaluation of the unique characteristics of historical 'borghi', hamlets and rural villages also contributes towards a better understanding of the motives behind widespread abandonment.

The second part of the thesis investigates examples of contemporary interest and action in Italy's ghost towns and documents and analyses projects which have brought them back to life. Chapter three explores the characteristics of recent popular engagement with Italy's abandoned villages, the impact of public institutional initiatives to prevent the abandonment of small communities and the work of non-government networks that protect and promote neglected historical villages. Chapters four, five, six and seven present a new database of fifty-one re-awakening projects and ten detailed examples which reveal the principal actors, locations and historical development of the phenomenon of resurrecting derelict towns in Italy. The various projects are divided according to the specific method adopted to revive the particular village - tourism, new business, repopulation or socio-cultural initiatives. This categorisation allowed for thorough analysis of each strategy and permitted comparative based analysis and evaluation of the different methods employed to restore and resurrect abandoned villages. Chapter four considers the impact of alternative forms of tourism popularised in the last decade, in creating new economic opportunities in previously isolated areas. Chapter five examines the role of new businesses in bringing ghost towns back to life. The examples in this section exemplify the importance of globalisation which has contributed to the success of economic enterprises in isolated areas. Chapter six evaluates the new colonisation of previously neglected towns, either in the form of spontaneous repopulation processes or through the settlement of an entire village by an existing group. Repopulation is the most long-standing method of re-awakening deserted towns, with some examples as early as the nineteen sixties. Recent scholarship regarding the growing counter migration of people away from urban areas known as new ruralism contextualises the examples. Chapter seven examines the role of social and cultural initiatives enacted to prevent the abandonment of semi-deserted
settlements or to conserve and promote site-specific heritage. This category includes a wide range of projects that range from museums and cultural centres to town cooperatives and struggling villages that volunteer to house refugees. Rather than resurrecting empty villages, social and cultural initiatives focus on the prevention of abandonment in communities in drastic socio-demographic decline. Chapter eight compares and evaluates the different strategies documented in the earlier chapters to identify emerging issues that arise when altering the form, ownership and function of historic towns. Advantages and disadvantages of the various methods are discussed recognising that places are important sites of identity creation and their modification can lead to an opposition between different value interpretations. Conflicting interpretation of place is particularly evident in the friction that can arise between ‘newcomers’ and original inhabitants.

Chapter nine contains an examination of the historical evolution and key features of the practice of reawakening Italian ghost towns and comparative analysis between the historical reasons for their abandonment with the contemporary motives for their reuse. These observations help to generate causal hypotheses regarding the questions ‘why now’ and ‘what has permitted contemporary investors and new inhabitants of previously abandoned towns to overcome the reasons that drove their original inhabitants away?’ Three elements are identified as contributing casual factors 1) new technologies, 2) a heightened interest in ‘sustainability’ and 3) newfound interest in authentic places. Contextual interpretation of examples regarding these three themes exemplifies the great extent to which globalisation and new technologies have influenced the current vision and treatment of ghost towns in Italy.
In the last fifteen years, we have witnessed an extraordinary intensification of interest in both popular and academic spheres regarding ruins. A review undertaken by Edensor and De Silvey concerning the literature produced in the last ten years about ruins and associated realms of dereliction led them to declare, ‘[…] we seem to be in the midst of a contemporary Ruinenlust.’ Ruinenlust is a German word that describes the notion of finding pleasure or fascination in the image of ruins. This philosophy gained momentum in the eighteenth century as a romantic reaction against some of the aesthetic ideals of the Enlightenment. While the Enlightenment aesthetic prized rationality and perfect proportions, ruins, in contrast, were incomplete, irrational and sensory - this aesthetic is described well by Rose Macaulay in her early-twentieth-century book *The Pleasure of Ruins.* By the end of the 1700s, contemplating the aesthetics of decay, also known as ‘ruin gazing,’ became associated with an elevated aesthetic sensibility and characterised the English pursuit of the picturesque. The classical ruins of antiquity were also a source of inspiration for generations of writers, philosophers and artists and the Grand Tour - an educational rite of passage for (predominantly) young, wealthy British men of the mid-seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries - provides an inexhaustible repertoire of considerations on the subject of classical ruins, many of which have been captured and analysed by English historian Christopher Woodward in his book ‘In Ruins.’ Woodward demonstrates the way in which numerous poets and writers from Shelley to Goethe embraced the ruin as a symbol for harnessing emerging romantic ideas about the relationship between nature and culture. Although the ruined figure fell decidedly out of fashion in the twentieth century (problematised by the scale and brutality of destruction during the two World Wars), today it has made a dramatic reappearance. Contemporary

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8 Rose McCauley, *The Pleasure of Ruins*. 
11 Ibid. 
12
academic interest in the issue is evidenced by a wide and various range of academic articles produced and conventions held internationally in the last ten years on the topic of ruins.\textsuperscript{13}

Unlike the romantic *Ruinenlust* of the eighteenth century, however, current interest in ruins is not limited to classical ruins but has spread to ruins of the recent past. Academic studies have embraced a whole new set of geographically disparate and typologically diverse abandoned sites. These include industrial ruins in postindustrial landscapes,\textsuperscript{14} military installations and Cold War remnants,\textsuperscript{15} abandoned rural settlements,\textsuperscript{16} and many others dealt with in greater detail by De Silvey and Edensor.\textsuperscript{17} The kinds of people using and commentating ruins have changed too. While previously the domain of a small niche of artists, philosophers and writers, today the ruin in its various forms has become a regular feature of discourse and practice in architecture, anthropology, sociology, urban planning and environmental studies.\textsuperscript{18} A parallel trend is evident in artistic and popular spheres.\textsuperscript{19} Contemporary interest in ruins goes beyond the eighteenth century romantic *Ruinenlust* also because, while the first is mainly interested in the symbolic use of ruins for philosophical reflection, the second places a strong emphasis on practical interaction and intervention. The contemporary ruin gaze is characterized by a desire to reverse the signs of ruination.\textsuperscript{20}


\textsuperscript{17}DeSilvey & Edensor, ‘Reckoning with Ruins’, pp. 465-485.

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. 465.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.

A similar phenomenon of increased interest is evident regarding the topic of Italy’s abandoned villages. Ten years ago, the curious researcher in a search for data about abandoned villages in Italy would have found relatively little information. A decade on, the same search reveals an extraordinary intensification of literature about Italy’s so-called ‘ghost towns’ or ‘paesi fantasma.’ Previously an object of interest for only a small niche of local historians and anthropologists, Italy’s long-neglected abandoned villages have today become a recurring tagline and image in bookshop windows, the blogosphere, and the media.21 Only between the years 2012 and 2016, there were over thirty books and numerous articles published on the specific topic of Italy’s abandoned villages.22 Running parallel to the increased interest in abandoned villages is an ongoing discussion about what might be done to save Italy’s ‘dying’ villages from decline and ruin. However, while there has been great attention on the topic of renewed interest and action in Italy’s abandoned villages in popular literature and the media, there has been decidedly less analysis from within academic spheres. Although there has been focused attention on the topic in anthropology and architecture studies in the last five years, there has been no sustained analysis from within other academic disciplines.

Anthropological interest in Italy’s abandoned villages is based on their value as the tangible and symbolic remnants of past societies and place-specific cultures. The anthropological studies that have been undertaken so far regarding Italy’s abandoned villages have two different focal points. The first is concerned with the histories and socio-cultural meaning contained within the historical villages whereas the second approach focuses on the revival of abandoned villages through new migratory fluxes. Both focal points provide invaluable insights into the dynamic phenomena of place abandonment and revival in the Italian context. Calabrian anthropologist Vito Teti and Torinese historian Antonella Tarpino are the most active and authoritative scholars on the subject of the history


22 See. bibliography
and meaning of Italy’s abandoned villages. Three of Vito Teti’s books could be considered seminal texts in the study of abandonment in the Italian context; Il ‘Senso dei Luoghi’, ‘Pietre di Pane’ and ‘Quel Che Resta’. 23 ‘Il Senso dei Luoghi’, which documents the stories and experiences of abandonment and the abandoned villages of his home region - Calabria, is his most celebrated text. In this book, Teti holds the view that places are neither immobile nor void of history but they ‘[…] have a life of their own: they are created, founded, modified, they change, they can die, they are abandoned, and they can come back to life.’ 24 For this reason, he encourages us to approach ruins as ‘traces of the contested historical past, but also as materials and symbols with their own meanings and rationale, their own vitality in the present.’ 25 Torinese historian Antonella Tarpino is another important point of reference for the study of Italy’s abandoned landscapes especially in the north of Italy. Her books ‘Geografie della Memoria; Case, Rovine, Oggetti Quotidiani’, ‘Spaesati’, and ‘Paesaggio Fragile. L’Italia Vista dal Margine’, are particularly poignant. 26 In ‘Spaesati’, Antonella Tarpino investigates the idea (first proposed by Teti), 27 that the historical ruins of emptied villages continue to send signs of past life and are waiting for definition and renewal. 28 In ‘Il Paesaggio Fragile’ she depicts the abandoned, ‘fragile’, neglected areas of the country and their patrimony of small villages as the very places from which to formulate new strategies for more a meaningful and ecological future. 29 Other invaluable recent contributions on the subject of migration and abandonment in the Italian context come from the case studies undertaken by Revelli 30 and Alasia & Montaldi. 31 While these voices provide invaluable information about the phenomenon of migration and abandonment and the meaning and sentiment of the towns left in its wake, their scope of research rarely touches on the growing number of experiences of re-awakening currently taking place in abandoned villages across the country.

24 Teti, Il Senso dei Luoghi, pp.4-5.
25 Ibid.
31 Franco Alasia & Danilo Montaldi, Milano, Corea; inchiesta sugli immigrati negli anni del «miracolo» con una lettera di Danilo Dolci (Roma: Donzelli, 2010 [1960]).
Another group of anthropology scholars is beginning to fill this gap. They have analyzed examples of what they perceive as the beginnings of a cautious counter-migration in Italy away from the 'too-full' urban and industrial areas, towards the 'too-empty' rural and mountainous zones. The case study undertaken by Bertolino of the settlement Ostana - an abandoned village that is slowly being repopulated by new migrants - demonstrates how previously abandoned zones are assuming new meanings and identities because of the mixing of cultures between traditional and new inhabitants.

Other recent studies conducted by Corrado, Dematteis, Van Der Ploeg and Varotto, have documented similar experiences in other zones in the Italian Alps. Like Bertolino, these scholars demonstrate that repopulation does not only lead to place ‘revival’ but also leads to ‘re-invention’ as original inhabitants and newcomers participate in practices of place-making and generate new identities. Some scholars have reminded us not to underestimate the urban nature of this phenomenon. Perlik, for example, reminds us that ‘new mobilities are embedded in an urban context and are practised by prosperous urban middle classes.’ Romita and Nunez demonstrate that people’s ability to enact desires for more authentic experiences and lifestyles (a point that we will develop in greater detail further on), are, to a great extent, dependent upon new technologies and paradigms of globalisation such as virtual emplacement - the idea that physical location is irrelevant as long as one is connected to the web. This notion will be investigated in further detail in chapter nine of the present thesis.

33 Maria Anna Bertolino, Eppur si vive; nuove pratiche del vivere e dell’abitare nelle alpi occidentali (Roma: Meti Edizioni, 2014).
34 Federica Corrado, Ri-abitare le Alpi. Nuovi abitanti e politiche di sviluppo (Genova: Eidon Edizioni, 2011).
36 Jan Douwe Van Der Ploeg, I nuovi contadini (Roma: Donzelli, 2009).
37 Mauro Varotto, La montagna che torna a vivere (Portogravo: Nuovadimensione, 2013).
38 Bertolino, Eppur si vive, pp. 97-102.
Other expressions of academic interest in Italy’s abandoned villages come from architecture and urban studies. In fact, architectural interest in abandoned villages has greatly intensified over the last decade. A surge in the number of doctoral and masters theses published in the last five years in Italy about strategies to re-awaken abandoned architecture and revitalize dying villages testifies to the disciplinary interest in the subject.41 The research project ‘Geografie dell’Abbandono’ undertaken in 2011 by researchers from the Politecnico di Milano under the direction of Professor Gennaro Postiglione is particularly significant. The project adopted a meta-design methodology to map the widespread phenomenon of abandonment in the Italian hinterland (with a focus on the region of Abruzzo), and to investigate the potential of abandoned villages as territorial assets. This was the first major academic project undertaken involving numerous scholars on the specific topic of investigating the potential of abandoned villages to become resources. The research produced is accessible on the online database Ab-archive.42 Some case study based analyses of particular relevance include those undertaken by Cicciarella & Medici,43 Bassanelli, & Postiglione,44 Guandalini & di DonFrancesco,45 Cantamessa & Operti and Riscino.46 Some common themes link each of these projects. The first is that they all describe Italy’s abandoned architectural heritage as an invaluable but often underestimated cultural and economic resource. The second is that scholars in this area of research argue that an innovative approach to conservation is necessary and promote strategies such as adaptive reuse for reinvigorating the abandoned built environment. There is a large body of literature about the architectural practice of adaptive reuse; a conservation method that goes beyond preservation tout court and gives new form and purpose to obsolete structures.47 Architect Christopher Smallwood described it as ‘the installation

41 See. bibliography
43 Chiara Cicciarella, Silvia Medici & Gennaro Postiglione, ‘Vedere l’invisibile’ (MA dissertation, Politecnico di Milan, 2011.)
of a different program into an existing building. Promoters of this practice argue that reusing abandoned sites for new purposes has multiple advantages not only for the environment but also as a way to conserve heritage and provide more meaningful lived spaces for individuals and communities. Campagnol, for example, argues that architectural intervention in abandoned sites can foster dialogue between the past and present, the old and the new. The adaptive reuse of abandoned buildings and landscapes has, in fact, become a mainstream architectural practice today and has played an important role in defining the new aesthetic of sustainability.

The emphasis on practical intervention, however, has worried some philosophers and anthropologists that renovation and reuse could damage the ‘genius loci’, and intangible qualities of the historical villages. In fact, the practice of modifying historical villages (even abandoned ones), regarding ownership, form, and function, is highly contentious. Moreover, there is an important debate about what kind of intervention is acceptable when dealing with historic ruins. Some of the most significant sources that deal with this debate within the context of Italy are - Relitti Riletti by Barbanera, La Forza delle Rovine by Barbanera and Capodiferro, Semantica della Rovina by Tortora and Ricomporre la Rovina by Ugolini. Scholars and activists that hold a romantic vision of ruins argue that it is better to leave them as they are - in a ruined state of suspended time - open-air museums of dereliction. For George Simmel or Marc Augé, for example, the only acceptable human interaction with ruins is of an intellectual, not practical, nature. For Simmel, the fundamental characteristic of a ruin is that it is

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*Architecture* (Southampton: WIT Press, 2012), pp. 155-164. This chapter presents an overview of the existing theories on adaptive reuse through an extensive study of academic literature.

48 Christopher Smallwood, 'The Role of Adaptive (Re)Use,' Originally published as as part of PMI Educational Foundation for Student Paper Competition Eastern Michigan University, 2011.


50 Gabriela Campagnol, 'Post-Industrial Sites as Canvas', *Architecture and Urbanism*, vol. 1 n. 521 (02/2014), p. 70.

51 ibid.


marked by its unavoidable destiny of return to nature.\textsuperscript{57} For Augé the ruin is a testimony of pure time, and any further human intervention, such as restoration, robs the ruin of its didactic purpose - it \textit{ruins} the ruin.\textsuperscript{58} Adherents to this school of thought only promote intervention in Italy's abandoned villages 'from afar' including use in cinema or route tourism such as the project \textit{incompiuto Siciliano} that leads its visitors on an ironic 'Grand tour' through the Sicilian landscape of modern ruins.\textsuperscript{59} While there is certainly some value in preserving ghost towns in a ruined state, the dramatic situation in Italy with overdevelopment on the one hand and flagrant abandonment on the other (the latest census demonstrates that one in two Italian villages risk abandonment in the next decade), suggests that some kind of intervention is necessary.\textsuperscript{60}

There are conflicting points of view regarding if it is justifiable or erroneous to interfere with ruins and to what extent. The responses vary wildly between the perspectives of developers, philosophers, archaeologists and architects. Woodward states, 'The artist is inevitably in contrast with the archaeologist [...] one tries to recompose the mosaic, but for the other, there are many truths, many possibilities.'\textsuperscript{61} Although the topic of re-awakening abandoned villages does cross into the territory of the wide-ranging philosophical debate whether it is erroneous or acceptable to resurrect ruins, it is not within the scope of this thesis to adequately address this discourse. This is because the present thesis approaches the subject from a historical perspective – based on analysis of existing examples – which means that the pertinent question is not \textit{whether} to intervene but \textit{when}, \textit{how}, and \textit{for what purpose}. Moreover, the increasing supply of modern abandoned sites and the vast number of classical ruins scattered all throughout the peninsula suggest that it is unlikely that non-functional forms will soon disappear in Italy and the opportunity to experience the decadence of deteriorating architecture will remain. We could thus argue that the critical value of an abandoned village is not only, nor principally,
its reception as a ruin, but rather as a historical relic of culture and community. In this specific case, perhaps ruination represents more of a negative rather than a positive consequence of abandonment.

An attempt to document and analyse existing initiatives that work to prevent the population decline of struggling towns and recuperate completely abandoned ones is still in the early stages. Scholars working in this field are mostly dependent upon collecting primary sources and case study based research is the predominant method. Some scholars such as Merlo & Lavoratti, Casella and Tartaglione have investigated the use of tourism as a re-awakening strategy (again - this area of research in the context of Italy is strictly dominated by the discipline of architecture). Some issues that arise from this body of literature include whether it is morally justifiable that a town, which is the result of generations of community building and living, should become the legal property of only one individual or company. Another concern is that the promotion of tourism in historical villages can alienate the authentic past in favour of more prescriptive, commodifiable narratives. Some other scholars assert that investment in tourism does not necessarily benefit the local residents (that may require a new school or hospital), but primarily the transient tourist population. Other strategies such as the repopulation of abandoned villages by new migrants for new communities such as artist villages and eco-villages have only begun to be analysed. The case studies undertaken by Italian architect Briatore about Torri Superiore and Calcata are important points of reference. The growing body of research about temporary reuse as a strategy to reactivate abandoned sites and landscapes has also

62 Alessandro Merlo & Gaia Lavoratti, ‘Pietrabuona; strategie per la salvaguardia e la valorizzazione insediamenti medievali’ (MA dissertation, Università degli Studi di Firenze, 2014).
63 Antonio Casella, 'Modelli di valorizzazione dei piccoli borghi storici' (MA dissertation, Università degli Studi di Firenze, 2016).
64 Irene Tartaglione, 'Costruire le radici - un processo per il ripopolamento e il riuso di un borgo abbandonato in Abruzzo (MA dissertation, Politecnico di Torino, 2017).
produced some fascinating studies however current literature is based upon experiences in smaller locations such as industrial sheds and factories - not whole abandoned towns.69

Recent urban, demographic and environmental studies about the phenomena of development and migration in Italy provide a more complete idea of the extent and impact of abandonment in Italy. The first attempt to count and map Italy’s abandoned towns was undertaken by the research lab Gruppo Norman Brian between 2003 and 2006.70 This survey was significant because it portrayed abandoned villages as commodifiable resources, which, at the time, was still a novel idea. The idea of mapping the abandoned built environment in Italy was emulated by other cultural associations such as Temporiuso (2009), Spazi Indecisi (2009), [Im]possibleLiving (2010), :Esibisco (2011), Disponibile! (2014) and Desertis Locis (2017).71 These groups have used online platforms to create participatory, interactive maps of the abandoned built environment in Italy - the goal to play ‘matchmaker’ between abandoned sites, proposals for their eventual reuse and investors. In 2012, the WWF led the first nation-wide participatory census of abandoned places in Italy called ‘Let’s Reuse Italy’.72 This event was significant because it linked the issue of widespread abandonment to the topics of unsustainable development and environmental damage. Environmental spectators of modern ruins are beginning to depict them as sites of possibility - not only for generating theory but also as part of a practical solution to the problem of which they are the material evidence - overdevelopment. The extensive analytical report published at the conclusion of the campaign, ‘Riutilizziamo l’Italia, Report 2013; Dal Censimento del Dismesso Scaturisce un Patrimonio di Idee per il Futuro del Belpaese’, played a critical role in bringing this issue to the forefront of popular, academic and political discourses in Italy.73


73 Ibid.
Italy’s ghost towns - many of immense historical and cultural value - have also benefited from new widespread interest in sites of so-called ‘minor’ heritage. While historically overshadowed by the massive number of heritage sites of ‘major’ importance (such as the Colosseum, Pompeii, the historical city centres of Florence, Milan and countless other sites of archaeological and cultural interest), recently interest has spread to other less glamorous, heritage sites including rural historical villages or ‘borghi’. Italian villages are increasingly recognized as unique and significant keepers of Italy’s tangible (architectural, agricultural, artisan), and intangible (social-cultural, historical), heritage. Increased funding, mediatic coverage, academic conferences, and tourism testify to the newly perceived importance of Italy’s sites of ‘minor’ patrimony. A large portion of the literature about this topic is produced in popular spheres - mostly indexed on the web and reproduced in the media. These domains tend to privilege the aesthetic elements of abandoned towns and emphasise sentiments of nostalgia, which, according to Teti, takes place at the expense of more complex imaginings and analyses. Such depictions neglect the ruin’s non-representational power to activate memory and sensation and downplay the significance of the lived presence of ruined spaces and places. In his latest book, Quel Che Resta, Teti warns against what he perceives as a neo-romantic celebration of Italy’s historic villages. He says that current popular literature about this topic reproduces an ‘unbearable form of rhetoric’ far from the reality of these worlds. He declares that ‘villages do not need celebration but attention, they need to be perceived with their strengths and shadows’. Teti argues that it is only by genuinely connecting with ruins - not merely by celebrating them - that we can hope to achieve genuine solutions to the widespread phenomenon of abandonment.

75 Ibid.
76 DeSilvey & Edensor, ‘Reckoning with ruins’, p. 478.
79 Ibid.
The specific issue of re-awakening abandoned Italian villages is not a well investigated field of study, and there are still many gaps in our knowledge about repurposing entire villages, its origins, interrelations and implications. Despite the existence of numerous projects that have sought to revive and resurrect abandoned Italian villages over the last twenty years, we are missing quantitative description and analysis of the phenomenon of re-awakening abandoned villages and qualitative description and analysis of many individual cases. Moreover, while bringing abandoned architecture back to life is becoming a popular topic in architecture and anthropology, the subject has been largely neglected by other academic disciplines. For a historian, one of the more evident gaps in the literature regarding the increased interest in Italy’s ghost towns is a lack of analysis in historical context. The practice of bringing abandoned villages back to life indicates a new way of perceiving and interacting with abandoned places, no longer as rubbish but as resources. Such a dramatic change in perception and action provokes the questions: ‘Why now?’ and ‘How did the idea of re-awakening abandoned towns - first espoused and experimented by a small number of artists in the sixties, become a topic of mainstream discussion, widespread interest and government funding in only a few short years?’

English art historian and director of Britain’s Holburne Museum of Art Christopher Woodward demonstrates that shifts in attitudes and perspectives regarding abandoned places are connected to historical events and trends.80 To be able to analyse the motives behind this change, it is important to examine what has been said about the way that we create and experience places in the twenty-first century.

The impact of globalisation and new technologies on people’s perception and experience of place has been the subject of a lively academic debate. One of the key actors in this debate is French anthropologist Marc Augé who described the current epoch as characterized by a ‘speeding up of communication, an excess of images and simultaneous events, and an excess of individualism’.81 By an excess of time, Augé means that our sense of the present is stretched past its limit by the enormous volume of events we are expected to register at any one time. The excess of space is the result of an

80 Woodward, Tra le rovine, p. 69.
apparent shrinking of the planet with air travel and satellite technology connecting people across remote regions of the globe and permitting distant and disjointed events to unfold in real time. The excess of individuality is the paradoxical outcome of the ‘enforced solitudes of contemporary life’ in which the ego expands to fill the vacuum of missing socialisation that traditionally coordinated daily life.\textsuperscript{82} He describes this condition as \textit{supermodernity} and argues that it creates \textit{non-places} rather than places and \textit{macerie} (rubble), rather than ruins.\textsuperscript{83} Augé declares ‘If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be redefined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place. The hypothesis advanced here is that supermodernity produces \textit{non-places}, meaning spaces which are not themselves anthropological places[].’\textsuperscript{84} Augé does not suggest that \textit{non-places} will completely supplant places, instead he says that ‘place and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally complete.’\textsuperscript{85} He does argue that \textit{non-places}, are becoming ‘the real measure of our time.’\textsuperscript{86} Teti likewise notes that places are becoming less familiar to us, that ‘we are losing the ‘habit’ of places.’\textsuperscript{87}

Several scholars have pointed out that while it may seem as if the world is becoming increasingly ‘placeless’ (as space-spanning connections and flows of information, objects and people undermine the rootedness of a wide-range of processes\textsuperscript{88}), there is still space for places in the globalising world. It is useful at this point to draw attention to some of the ontological premises that underlie this thesis. The first is that places are constructed through social practices. Doreen Massey’s interpretation is useful, who states that;

\begin{quote}
Places, and sense of place do not, as some evocations would have us believe, arise organically out of the soil. They are the product of relations and interactions, both within the place itself and more widely. No place’s ‘sense of place’ is constructed without relations with and/or influences
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Ibid.}, p.80.
\textsuperscript{84} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 77-78.
\textsuperscript{85} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 79.
\textsuperscript{86} \textit{Ibid.}, 79.
\textsuperscript{87} Teti, \textit{Il Senso dei luoghi}, p.19.
\textsuperscript{88} Thomas Friedman, \textit{The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century} (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005).
from elsewhere. Nor is any place’s associated ‘sense of place’ likely to be singular. Different social
groups within any physical location may live those locations in very different ways. Tim Cresswell takes a similar stance when he declares that ‘value and meaning are not inherent in any
space or place – indeed they must be created, reproduced, and defended from heresy.’ While places
have important roles, they do not have intrinsic meanings and essences but their meaning is produced
within particular sets of social, economic and political spheres within a particular social formation. This
means that ‘Any given set of interpretations of space can be and have been overthrown historically.’

The second assertion is that places are fluid and dynamic in character and have permeable rather than
fixed boundaries. This means that even though certain places express a commonality of experience and
performance they are internally diverse rather than homogenous. Rather than quantifiable portions
of space on a geographical map, Doreen Massey (again, a keen exponent of discussion about places and
globalisation), suggests we think about places, not as bounded areas, but as unique intersection points
in a greater global network of social relations, movements and communications. This interpretation
allows room for places in the supermodern world. Massey also reminds us that the globalised world is
not placeless. She explains, ‘the most planetary of economic sectors, finance, has its feet very firmly on
the ground. It conducts its activities of immaterial and global transactions from locations that are self-
consciously ‘places’... globalization is made in places and places matter to globalization.’ She also
argues that specificity of place remains despite globalization because the specificity of place does not
stem from a ‘long internalized history’, or ‘mythical internal roots’, but from the ‘absolute particularity
of the mixture of influences found together there.’ Political geographer John Agnew similarly points
out that past revolutions in spatial re-configuration through technological innovation (such as roads,
railways, telegraphy, shipping routes), did not signal the end of places but a reformulation (and reinvestigation), of their form and purpose.\textsuperscript{96} Philosopher Edward Casey suggests that we often underestimate the pervasiveness of place in our lives. He reminds us that ‘nothing we do is unplaced [...] our language and logic, our ethics and politics, even our bodily bearing and our personal relations are very much riddled with places.’\textsuperscript{97} Casey argues that because we are essentially ‘implaced’ beings, our sources of meaning and our ways of experiencing the world, are tightly bound up in places.\textsuperscript{98} Calabrian anthropologist Vito Teti reiterates this thought when he says that ‘our perceptions, our memory, our life cannot be recounted and represented if not with regards to a place.’\textsuperscript{99} These perspectives emphasise the importance of places as centres of human experience and memory to which people have deep emotional and psychological ties.\textsuperscript{100} They suggest that even within the globalising, super-modern world, places (especially historical places), remain important sites for creating meaning and identity.

Some scholars have noted that the preoccupation that we are losing places has actually provoked a revitalised sensitivity to them and an increased desire for more intentional relationships with people, history and places. Philosopher Edward Casey states, ‘the encroachment of an indifferent sameness of place on a global scale [...] makes the human subject long for a diversity of places, that is, a difference-of-place, that has been lost in a worldwide monoculture based on Western (and, more specifically American), economic and political paradigms.’\textsuperscript{101} Augé likewise suggested that ‘place becomes a refuge to the habitué of non-places (who may dream, for example, of owning a second home rooted in the depths of the countryside).’\textsuperscript{102} These scholars argue that the proliferation of non-places have given rise to examples of heightened interest in what might be considered ‘anthropological’ places. Renewed interest in unique, ‘local’, site-specific cultures and identities and localities with a strong ‘sense of place’

\textsuperscript{96} Agnew, ‘Space and Place’, p.318.  
\textsuperscript{97} Edward Casey, \textit{Fate of Place; A Philosophical History} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p.x.  
\textsuperscript{98} ibid.  p.xv.  
\textsuperscript{99} Vito Teti, \textit{Il senso dei luoghi}, p. 4.  
\textsuperscript{101} Casey, \textit{Fate of Place}, p. xiii.  
\textsuperscript{102} Augé, \textit{Non-places}, p.107.
or ‘genius loci’ could be evidenced by the growing popularity of rural tourism, rural migration and
heritage readaptation. Casey goes on to argue that heightened sensitivity towards places is not just a
matter of nostalgia, he says, ‘An active desire for the particularity of place - for what is truly ‘local’ or
‘regional’ - is aroused by such increasingly common experiences. Place brings with it the very elements
sheared off in the planiformity of site: identity, character, nuance, history.’

Some scholars have drawn connections between the twenty-first century’s apparent thirst for more
authentic experiences of place and the contemporary phenomenon of widespread interest in
abandoned places. De Silvey and Edensor suggest that a growing resistance against capitalist and
bureaucratic logic that permeates and conditions contemporary space drives the present-day
ruinophilia. They argue that the contemporary hunger for ruins transcends a simple romantic,
dystopian dichotomy, and reveals urgent desires to experience and conceive of space otherwise.
They say, ‘off-modern ruins are not only symptoms but also sites for a new exploration and production
of meanings.’ Ruins of the recent past are no longer viewed as eyesores to avoid but as opportunities
to engage in more ‘authentic’ experiences of place. Likewise, in their studies of the practice of Urban
Exploration or Urbex, Cresswell and Garrett locate the origins of the current widespread interest in
ruins and abandoned places in a reaction against elements of supermodernity and neoliberal
globalisation – specifically, the increasing homogenisation and prescriptivism of place. Garrett
describes Urbex as a practice of ‘researching, rediscovering and physically exploring temporary,
obsolete, abandoned, derelict and infrastructural areas within built environments without permission
to do so.’ For Garrett and Edensor, abandoned areas provide a remedy to the negative characterising
features of globalisation and supermodernity such as increased homogenisation, sterility,

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103 Casey, *Fate of Place*, p.xiii
105 ibid.
106 ibid.
107 See. Tim Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*, Minneapolis: University of
Minnesota Press, 1996; Garrett, Bradley. ‘Undertaking Recreational Trespass’, *Transactions of the Institute of
British Geographers*, 2013.
Institute of British Geographers*, 2013. p.1. See also Trigg (1999), Cresswell (1996), Hell & Scho’nie (2010), Gandy
(1999) and Edensor (2007) regarding the phenomenon of urban exploration.
commodification, replicability and surveillance and control over urban space.\textsuperscript{109} He goes further to argue however that transgression and adventure are not the only attractive elements of Urbex but that urban explorers express a strong desire to build personal relationships with places and that by exploring the liminal zones of built space; ‘one finds and creates a place and a sense of community that is increasingly rare.’\textsuperscript{110} For Edensor too, the ruins of the recent past generate curious spaces, which ‘allow a wide scope for imaginative interpretation, unencumbered by the assumptions which weigh heavily on highly encoded, regulated spaces.’\textsuperscript{111} Hell and Schlone similarly argue that because an industrial ruin is unregulated by sensory filters and mediating social conditioning, it ‘enables individual freedom, imagination and subjectivity.’\textsuperscript{112} This school of thinking is heavily influenced by the philosophy of De Certeau who argued that places are created and distinguished from the wider space through \textit{practice}.\textsuperscript{113}

Current interest in abandoned sites is not only characterised by the desire for exploration and discovery but also by a heightened sense of moral and historical responsibility towards ruins. Participants of Urban Exploration and Ruin Photography often cite the desire to ‘capture’ endangered places of the past and has led to some urban explorers to label themselves as ‘guerilla preservationists’.\textsuperscript{114} In a Ted Talk in 2008, artist Miru Kim, when talking about her underground explorations and artworks she said, ‘I feel an obligation to animate and humanise these spaces continually in order to preserve their memories in a creative way before they’re lost forever.’\textsuperscript{115} This sense of urgency to conserve the memory and teaching of ruins is echoed in Thomas Bernhard’s advice

\begin{footnotes}
\item[110] Garrett, ‘Undertaking Recreational Trespass’, p.11
\end{footnotes}
who implores us to ‘narrate the ruins before they become rubble’\(^\text{116}\) and again, by Antonella Tarpino when she says we need to ‘tell the story’ of places, ‘to animate their physical perimeters: to cut out their profile from the undifferentiated and inert space that surrounds them.’\(^\text{117}\) Vito Teti writes nostalgically; ‘[.] I wear myself out naming abandoned, erased and disappeared towns; I try not to forget any of them. Even though I know that those names will not mean anything to the reader and will soon be forgotten, I do not believe that listing them is in vain. I consider it repair and restoration work on the memory. I delude myself in thinking that through nominating them these towns might live again, and, even if only for a moment, they might wake up hearing their name being called.’\(^\text{118}\) Woodward demonstrates that ruins have often been used as a kind of ‘mirror’ that provokes self-reflection and exhorts us to take account of the drama of life and its unalterable laws.\(^\text{119}\) He says, ‘when we contemplate ruins we contemplate our future.’\(^\text{120}\) However, while in the past ruin-gazing was practiced on the remains of other civilisations (poets and writers pointed to the implosion of earlier societies to forewarn a disastrous future),\(^\text{121}\) today's ruin-gazers (especially environmental advocates) do not point to the remains of past societies but those of the present - mounting sites of abandonment that are very different from the past; not ‘ruins’ but ‘rubble’. A significant body of literature has investigated the differences between ruins and ‘rubble’.\(^\text{122}\) While ruins continues to send signs of past life, ruins of the recent past are ‘much newer but blocked in time, mute to all effects.’\(^\text{123}\) Augé stated that ‘future history will no longer produce ruins. It does not have the time for them.’\(^\text{124}\) Augé’s proclamation builds on the idea espoused by Friedrich Schlegel two centuries earlier who exclaimed, ‘Many of the works of the ancients have become fragments. Many of the moderns are fragments the moment they come into being.’\(^\text{125}\) According to Tarpino, although ‘everything around us competes to make us believe that

\(^{116}\) Paraphrased by Tarpino Spaesati, p.35.

\(^{117}\) Antonella Tarpino, Geografie della memoria; case, rovine, oggetti quotidiani (Torino: Einaudi, 2008), p.22.

\(^{118}\) Teti, Quel che Resta, p. 182.

\(^{119}\) Woodward, Tra le rovine, pp. 86-102.

\(^{120}\) Ibid.

\(^{121}\) Ibid, pp.86-102.


\(^{123}\) Tarpino, Spaesati, p. 23.

\(^{124}\) Augé, Rovine e macerie, p.43.

\(^{125}\) Friedrich Schlegel, quoted in Michael Roth, Claire Lyons & Charles Merewether (eds), Irrisistible Decay; Ruins Reclaimed (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1997), p.72.
history is finished and that the world is a mere spectacle which represents its end,’ 126 ruins can teach us a new awareness of history. 127 Teti argues that today, more than ever, the ruins of the past are not viewed as ‘elements of the natural landscape or as a metaphysical necessity, but as moments of a historical event that we feel a part of. [...] And it is in the name of this different historical and anthropological awareness, [...] that ruins and abandoned villages are embraced as essential elements of an event that is taking place in the present.’ 128 These ideas will be investigated further in Chapter One of the present thesis and will serve as a guide in our analysis of the evolution of the idea and practice of re-awakening villages in Italy.

126 Augé, Rovine e macerie, p.137.
127 Tarpino, Spaesati, p.23.
128 Teti, Il senso dei luoghi, p.562.
Research Design and Method

Re-awakening abandoned villages for contemporary use is a fascinating area of study with enormous potential for future research in a wide range of disciplines. To date, however, not much academic research has been attempted outside of the fields of architecture and anthropology. This thesis is, in fact, the first sustained historical study of the practice of re-awakening abandoned Italian villages. It is also among the first to gather the various examples of this phenomenon into one document and the first to undertake a comparative historical analysis of samples. The fact that the phenomenon has not been sufficiently documented or analysed, determined the research questions, aims and design of the current thesis. Given the relatively unexplored nature of the practice of re-awakening Italy’s abandoned villages, this thesis includes both descriptive and historical comparative analysis. Two primary objectives guided the investigation. The first was to compare and evaluate different strategies for bringing abandoned villages back to life and the second was to generate causal hypotheses regarding the new favourable treatment of Italy’s previously neglected communities.

Preliminary study involved two separate focused literature reviews; the first about the dynamics of abandonment and migration in the Italian setting and the second concerning the past and contemporary perception and treatment of abandoned places in Italy and other parts of the world. These served to locate examples of place revival within their specific historical and geographical context and within universal expressions of the dynamic relationship between people and places. A range of qualitative and quantitative studies from a variety of disciplines aided this venture. The detailed knowledge gained through preliminary research significantly enhanced the quality and accuracy of the process of analysing and interpreting the collected data. The primary research is divided into two parts. The first section regards the phenomenon of population decline and proliferation of ghost towns in Italy and the second concerns the initiatives associated with their re-awakening. The complexity of the issue of abandonment and the difficulty of settling on a precise definition of the term 'ghost town' or 'abandoned village' (and thus selecting universal research parameters), means that the small number of previous attempts to map the abandoned built
environment in Italy have produced dramatically different results. For this purpose, it was decided to undertake a new census of Italy's ghost towns that would include detailed information about their locations, dates of abandonment and reasons for their desertion. To avoid repetition, the specific research parameters adopted regarding this first part of the research are outlined in Chapter One; 'A New Census of Italy's Ghost Towns'.

The second and principal part of the research focused rather on the practice of re-awakening abandoned villages. The first step was a wide-ranging search over a variety of primary and secondary sources using the following specific criteria to locate and identify the relevant projects. 1) Historical human settlement (village, hamlet or town). It is not within the scope of this thesis to deal with projects that have brought other kinds of abandoned places - such as individual buildings or industrial areas - back to life. 2) 'Ghost town': Before the revival project, the village could be considered a 'ghost town'. Either it was suffering from progressive abandonment with a significant decline in population and services provided, extreme abandonment with only a few remaining inhabitants (with inadequate services and infrastructure to ensure the town's survival), or a total state of abandonment. 3) 'Re-awakened': A substantial intervention has brought new life to the village and promises a more positive future. Some indicators include renovated architecture, improved social, economic and cultural opportunities, population growth, job growth and an increase in tourism. Examples of temporary reuse such as use as cinema set or as the location for a single event are not included. Using these specific criteria fifty-one examples were identified. In undertaking this step, it became evident that sources about the practice of re-awakening abandoned villages were widely spread out and hidden in various articles, websites, books and documentaries. The difficulty of tracking information about the multiple projects hinders contextual or comparative analysis of the phenomenon. Although there have been some comprehensive case studies undertaken of some individual projects, many of the cases had some considerable information gaps with necessary information such as dates and reasons for abandonment.

While a concerted effort has been made to document all cases that match this description up until 2017, I trust that the number of samples will grow considerably in the coming years. The significant amount of neglected, abandoned villages, the growing interest in re-adaptation and the increasing allocation of public funds for projects of this kind, indicate that we are still only in the early stages of what might become a widespread practice.
either buried in local historical documents or wholly absent from the paper record. Another issue is that case studies about re-awakening abandoned villages in Italy have been undertaken almost exclusively by scholars of architecture and environmental studies which are structured in a way to answer discipline-specific questions. The narrow focus of some of these publications means that it is difficult to extrapolate the required historical information to locate the various examples within specific historical and broader global context.

For these reasons, the present thesis gathers the widely spread information regarding the various examples into a single ‘database’ with relevant information presented in a variety of ways (including maps, spreadsheet, timeline, graphs, and pie charts) to facilitate future multidisciplinary research on the topic. Data is presented in a way to permit easy comparison of the various projects undertaken so far in Italy so that these projects of re-awakening abandoned places can be compared with similar experiences throughout the world. The only previous attempt to gather the widely spread information about revival projects in Italian villages is the online project *Borghi Reloaded* by Martina Menconi.\(^{130}\) While this project is a helpful starting point, it is not within its scope or purpose to contextualise the phenomenon. In fact, it does not provide enough specific information (especially regarding dates), to be able to construct a complete timeline of the villages’ abandonment and revival. These missing dates are essential to contextualise the phenomenon of re-awakening abandoned villages within the historical discourse of abandonment and the global events of globalisation and supermodernity. Moreover, the presentation of the data is intended to answer architectural questions, and the focus thus privileges the practical features of particular projects. The dataset in the present thesis gives much more space to dates and context, seeking to provide more focused information to answer questions related to the phenomenon in historical and global context.

Both primary archival data and high-quality secondary sources were used to document and investigate the history of abandonment and re-awakening in each of the historical villages. Sources included

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surveys and census, council records, online websites, academic articles, books, biographies, magazine and newspaper articles, as well as documentary evidence including photos, interview records and documentaries. Contextual analysis of sources enhanced their reliability, and constant cross-referencing of facts ensured that the details were accurate. Onsite fieldwork was an essential part of the research, helping to fill predetermined gaps in the archival data and to achieve added insight through personal observation. Visiting the sites in person was also a way to collect primary data in the form of photos and conduct interviews with privileged observers (including local historians, ex-inhabitants and leaders and participants of the new revival projects). Interviews were directed towards filling specific information gaps identified in the preliminary research. In cases where direct meetings were not possible, interviewees were contacted via email, Skype and telephone. The interviews were semi-structured in design. This model supplied the information gaps but also allowed enough flexibility to acquire new information.

Population statistics were used as a tool to describe the phenomenon of abandonment and migration in Italian towns while acknowledging some of its limits. The dangers of using quantitative demographic statistics were avoided by corroborating individual pieces of information with a variety of other sources and by being aware of some significant pitfalls. The first is that the complete abandonment of a town is not necessarily signalled by a change in population because the ex-inhabitants relocated to another newly built replacement village with the same name. In this case, a variation in the population does not necessarily indicate the presence of an abandoned village. Another is that Italians tend to retain their original residency even when they emigrate or change cities; this means that in some cases the official population is much higher or lower than that recorded in official data. Another important issue regarding the use of population statistics for studying the current phenomenon is that while they can aid in the description of abandonment, they can rarely portray the aspect of revival. A small increment in the population such as a certain number of new births (which is an indicator for the town's renewal), may be missed in the statistics if, for example, an equal number of deaths in the elderly resident population counteracts the number of new births. Population growth is also not the
only indicator of revival or resurrection as we can see in the case of Tonda, Castelfalì and other

Tourism-oriented revival projects. In these cases, measurements of growth in tourism, rather than an
increase in the resident population, were considered as more accurate indicators of increased interest
and growth.

A spreadsheet synthesis of significant dates and other relevant classifications including actors, kind of
project, the reason for abandonment, and location allowed quantitative analysis and grouping of the
various datasets. This data allowed a historical investigation of the examples based on critical dates. A
new timeline served as the basis for locating the phenomenon within the historical context and guided
the historical analysis of re-awakening Italy's abandoned villages in Italy. By analysing the examples,
four different strategies were identified as the primary methods adopted for re-awakening abandoned
villages in Italy – tourism, new businesses, repopulation and social and cultural initiatives. Examples
were organised according to these categories which permitted analysis of each particular approach and
a comparative evaluation of the different strategies. Given that the methods of tourism and
repopulation were the most frequently adopted, these sections are more heavily weighted with several
detailed examples for each. Projects for more detailed depiction were chosen because they have been
the objects of ongoing revival projects, which ensured a sufficient number and variety of primary and
secondary sources (magazine and newspaper articles, interviews with the protagonists, documentaries,
some academic case studies and updated websites), to analyse. Many of the projects are well-


established, award-winning projects. Information gathered was divided into the following segments for
each of the towns: 1) town history and abandonment, 2) re-awakening, 3) project outcomes and 4) pro-

tagonists’ insights. Information provided regarding the protagonists’ insights was gathered from
published interviews or, where there was no such interview or specific reference, semi-structured
interviews. Much care was taken in the recording of facts, acknowledging that cross-case analysis
depends upon the quality of individual cases.

Methods and analysis were guided by a critical research paradigm informed by a holistic perspective.
The research focus was on complex interdependencies and system dynamics rather than linear, cause
and effect relationships. Comparative historical analysis was chosen as the preferred method to examine the transformation of perception and interaction with Italy’s ghost towns because, as Slater and Ziblatt declared ‘comparisons are a cornerstone of contemporary social sciences and history, and no social inquiry is possible without them.’\textsuperscript{131} Cases were systematically analysed with keen attention to the specific context (environment, socio-cultural, historical) to extrapolate patterns - while being aware of the limits of making generalisations across time and space. Commonalities were identified and analysed with regards to the broader historical phenomenon of abandonment in Italy as well as the current treatment of abandoned places in the global context. This comparative method generated some meaningful hypotheses regarding causation and engendered several pertinent questions for further research. It is not within the scope of this thesis to thoroughly test the propositions because we are still in the hypothesis-forming stage of a much larger project. The new census of Italian ghost towns, the databases regarding re-awakening projects and the historical investigation are necessary and valuable contributions to knowledge. Both the historical data and the analyses are helpful as groundwork for future multidisciplinary research and exploration.

The Phenomenon of Abandonment: Past and Present

The phenomena of place abandonment and place revival are experiences bound up within the ever-changing relationship between people and places. Abandoning places is a natural part of the long history of human mobility and settlement. By tracing the history of human settlement, we can see that the ancestral inclination for movement in searching for new spaces to use and colonise led to the abandonment of a previously occupied place. In the case of Italy, layers upon layers of archaeological remains from the Neolithic period to the ancient Greek, Etruscan and Roman civilisations to the Medieval and Renaissance period and the events of modern history testify to the numerous actors and events that have founded and re-founded, shaped and modified the Italian territory. Italian anthropologist Vito Teti states; 'The land is a map of all the civilisations that have succeeded one another, from those of classical antiquity to those of the medieval period until today [...] ruins are a fundamental part of the landscape, of places, of the mind, of people's perception.' In this vision, phases of place abandonment periodically alternate with moments of rebirth, transformation and renewal. Teti argues that the abandonment of one town can be perceived as the necessary prelude to the formation of a new one demonstrating that a legend or history of the abandonment of an earlier settlement commonly accompanies the foundation of a new one. He explains; 'The foundation myth is no different from a myth of abandonment [...] the birth of one place involves the demise of another.' He uses the metaphor of a weathered book with its pages erased and rewritten many times over to illustrate the history of the Calabrian territory in which there are no blank pages - no genuinely original settlements or virgin lands to conquer - but new settlers are forced to interact with the past. This image represents not only Calabria but the whole Italian territory, moulded and modified by a millennial history of human settlement and migration in which almost all her towns (especially those constructed in the late medieval period), are founded upon earlier, abandoned establishments. In this mindset - the evolution of a village becomes a complex phenomenon in which 'death' is not always (and

133 Teti, Il senso dei luoghi, p.6
134 Ibid. p. 297.
135 Ibid. p. 6.
not often) a definitive event, and ‘birth’ is never a clean state. Instead, places are the result of the historical stratification of people’s actions and interactions with other people, and with past and present. This means that we inherit places, and we make them our own, but we must inevitably engage with the actions and choices of those that have preceded us in the same way as we must make decisions about present places that we will deliver to future generations.

If abandonment is a natural phenomenon connected to human migration and settlement, ‘when’, Pascolini asks, ‘did abandoning constructed, organized spaces inhabited by people assume such a negative meaning of irremediable loss?’ It is evident that the perception of abandonment takes on different connotations depending on the propensity for stability and movement. In settling, humans convert the wider space into place. Space stops being merely the setting in which events unfold, and it becomes lived territory, with unique characteristics. We invest places with meaning that goes well beyond their functional use. Places become dynamic constructions and constructors of society. We invest them with an identity, which fosters a sense of belonging. Social anthropologist Penelope Harvey reminds us that places play an important role in the formation of group and individual identities. She argues that ‘places and identities are mutually constructed and constituted.’ The result of this increasing attachment to places means that the experience of abandonment also acquires new meaning. Either caused by an emergency situation or because of slow decline, abandonment becomes a traumatic experience, which uproots communities, unsettles cultural identities and ruptures deep relationships between place and people. Numerous first-hand accounts of the experience of abandonment are stories of loss, regret and disorientation. Spanish author Julio Llamazares recounts the story of Andrés De

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139 Ibid. p. 2.
140 There is a wide-ranging body of literature that examines the distinction between space and place from which we will use the most inclusive definition of place as ‘organised and lived space’.
Casas Sosas – the final remaining inhabitant of a deserted town in the Pyrenees – who poetically expresses the sentiments so often attached to the experience of abandonment;

At Ainelle, I was the only one left, the only – the final – survivor [...] Despite everything, I experienced the slow and progressive advance of its ruination, day after day. I saw its homes collapse one after the other and I fought in vain so that this one, where I live, would not give way prematurely and become my tomb. For all these years I have been the only witness to the inexorable decomposition of a village that, perhaps, was already dead before I was born. Abandoned places become ‘ghost towns’; lacking life and spirit and burdened with negative connotations. They come to embody the negative experiences of disaster and remorse and are shunned, even feared. They might be labelled ‘new ruins’ which, according to McCauley in her post-Second World War study, still ‘smell of fire and mortality.’ Such places still contain the material causation for their abjection and are haunted by a present past too painful to be embraced. They are not ‘closed’ figures, but reminders of a recent, often painful, past.

While recognising that processes of modification have taken place in every angle of the Italian environment since antiquity, it is also true that in the course of the last two centuries – especially in the twentieth century – these modifications have accelerated to an unprecedented rate. Rising world populations, the proliferation of post-industrial landscapes, increasing global mobility, and widespread adoption of capitalist modes of production and development (that encourage overproduction and engender debt crises), have significantly accelerated the rate with which abandonment occurred in the past. Today people are moving faster than ever before, building more than ever and are using increasingly durable building materials, which mean that they are leaving a great number of abandoned places in their wake. The exponential proliferation of increasingly permanent and visible abandoned sites reminds us of Walter Benjamin’s condemnation of progress inspired by Klee’s Angelus Novus:

His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The

142 Julio Llamazares, La pioggia gialla (Torino:Einaudi, 1993 [1988 La Lluviar Amarilla]).
143 McCauley, The Pleasure of Ruins, p. 454.
144 Ibid.
147 Ibid.
angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress. 148

Rather than portraying history as a progressive, linear sequence of events, Benjamin depicts modernity as a process of unending ruin and devastation.149 He points to the accumulation of sites of abandonment and ruins to criticise illusions that cumulative capitalism can be coterminous with progress. The ‘pile of debris’ described by Benjamin is more accurately represented by what Augè calls ‘macerie’ or ‘rubble’, rather than ‘ruins’. 150 Macerie are the inert and awkward remains of social, economic and environmental disasters; abandoned warehouses, obsolescent industrial plants, unfinished illegal buildings, empty apartments on the urban fringe. Where the ruin conserves traces of the past and still emits signs of life that can indicate a way to move forward, macerie are ‘much fresher ruins but blocked in time, mute to all effects.’151 Teti argues that this ‘geography of abandoned spaces’, has become a normalized part of the landscape in which situations of dereliction coexist alongside traditional experiences of a strong connection to place.152

Italian historian Antonella Tarpino argues that it is the proximity of ‘empty’ modern ruins which invites us today to engage with the many historically valuable abandoned places that have been marginalised by modernization processes.153 She says, ‘Perhaps it is the rubble of the present that forces us today to reconsider the many abandoned places that have been gradually relegated to the periphery.’154 Buildings, homes, territories and landscapes that have been forgotten over the past century because viewed as the inconvenient inheritance of a past world based on agriculture and artisan work. For the fault of an urban-centric vision and a political-economic geography that has made cities and plains the cornerstone of a short-sighted and socio-ecologically unsustainable development model that has

150 Augè, Rovine e macerie, p.135.
151 Tarpino, Spaesati, p.6.
152 Teti, ‘Il clamore del vuoto’.
153 Tarpino, Spaesati, p. 6.
154 Tarpino, Spaesati, p. 12.
produced much rubble. While neglected until now, places on the ‘periphery’ [...] are regaining visibility, taking advantage of the hefty retreat of the ‘centre’ crippled by a global crisis[... ], it is not only the buildings that are in ruins but the very paradigms that generated them.155 The ‘fringe’ - those villages in the Italian territory once inhabited, recognisable and ‘domesticated’, then abandoned, forgotten and wild that is returning to the centre of a cultural and social attention as the base of a re-thinking about community life and new lifestyles. These towns are taking on unexpected potential, rekindling a sense of responsibility. Not the kind of responsibility that advocates for ruins to become archaeological sites, but one that desires to recuperate them, to see them ‘come back to life’. 156 The Italian mountains and rural areas are teeming with ruined historical villages which Tarpino describes as ‘spaces of resistance’, points of departure for creating alternative development models.157 The idea that ruins can provide the basis for rebirth is well encapsulated by the American intellectual J.B Jackson who argued that ‘ruins provide the incentive for restoration, and for a return to origins. There has to be an interim of death or rejection before there can be renewal and reform.’158

155 ibid, p.7.
156 ibid, p.29.
Repurposing Ruins

In 2014 the Tate Britain in London hosted an exhibition and a series of seminars entitled respectively ‘Ruinenlust’ and ‘Reading Ruins’, celebrating British art and literature’s long illustrious love affair with ruins.159 Writer Justin Hopper posed the question - ‘Why in a period of intense innovation do we lust more than ever after these symbols of disappearance and loss?’160 Cultural historian Andreas Huyssen similarly asks, ‘[…] to what extent is the contemporary love affair with ruins […] still energised by an earlier imagination that had fastened on to the ruins of classical antiquity?’161 While the contemporary explosion of interest in ruins and abandoned places is, in some ways, reminiscent of the Eighteenth century romantic Ruinenlust, there are also some important differences. Current interest in ruins is not only romantic but it also has practical undercurrents. Unlike the Romantic appreciators of ruins that advocated interaction ‘from afar’ (or intervention of an exclusively intellectual nature), the contemporary ruin gaze is also typified by a strong desire to see ruined forms ‘come back to life’ through renovation and reuse.162 New relationships are forming between contemporary people and these places of the past, fuelled by curiosity and the desire to mix and incorporate the historical with the present.163 Over the last ten years, hundreds of projects have popped-up across the world involving mapping and ‘re-purposing’ or ‘re-awakening’ vacant places. An increasing number of groups and individuals are deliberately choosing unused, abandoned or underutilised spaces for their contemporary projects as preferable to constructing from scratch.164 These new ways of interacting with previously neglected places are important because they point to a historical shift in the way we perceive abandoned places – not as rubbish but as resources.

159 Brian Dillon, Emma Chambers & Amy Concannon (curators), ‘Ruinlust’, Tate Britain (exhibition 4 March-18 May 2014).
162 Augé, Rovine e macerie, p. 69-70.
163 DeSilvey & Edensor, ‘Recokoning with Ruins’, p. 479.
The challenge of addressing obsolete remains of the historical past is faced by communities in every part of the globe.\textsuperscript{165} From early attempts in the 1960s and 1970s, the ‘adaptive reuse’ or ‘repurposing’ of abandoned buildings and landscapes has since become a mainstream architectural practice and has played an important role in defining the new aesthetic of sustainability.\textsuperscript{166} Repurposing is the process by which an object with one use value is transformed or redeployed as an object with an alternative use value.\textsuperscript{167} The repurposing of abandoned places converts underused and abandoned architecture - previously a problem - into something new and useful for the contemporary society. Adaptive reuse reduces the consumption of virgin materials (and associated energy usage and air and water pollution), that would be employed to create a new product, and greatly reduces the energy and materials required in development and demolishing processes.\textsuperscript{168} Today reusing existing built resources is considered a key factor in land conservation and in the reduction of urban sprawl. It has also emerged as one of the most common ways to ensure the conservation of industrial buildings, although adaptive reuse and preservation for archaeological or historical reasons should not be treated as synonymous. It is rather an incorporative method of historical conservation and preservation - creative attempts to incorporate, rather than exclude or musealise, historically valuable sites into the fabric of contemporary society.\textsuperscript{169} "Today, the simple restoration and safeguarding of cultural assets - although important aspects of the process - is not enough to guarantee the long-term conservation of these objects of value. We will need compatible, low-impact and sustainable projects from both economic and organisational points of view."\textsuperscript{170}

Today environmental concerns, historic preservation, urban renewal, and desire for cultural identity are the primary forces guiding changes that give obsolete structures new functions.\textsuperscript{171} While the recycling of abandoned materials has been an integral part of the growth and development of human
societies (and in the past, these actions took place mainly out of economic necessity), today the practical examples of up-cycling and re-purposing are deliberate and conscious choices. The choice to pursue adaptive reuse is not necessarily driven by a desire to save money but rather for the enhanced architectural, historical and cultural value of the final product. Martina Baum argues that architects are stimulated by post-industrial remains by their simultaneous qualities of stability – through their history, context, and architecture – and of openness, through their flexible, interpretable and open space. She writes; ‘[in] contrast to the characterless buildings and cityscapes that are the same all over the world, these locations stand for a type of architecture that has specific features and relates to history and contest while at the same time offering space for current and future needs.’ Tarpino also exemplifies the creative potential of ruins and abandoned spaces stating that ‘as long as the ruin is recognizable, it invites the work of the memory, the pieta of deconstruction, the intelligence of historical reconstruction. Ruins indicate an absence, but at the same time, they incarnate a presence, a medium between the visible and the invisible.’ Abandoned historical sites present not only new exploratory platforms for creative expression and inspiration but also fonts of knowledge about ancient construction methods, forms and materials. Historical villages also provide a window into history - they stimulate memory, curiosity and regarding presenting untethered opportunities to learn from past lifestyles, ancient workmanship (artisan), architectural and agricultural methods. For the architect, they are ‘open-air laboratories’ which can aid greater comprehension of spontaneous rural architecture. This knowledge can evolve in practical experiments that aim to propose the most effective restoration methods, whose whole conservation is often compromised by current legislation, by unstable material consistency and through erroneous functional choice.

All places are seen through the interpretive lens of the viewer. Woodward reminds us that ‘A ruin is a dialogue between an incomplete reality and the spectator’s imagination.’  

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174 Tarpino, Spaesati, p. 8.  
175 Bertolino Eppur si vive, p. 20.  
176 Woodward, Tra le rovine, p. 130
value and feelings evoked by a particular place depend, to a great extent, on the personal visions, ideas of value, connotations brought to the place by the spectator. As Christopher Woodward noted regarding the many and various participants of the Grand Tour ‘No writer sees the same Colosseum as the others.’ For the ex-inhabitants of an abandoned village, this might be a site of memory (with positive and negative connotations of lived memory – both positive and negative). It might be a reminder of hardship or disaster. For an outsider, the same town may appear menacing, or mysterious and romantic. The freedom of the ruined form allows the emergence of alternative orderings and appropriations of place. Physical restoration but also external elements like stories, poems and paintings can also contribute to the kind and evocative density attributed to a particular site. The question why one place comes back to life while another similar to all extents remains abandoned is based on human choice. Calabrian historian Vito Teti similarly points out that ruins are ‘[…] never a mere product of time, they require human choice.’ The way that a place is imagined and represented is significant because the act of recognising or discounting value (historical, artistic, cultural, spiritual or other) of a place is the difference between resurrection and oblivion. The attribution of value to a place can constitutes the principal motor of reawakening or, in the case of negative judgment, its passing into oblivion. Giving value to one place instead of another is not necessarily because of some greater intrinsic or practical issues but because of human choices and chance (a particular village catches the eye of a future benefactor because it was by chance located on their trajectory) and the stories we tell about places. The act of restoration tends to promote or emphasise one historical period and one culture at the expense of many others that have passed through and influenced that place. Marc Augé poses the question; ‘[…] which past should be found and brought back to life?’ Moreover, places - even abandoned ones - are not only physical entities but are inextricably entwined to people's sense of personal and collective identity. Vito Teti reminds us that

Abandoned towns are not places that can be fathomed at first sight, or understood in a limited amount of time […] the fact that nobody, or almost nobody, lives there, does not mean that

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177 ibid p.19
178 Teti, Il senso dei luoghi, p. 74.
179 Ibid.
181 Ibid.
nothing happens, or that there is little to talk about. On the contrary. Absence and emptiness teem with signs and traces that need to be deciphered and interpreted, case by case.\textsuperscript{182}

\textsuperscript{182} Vito Teti, \textit{Quel che resta}, p.5.
A New Census – Italian Ghost towns

The difficulty of counting Italy’s ghost towns

The complexity of the phenomenon of abandonment and the difficult decision about defining specific parameters on the basis to include or exclude particular examples means that earlier attempts to map ghost towns in Italy have produced a variety of different results. There is no consensus, for example, as to the exact definition of the ambiguous term 'ghost town'.\textsuperscript{183} Frequently it is used to indicate entirely ruined and empty settlements long-neglected by their former inhabitants but it is also regularly used to refer to towns and cities that are still populated but which are affected by high levels of demographic, socioeconomic and architectural degradation.\textsuperscript{184} The expression was first coined in 1977 by the Swedish journalist Jan-Olof Bengtsson. Reporting from the city of Famagusta after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus during the Greek-Turkish war, he described what he saw, ‘The asphalt on the roads has cracked in the warm sun and along the sidewalks, and bushes are growing. Today, the 24th of September 1977, the breakfast tables are still set, the laundry still hanging and the lamps still burning. Famagusta is a ghost-town.’\textsuperscript{185} The following dictionary definitions each emphasise a different aspect of ghost towns. The Cambridge definition of a ghost town focuses on the demographic element describing it as 'A town where few or no people now live'.\textsuperscript{186} The Merriam-Webster dictionary is more descriptive and alludes to one of the main reasons for abandonment; economic obsolescence. It describes it as ‘a once-flourishing town wholly or nearly deserted usually as the result of the exhaustion of some natural resource.’\textsuperscript{187} The Collins dictionary emphasis is on the economy and historical change, stating; ‘A ghost town is a town which used to be busy and wealthy but is now poor and deserted.’\textsuperscript{188}

There is also much conjecture regarding when a town might be officially declared ‘abandoned’. A statistical population of ‘zero’ is arguably not the only indicator of abandonment. Historian Antonella

\textsuperscript{183} Clint Thomsen, 'What is a ghost town?', Ghost Towns: Lost Cities of the Old West. (Oxford :Shire Publications), 2012, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid. p. 4.
\textsuperscript{185} Jan-Olof Bengtsson, 'Famagusta', Kvarnsposten (24 September 1977).
\textsuperscript{186} Cambridge online english dictionary https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/ghost-town
\textsuperscript{187} Merriam-Webster online english dictionary https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ghost%20town
\textsuperscript{188} Collins online english dictionary https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/ghost-
Tarpino points out that many unpopulated villages still lead an important existential role for the ex-inhabitants who regularly revisit the original town and reanimate it with religious rites and festivals.\textsuperscript{189} On the other hand, an official population of only one or two remaining inhabitants cannot save a struggling village from displaying the characteristics of a 'ghost town', including a diminished human presence and advanced structural degradation. It is also challenging to formalise the event of abandonment regarding the geographical area – the historical centres of some towns such as Maratea or Brienza, Celleno and Senerchia are considered in some counts to be entirely abandoned although they each possess a populated periphery. Other ghost towns such as Craco and Civitá di Bagnoregio have experienced a bout of popularity recently as tourist attractions and are thus re-animated by a regular presence of visitors even though the whole hamlet of Civitá is home to only ten residents and Craco lie in complete ruins. There is also the issue of whether to include freshly abandoned villages such as those damaged in the disastrous earthquakes in central Italy in 2016 and 2017, which rendered many towns including Amatrice, Accumoli and Arquata Del Tronto, uninhabitable. Another example of a recent abandonment is Cavallerizzo di Cerzeto in Calabria which, since 2005, has been slowly sliding down the mountain on which it was originally built by Albanian refugees in the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{190} The exiled inhabitants of these endangered communities are currently perched in semi-permanent camps close to the original village and are waiting (and hoping) for the reconstruction of their homes and original town. It is difficult to predict the destinies of these towns – whether they will be rebuilt and re-inhabited, rebuilt and later abandoned or whether they will remain in a state of ruins.

**Previous Studies**

There are relatively few studies regarding the phenomenon of abandoned villages in Italy. No official national census of abandoned villages guides our search although a small number of important surveys undertaken by public organisations (Legambiente-Confcommercio), private companies (Gruppo Norman) and academics (Postiglione & Bassanelli and Di Figlia), have provided important


contributions towards quantifying the phenomenon. We can also reference a plethora of genre-specific travel guidebooks and participatory, online mapping initiatives that are producing an increasing number of descriptive datasets.\textsuperscript{191} The advantage to online, interactive mapping of the abandoned built environment with a wide range of contributors is that it widens the scope of exploration and increases the chances of identifying previously undocumented sites. The limits to this kind of approach are that they are inclusive (anyone can participate), incomplete, wide-ranging (include a broad range of typologies of abandoned places), and the criteria for including or excluding a particular site is not well defined. The first census of Italy’s ‘paesi fantasma’ (ghost towns), was not a public initiative but was conducted by the property management company Gruppo Norman Brian in 2003 – 2006 with the aim of establishing a new business model tied to the recuperation of abandoned settlements.\textsuperscript{192} This research project located and identified 341 abandoned settlements spread out within 167 councils.\textsuperscript{193} This number was not limited to completely abandoned villages (with zero population) but also included some semi-deserted towns. One limit to the study was that the selection criteria for inclusion or exclusion of a particular village was not well defined and it not provide the necessary keys for quantitative analysis of the dates or reasons for abandonment which is fundamental information for the present thesis. Two other academic projects stand out in their contribution to creating a quality census and map of abandoned villages in Italy. In 2011 Postiglione and Bassanelli published an updated map of Italy's abandoned villages but this was based on the previous study undertaken by Gruppo Norman Brian in 2003-6.\textsuperscript{194} The most recent was published by architect Luca di Figlia with the University of Florence in 2016, who reported finding 110 completely abandoned villages.\textsuperscript{195} While his project produced a significant amount of useful data and insightful analyses, the criteria used in his research were highly stringent. Di Figlia’s study included only those villages with an absolute zero population and only those which were abandoned in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. For the present

\textsuperscript{193} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid.
thesis, these criteria were deemed too strict because of the presence of a significant number of integral ghost towns abandoned before the twentieth century and others with such a tiny remaining population they could easily be considered ‘ghost towns’. For these reasons, a new census and map of Italy’s ghost towns was deemed necessary for the present thesis.

The present census included historical community settlements (villages, hamlets, towns and rural settlements) that today are either entirely deserted or in an extreme state of abandonment lacking the essential services for permanent habitation and a population of fewer than ten residents. The research was limited to sites which are still recognisable as villages, thus excluding the ancient ruins of earlier settlements. The data gathered for each ghost town included the location, period of abandonment, state of conservation (ruins, partially damaged, modest or renovated), and the reason for desertion. The reasons include natural disasters such as earthquake, landslide or flood and other socio-economic causes such as urban migration (caused by isolation, a lack of modern conveniences and economic opportunity) and obsolescence of the local economic activity. Other motives include war and the forceful eviction of the town’s inhabitants when it is deemed by the government as unfit or unsafe for human settlement as well as modern constructions such as a bypass or a dam or the poor implementation of contemporary infrastructure causing disaster. From the analysis of data collected it was possible to gain greater insight into the phenomenon of abandonment in Italy regarding the period of abandonment, geographic location and reasons for neglect. A rigorous cross-checking of facts across a variety of sources including dedicated websites, books and articles, email correspondence with privileged observers and censuses and maps, served to augment the integrity of the final results. Onsite fieldwork was also undertaken to verify specific facts. Uncorroborated information gaps are marked as ‘unknown’. The first section is a presentation of the collected data in charts, maps and diagrams accompanied by a brief quantitative analysis of each figure. Historical and contextual qualitative analyses follow in the following chapter; ‘From Flourishing Cultural Centres to Shameful Ghost-Towns – The Rise and Decline of Italy’s Hamlets, Walled Towns and Rural Villages’. A historical description of

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196 Because of the wide scope and complexity of the research and the newness of the overall study, it is expected that there will be some gaps.
thirteen of Italy's ghost towns (selected by the author as representative of the wider phenomenon); add case-specific evidence and detailed insight into the analysis.

Degrees of Abandonment

We can loosely divide the Italian ghost towns recorded in this census into three different categories. The first are completely abandoned villages. In this case, there are no remaining inhabitants in the town and the power of nature and the passing of time have a physical impact on the village. Decaying and empty buildings and the encroachment of natural forces characterise this kind of ghost town. Some examples include Poggioreale, Castelnuovo dei Sabbioni, Consonno, and Fabbriche di Careggine. The second category of ghost towns in Italy comprises villages which are declared 'unfit' for residential purposes, and the community relocates to a newly built settlement given the same name as the former village. In this case, the community leaves the original village in ruins but continues to exist. This kind of ghost town is statistically invisible because population statistics do not come to a halt despite the existence of an empty village. An added prefix such as 'Vecchio' (Old) is often used to distinguish between the two towns. Some examples include Craco Vecchia, Balestrino, Torri Superiore, Bussana Vecchia, ‘The Sassi of Matera’, Africo Vecchia. The third category of Italian ghost towns consists of towns and villages in a state of advanced social degradation with severe population decline. These towns are not empty but do not reach the minimum ‘survival’ threshold concerning demography, socio-economic needs and essential services and risk becoming ruins. The lack of necessary services (health, education, governance, products) makes life difficult for the remaining inhabitants (mainly elderly and aging) and actively dissuades new residents or external investment. Some examples include Roscigno Vecchia (Campania), Savogno (Lombardy) and Socraggio (Piedmont). Each of these communities only has one remaining inhabitant. Towns in this third category have only been recorded in the present census if they adhere to these criteria and have a population of no greater than ten residents.
Ghost Towns in Italy: Location

Map 1. Map of Ghost Towns in Italy based on New Census
## Ghost Towns in Italy Divided by Region

### Campania
- Apice
- Carbonara (Aquilonia Vecchia)
- Castelpoto
- Conza della Campania
- Croce
- Fondola
- Marzanello Vecchio
- Melito Irpino
- Rione Terra
- Romagnano al Monte
- Rossigno Vecchia
- Sacco
- San Felice
- San Pietro Infine
- San Severino di Centola
- Senerchia
- Tocco Caudio

### Basilicata
- Alianello
- Brienza Vecchia
- Cacium
- Campomaggiore vecchio
- Craco Vecchia
- Trifoglio

### Lazio
- Camerata
- Cappudine
- Castiglione
- Celiano Vecchio
- Chia
- Civita di Bagnoregio
- Curtignale
- Faleria Antica
- Faleria Nuova
- Flanello
- Forgletta
- Galeria
- Grotta Marozza
- Montecoccoli
- Monterano
- Ninfa
- Norchia
- Reaposto
- Roccasecca
- Rocchette
- San Genaro
- San Lorenzo Vecchio
- Stazzano

### Piemonte
- Aramola
- Avi
- Balmalonesca
- Brusashetto Basso
- Casone di Vegni
- Chiapparo
- Coindo
- Commio
- Ferrazza
- Lampore
- Leri Cavour
- Narbona
- Onunchio
- Reneuzzi
- Soccraggio

### Liguria
- Aia
- Arena
- Balestrino
- Barbassano
- Brugosseco
- Cà di Ferré

### Abruzzo
- Buonanotte (Montebello sul sangro)
- Cannavine (o Le Canavine)
- Casagreca
- Castel Del Monte
- Castelvecchio Calvisio
- Castiglione della Valle
- Faraone
- Forno
- Frattura
- Gessopalaena
- Giova Vecchia
- Laturo
- Martese
- Morino Vecchio
- Piano Maggiore
- Pomarolo
- Rocca Calascio
- Roccaramarano
- Salle
- San Biagio
- Serra
- Servillo
- Sperone
- Stivigliano
- Tavolero
- Torre di Sperone
- Valle Pezzata
- Valle piola
- Vallenquina
- Valloni

### Puglia
- Balsignano
- Monteruga
- Rione dei Fossi
- Roca Nuova

### Sardegna
- Acquaresi
- Arenas
- Argenteria
- Borgo Sant’Angelo
- Gairo vecchio
- Ingurtosu
- Naracauli
- Osini
- Planu Sartu
- Rebecu
- Tratalias Vecchia
- Villaggio Asproni
- Villaggio Righi

### Trentino Alto Adige
- Borgo Carrero
- Curon Vecchia

### Calabria
- Acerentia
- Africo
- Amendolea
- Bianco
- Brancaleone
- Bratico
- Buzzano Vecchio
- Campana
- Carelo
- Casalnuovo
- Castelmonardo
- Cavellerizzo di Cerzeto
- Circella
- Fantino
- Gumeno
- Laino Castello Vecchio
- Mileto
- Nicastrello
- Oppido Vecchio
- Papagioni
- Pentedattilo
- Perlupo
- Precacore
- Righi
- Saguccio
- Savuci
- Zoparto

### Marche
- Castelnuovo di Auditore
- Cossinino da Piedi
- Elicto
- Gesso
- Tavernelle

### Molise
- Pesche
- Ripalimosani
- Rocchettone
- Villa San Michele

### Toscana
- Bergiola
- Brento Sanico
- Bugnano
- Buriano
- Case Vergheto
- Castelnuovo dei Sabbioni
- Castiglioncello
- Col di Luco
- Col Pavilla
- Crasciana
- Fabrichi di Careggine
- Frontignano
- Lozzole
- Montesilvestre
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Ghost Towns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lombardy</td>
<td>Zucco Grande, Mandonico, Rovaiolo, Savogno, Consonno, Assiano, Castel Liteggio, Basile, Fraggio, Maronella, Borgo del Canto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veneto</td>
<td>Camponevoso, Canate di Marsiglia, Case Fontana, Case Veise, Costa di Soglio, Gravarezza, Filettino, Gravero, Il borgo senza nome, La Stanga, Luvega, Monte Bano, Novegna di Cima, Osiglia, Pollarocca, Poragine, Porciorasco, Portesone, Rio Ciaé, Teitin, Vesallo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umbria</td>
<td>Irene, Ischiazz, Maso, Rover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valle d’Aosta</td>
<td>Biselli, Marzana, Salci, Scoppio, Sensati, Umbriano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</td>
<td>Nebbiola, Pianosa, Poggio Santa Cecilia, Pratariccia, Toiano, Val Cavaliera, Valibona, Vetrice, Villa Saletta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barmaz</td>
<td>Table 1. Ghost towns in Italy divided by Region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Diagram 1. Number of Ghost Towns per Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Ghost Towns per Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abruzzo</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basilicata</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calabria</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campania</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emilia-Romagna</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liguria</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lombardia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marche</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molise</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puglia</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sicilia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sardinia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sicilia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basilicata</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calabria</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emilia-Romagna</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liguria</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lombardia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marche</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molise</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puglia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sicilia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sardinia</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The presence of ghost towns is particularly strong in the Centre-South and the Apennine zones. Many small Alpine centres avoided abandonment because of a flourishing tourism industry and those in the north have continued to survive because of their vicinity to large industrial cities and because of the well-developed transport system that allows residents to reach the cities relatively quickly and easily. In the centre-south, the situation is different. Thousands of villages have been abandoned. According to this study, the most critical situations have been registered in Abruzzo with thirty ghost towns, followed by Liguria and Calabria with twenty-seven in each region. The region with the least number of ghost towns is the Valle d’Aosta (with only two), followed by Molise and Puglia with four each. Other studies regarding the phenomenon of abandonment and population decline in Italy reveal a much higher presence of ‘at-risk’ villages in Basilicata and Molise, demonstrating that even though the number of empty towns is not considerable, the issue of abandonment affects these regions to a significant degree. 197

Period of Abandonment

Diagram 2. Number of Towns Abandoned per Historical Period

Diagram 3: Number of Towns Abandoned per Historical Period %
The data demonstrates the phenomenon of abandonment peaked in the nineteen-sixties with fifty-nine towns abandoned (23.5% of cases) followed closely by the fifty-eight towns abandoned in the nineteen-fifties (23.1% of cases) and thirty-one towns abandoned in the nineteen-seventies (12.4% of cases). The abandonment of a number of towns in the same geographical area in the same historical period is often attributable to the same cause, either dramatic socio-economic change in the area (the obsolescence of the town’s economy for example), or a particularly powerful natural disaster. The census demonstrated that some particularly powerful seismic events caused the destruction and abandonment of several villages (we will also see them emerge in some of the cases of re-awakening).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type of Disaster</th>
<th>Number of villages abandoned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1783</td>
<td>Calabria/ Sicily</td>
<td>Earthquake</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>Liguria</td>
<td>Earthquake</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Campania/Calabria</td>
<td>Earthquake</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Abruzzo</td>
<td>Earthquake</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Sicily (Belice Valley)</td>
<td>Earthquake</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-3</td>
<td>Calabria/ Sicily</td>
<td>Floods</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Friuli Venezia Giulia</td>
<td>Earthquake</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Basilicata/ Campania</td>
<td>Earthquake</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Abruzzo</td>
<td>Earthquake</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Natural Disasters Causing the Abandonment of Several Villages.
Diagram 4. Reasons for abandonment %

The driving cause for the abandonment of Italy’s historical villages, towns and hamlets is emigration which was the leading motive in 43.9% of cases. Migration was influenced by factors such as the extreme isolation of settlements and a lack of economic opportunities and modern conveniences that were more readily available in urbanised areas. Natural disasters, including earthquakes, landslides, flood and fire accounted for 28.1% of cases. The negative impact of earthquakes was particularly evident, playing a catalytic role in 18.6% of cases of abandonment. Other socio-economic causes such as the obsolescence of local economic activities, the forced eviction of towns because of the construction of hydroelectric dams and the poorly planned rural settlements constructed in the Fascist period and during the Agrarian reform of the 1950s attributed for another 9.6% of abandonment. Other external causes leading to villages becoming ghost towns include war (in twelve circumstances), and epidemics (in seven). In some cases, such as Toiano in Tuscany and Case Scapinie Cjà Ronc in Emilia Romagna, it is difficult to discover why the inhabitants of some villages deserted them and, lacking direct or indirect testimonies, we can only hypothesise. The census points to two main factors creating ghost towns in
Italy: socio-economic change and natural disasters. The following chapter will examine these two features thoroughly using qualitative historical analysis. It will also examine the specific characteristics of Italy's historical hamlets, walled towns and rural villages to assess contributing factors leading to population decline and their abandonment.
Italy’s Most Iconic Ghost Towns

Each of the abandoned historic villages that we have documented in the census has a complex and unique town history and story of abandonment. Many of them have been inhabited for over a thousand years and they are all custodians of generations of historical memory and cultural heritage. This section presents an insight into the history and characteristics of thirteen of the two hundred and sixty-seven Italian ghost towns counted. Their stories add invaluable case-specific evidence and detailed insight which aids qualitative analysis in the following chapter; ‘From Flourishing Cultural Centres to Shameful Ghost-Towns – The Rise and Decline of Italy’s Hamlets, Walled Towns and Rural Villages’.

Apice (Campania)

‘A Twentieth Century Pompeii’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>First-century a.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned Reason</td>
<td>21st of August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned Reason</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current state</td>
<td>Earthquake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current state</td>
<td>(magnitude 6.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current state</td>
<td>Relatively well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current state</td>
<td>preserved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apice was originally formed as a Roman settlement to house building workers during the construction of the Via Appia. Apice has a long history of seismic activity. An earthquake in 1702 killed thirty people equating to 2.6% of the population in that period.\(^{198}\) Another particularly violent earthquake in 1930 led to the erection of a new village which was supposed to house the ex-inhabitants of the old town, the great majority of which, however, chose to remain in the old village. Many buildings of the first replacement village of Apice were never used and today the whole settlement it is completely

abandoned. Another more catastrophic earthquake hit Apice at 7:30 pm on 21 August 1962. It caused 17 deaths and forced the evacuation of 6500 inhabitants. At this time only 20% of the population respected the eviction notice with the remaining 80% of the population continued to live in the damaged town until 1980, when another powerful earthquake convinced most (but not all), of the inhabitants to relocate to the plain below the original village and build a second replacement village—'Apice Nuova' (New Apice). A small number of stalwart residents continued to remain in the old village such as the town's barber – Tomaso Conza - who lived there until 2007 and whose shop remained open until 2013 when it too was transferred to the new village. In 1993 a project led by the architect Gennaro Giangregorio and the (then) mayor Luigi Bocchini in collaboration with public institutions, began the complex process of recuperating the old village's enormous Norman castle. Today the renovations are almost complete, it hosts the town's public library and a museum and demonstrates the deep attachment that the inhabitants still have for the abandoned ancient village. Architect Giangregorio however provides insight into the phenomenon of post-disaster resettlement when he admitted in an interview that he thought that a possible repopulation of the old town by its former residents would be almost impossible. He says that once the new town is built and the old inhabitants are finally resettled, it is difficult for them to go back, not only because of the emotional effort required in transplantation but also because the residents, who are by now used to the large and modern houses in the new settlement would find it difficult to readapt to the small dimensions and lack of modern comforts in the old town. Apice's abandoned historic centre, invaded by vegetation and crumbling in parts, has become a popular destination for 'ghost-town' enthusiasts. Access to the abandoned village is not permitted without authorisation because of the renovations that are taking place in the castle.
Balestrino (Liguria)

*Hilltop Castle Town used in Fantasy Film*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Sixteenth century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>1962-63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>Inhabitants evicted for hydrogeological instability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current state</td>
<td>Partly renovated, plans for an albergo diffuso, closed to the public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Balestrino is a fascinating walled town with castle located on a hilltop overlooking the Western Riviera in Liguria, province of Savona. Benedictine monks of the Abbey of San Pietro dei Monti founded the town in the Early Medieval Period. At the end of the eighteenth century, during the French occupation, Balestrino became the setting of dramatic events. In the Battle of Loano in 1795, fierce fighting took place around the Castel and the town become subject to a bloody retaliation which cost Balestrino numerous of its residents lives.  

After the Napoleonic period, the former fiefdom followed the fate of the rest of Liguria, first being annexed to Piedmont, then to the Kingdom of Italy. The inhabitants of the historical castle and the old town were evicted between 1962 and 1963 for fear of an impending landslide. Today Balestrino is famous for being the cinematographic set of the Hollywood film ‘*Ink Heart*’ directed by Ian Softley in 2008. The local council of Balestrino has since restored part of the historic centre and plans to open an Albergo diffuso. The Liguria Region has committed 1.160.000 euro and 290,000 euro (through co-financing) for the renovation of the old town with the aim for Balestrino to assume an important role in regional tourism. The renovation project (still on paper),

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206 Ibid.

plans for fifteen hospitality structures, nine structures for tourism and one hundred and sixteen residential houses of which a part will become an albergo diffuso.

Civita di Bagnoregio (Lazio)

‘La Città Che Muore’ The Dying City

Image 1. Civitá di Bagnoregio

Civitá di Bagnoregio is an ancient Etruscan village perched on a rocky outcrop in the province of Viterbo in Lazio. The author Bonaventura Tecchi (one of Civita's illustrious past inhabitants), gave the town its epithet - ‘La Città Che Muore’ (The Dying City) in.208 The label refers to the natural an extraordinary phenomenon of erosion in act since the seventeenth century that causes the town's buildings, one by one, to fall off the edge of the sheer cliffs into the valley below. Federico Fellini’s screenwriter Ennio Flaviano, on visiting Civitá di Bagnoregio exclaimed: ‘Only the truth contains this level of fantasy.’209 The city's original inhabitants began to leave the city as early as the 1600s because of the erosion that was destroying it and due to numerous earthquakes. In 1794 an earthquake destroyed the natural narrow bridge that connected Civita and Bagnoregio, causing a high proportion the population to move to the nearby Rota. While the inhabitants built a replacement bridge soon after the earthquake, bombing in WWII destroyed the replacement bridge. The most recent bridge, constructed in 1965, is still in use today. Today less than ten permanent residents live in Civita di

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208 Bonaventura Tecchi, Antica terra (Roma: Dell’Albero, 1967).
Bagnoregio but its growing popularity with tourists recently means that it is rarely empty. The charming village, able to catapult visitors into its medieval past, has become one of the ‘Borghi Più Belli D’Italia’ and since 31 January 2017 is in the running to become a UNESCO World Heritage site.210

Consonno (Lombardy)

Inhabitants Evicted and Medieval Village Destroyed to Make Room for a Fun Park... Now in Ruins

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>Fourteenth century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>Failed business venture, landslide ruined access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current state</td>
<td>Totally abandoned, for sale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consonno was a typical rural village on the panoramic slopes of Monte Brianza. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Consonno counted a rural population of about 300 people, however, none of the inhabitants who were sharecroppers, owned the houses that they lived in or the land that they worked. The village, its surrounding fields and forests (c.170 hectares), were owned by the Verga and Anghileri families united in the 'Immobiliare Consonno Brianza'.211 By the beginning of the 1960s Consonno’s population had dropped to about 60 people due to urban migration.212 On 8 January 1962, eccentric industrialist Mario Bagno (Count of the Valle dell’Olmo), bought the whole village from the Anghileri and Verga families for 22,500,000 lire.213 The remaining inhabitants were forced to leave, and bulldozers demolished the historical village to make room for an amusement park, envisioned as a ‘Las Vegas’ of the Brianza. The only surviving parts of historical Consonno were the church and the cemetery. On top of the demolished historical village of Consonno, Bagno constructed his fun-park with arabesque shopping gallery, Egyptian sphinxes, a ballroom, casino, minarets, war cannons and Chinese

Pagodas. The bulldozers upset the area’s hydrological balance and caused dangerous landslides in November 1966 and April 1967. Consonno enjoyed a few golden years of tourism until the beginning of the seventies when a period of decline began. Tourism floundered as initial novelty waned and local protests against the cultural and environmental disasters fuelled an increasingly negative public opinion. The final blow came in the form of an earthquake that damaged the principal road of access in 1976. The Consonno amusement park was abandoned before many of the original projects were completed. In 1998 the movie director Davide Ferrario used Consonno as the location for some scenes of his film ‘Figli di Annibale’. Since then, Consonno has become a popular underground destination for ghost town enthusiasts. The website www.consonno.it has a section dedicated to the memories of visitors to Consonno. The recollections highlight the dramatic difference in experience between those with fond memories of Consonno at the height of its glory as ‘Pleasure Island’ and the eerie, adventurous or dejected experiences of contemporary visitors to Consonno as an authentic ghost town. One visitor Matteo describes Consonno as a village with a ‘... unreal atmosphere. It’s like a dream that transformed into a nightmare.’ Today the village and territory of Consonno are for sale for twelve million euro and it has been the location of a novel, international ‘hide-and-seek’ sporting event held yearly since 2010.

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**Craco Vecchia (Basilicata)**

*Harrowing Hilltop Village and Popular Film Location*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>Twelfth century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>Landslide provoked by new public infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current state</td>
<td>Ruins (Access permitted with a guide and safety harness)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Craco Vecchia was a strategic military centre during the reign of Federico II. Its control tower built by the Normans had one of the most scenic positions in the region for territorial administration. In 1239 the tower became a prison which exemplifies Craco’s importance in that period. Craco has detailed population records dating back to as early as 1277 which records eighty-three ‘fires’ or families comprised of around 400 individuals. In 1561 Craco counted 2590 residents but an epidemic in 1656 caused a severe drop in population. In 1799 Craco was the stage of a significant peasant revolt led by Innocenzo de Cesare, a local student who, on return from his studies in Napoli, bringing with him the ideals of the Parthenopean Republic, inspired a revolt against the feudal lords. The revolt was violently extinguished by the town’s nobility and its participants were killed. Craco was also famous for its central role in the banditry wars that took place in southern Italy during the nineteenth century. The inhabitants of the twelfth-century hilltop village were evacuated in 1963 following a landslide that was caused by infrastructure work (sewage and water systems). The 2000 inhabitants were transferred to another town called Craco Peschiera in the nearby valley. A damaging flood in 1973 followed by a violent earthquake in 1980 extinguished the ex-inhabitants’ hopes of an eventual return to their historic village. In 2010 the walled town of Craco Vecchia was listed by the World Monuments Fund as an important monument to safeguard. In 2011 and 2012 the council opened the possibility for visitors to visit secured parts of the old town with a guide. In 2013 the old Borg had received 5000 visitors, in 2015 over 12,000. Craco Vecchia is perhaps the most recognisable Italian ghost-town having been featured in various films including ‘The Passion of the Christ’ by Mel Gibson (2004), Nativity by Catherine Hardwicke (2006), Quantum of Solace by Marc Forster (2008), ‘Christ Stopped at Eboli’ by Francesco Rosi (1979), and ‘Basilicata Coast to Coast’ by Rocco Papaleo (2010).

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219 Dario Marani (dir.), Ghost town; Craco (Italy: Fish-Eye Digital Video Creation, 2017), 56 mins.
220 Ibid.
Fabbriche di Careggine (Tuscany)

Hidden Underwater Medieval Village; Re-emerges Every Ten Years

**Origins:** Thirteenth century

**Abandoned:** 1947

**Reason:** Inhabitants evicted for the construction of a dam

**Current state:** Submerged in the artificial Vagli Lake

Fabbriche di Careggine is one of the numerous medieval villages (along with Curon Vecchia, Osiglia, Stramentizzo, and Movada) that were flooded to make room for new hydroelectric plants in the 1940s. In 1941 under the Fascist regime, the company Selt-Valdarno (today Enel), decided to construct a hydroelectric dam, diverting the course of the Edron River in the area of Vagli Sotto. Construction took place between 1947 and 1953, in which 70m of water submerged the town of Fabbriche di Careggine. The 147 residents of the thirteenth-century village were forcefully moved to new purposely built houses in Vagli Sotto. There is a fascinating video clip filmed by British Pathè, which captures the final evacuation of the inhabitants of Fabbriche di Careggine and its successive flooding. On four separate occasions, 1958, 1974, 1983 and 1994, maintenance work on the dam emptied the lake which permitted the ruined medieval village, with its stone houses and cemetery, its bridge with three arches, the Romanesque church of San Teodoro and its bell tower, to reemerge. In 1994, the event of Careggine’s emersion (that went mostly unnoticed in the previous years), attracted an unexpected flood of over a million tourists from all over the world. The event, which lasted for six months, was

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226 Del Pelo & Pagnoni, ‘Margini di memoria,’ p. 4.
accompanied by intense media coverage. Academics, curious onlookers and locals eagerly wait for the next emptying of the lake (initially planned for 2016 but since postponed), to glimpse this captivating village hidden underwater.

Gibellina Vecchia (Sicily)

Ancient village destroyed by an earthquake is immersed in a giant concrete artwork; the replacement village is an open-air modern art museum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>Ancient origins, Seventeenth century (existing village)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>Earthquake (magnitude 6.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current state</td>
<td>Ruins immersed in landscape artwork</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An earthquake in the Belice Valley destroyed the ancient village of Gibellina in 1968. Between 1984 and 1989 the remains of the old town were immersed in a giant concrete landscape artwork by Alberto Burri known as ‘Il Cretto di Burri’. In the seventies a swathe of international artists came freely to decorate the replacement town - ‘New Gibellina’ – invited by the town’s mayor, Ludovico Corrao. Today Gibellina is an open-air museum of modern experimental art and architecture. While initially met with enthusiasm and praise, the original artistic experiment is today, is unkempt. Its disconnection

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to the surrounding historical, cultural and territorial context is dramatic.\textsuperscript{230} Gibellina still has a considerable problem of population decline due to the lack of work opportunities and the continual migration of its residents.\textsuperscript{231} When art historian Christopher Woodward visited Burri’s artistic tribute to Gibellina Vecchia he was impressed by the harshness of the memorial. He exclaimed, ‘There was no proof of dialogue between the old and new, and I asked myself what hope such an anonymous and sterile monument might offer the survivors. The fields in the valley are prosperous, but nature will not be able to resurface from under the impermeable, suffocating cement.’\textsuperscript{232}

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**Pentedattilo Vecchio (Calabria)**

*‘La Mano del Diavolo’ (The Devil’s Hand)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origins:</th>
<th>640 b.c (Greek foundations)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned Reason</td>
<td>1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current state</td>
<td>Partially restored, visiting is possible via foot access only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Pentedattilo, 1990

The original Greek name for Pentedattilo is *Penta Daktilos* - meaning five fingers. This name refers to the unusual geographical formation of the mountain behind the town whose five dominant peaks resemble a hand. An ancient Greek colony known as the Calcidesi founded the village in 640 b.c. Pentedattilo is infamous for a historical family feud between the Alberti and Abenavoli families that led to the brutal massacre of the entire Alberti family during the night of the 16th April 1686 and for this


\textsuperscript{231} Cappello (dir), ‘Gibellina Nuova’.

\textsuperscript{232} Woodward, *Tra le rovine*, p. 83.
reason, is sometimes referred to as the ‘mano del diavolo’ (the devil’s hand).\textsuperscript{233} A devastating earthquake in the eighteenth century destroyed many of the original town’s buildings and the original dwellings - squeezed into the mountain crevices, were steadily abandoned in favour of safer zones further down the mountain. The last of the town’s inhabitants left in the 1960s because of the constant threat of a landslide.\textsuperscript{234} At the beginning of the eighties, some locals and outsiders began to restructure some of the ancient town’s buildings and organise temporary events to valorise the abandoned village. Today Pentedattilo hosts many important cultural initiatives including the Pentedattilo Film Festival and an international festival of Calabrian Greek culture the ‘Paleariza’ and is considered one of Calabria’s most unique and picturesque villages.\textsuperscript{235}

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**Pianosa (Tuscany)**

*Prison Island in Tuscany*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>Sixteenth century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1998 (August)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned Reason</td>
<td>Obsolescent economy (Closure of prison)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modest condition, visits strictly regulated by the Tuscan Archipelago National Parks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pianosa Island is one of the seven islands located in the Tuscan Archipelago and National Park. People have settled on the island since the Paleolithic age. Given its strategic position in the Mediterranean,

\textsuperscript{233} Marcello Sestito, *L’architettata mano; Pentedattilo palmo di pietra* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2004), pp.39-40; see also Antonio Constantino, *La tragedia degli Alberti a Pentedattilo* (Reggio Calabria: 3rd Edition, 1982).

\textsuperscript{234} Teti, *Il senso dei luoghi*, p. 30-32.

Pianosa is characterised by an elevated number of significant ancient and modern historical sites.\textsuperscript{236} In 1858 the island became a rural penal colony under the Tuscan rule. In 1932 the island was inhabited by sixty families connected to the running of the penal colony. In 1938 the island received its first diesel motor which provided electricity until 1990 when an underwater electricity cable linked the island with nearby Elba. In the seventies, the agricultural penal colony became a maximum security prison. In 1998 the prison closed down and the island’s inhabitants - almost all employed by the prison - abandoned the island in the following years.\textsuperscript{237} After many years of being an absolute no-go zone, the ban was lifted in 2011 and access became possible again although all visiting is strictly regulated by the National Park.\textsuperscript{238} The island’s village (also called Pianosa) is uninhabited today although its incredibly attractive location and the quality of its architecture give it high potential for reuse. It is unlikely that Pianosa will remain a ghost town for long.

\textbf{Poggioreale (Sicily)}

\textit{Destroyed in the 1968 Belice Valley Earthquake}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>ancient origins, Seventeenth century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>(existing village) 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>Earthquake (magnitude 6.4) Ruins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On 14 January 1968, a violent earthquake hit the Belice Valley in Sicily damaging a significant number of historic villages. The earthquake destroyed the towns of Gibellina, Salaparuta and Montevago and caused severe damage in Salemi, Santa Ninfa, Santa Margherita Belice, Roccamena and Poggioreale. The seventeenth-century village Poggioreale was so heavily damaged the inhabitants decided to construct an entirely new town nearby rather than reconstruct the old one. The original village, which has remained abandoned since the earthquake and visits are not permitted. The time-freeze has endowed Poggioreale with a surreal atmosphere of suspended time. Recently the idea of reconstructing the old village has surfaced. In 2017, the expat community of Sicilian migrants in Sydney promised funds to rebuild the town’s ruined church. Sydney is home to a large community of ex-inhabitants of Poggioreale and their descendants. The president of the Sydney Association ‘Villaggio Sant’Antonio da Padova’, Pietro (Peter) Maniscalco said in an interview ‘I left the town with my family when I was eleven years old and every time I go back I feel at home.’ The commitment of the Sydney-based community of ‘Poggiorealesi’ to restoring the ancient village of Poggioreale demonstrates the significant attachment that people can have to a town even long after its being abandoned and illustrates the crucial importance of deep and genuine study of ghost towns before implementing renovation projects which may sever the fragile, and sometimes unexpected links, between past and present and between the abandoned town and its community of ‘refugees’.

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239 Dario Marani (dir.), *Ghost town: Poggioreale* (Italy: Fish-Eye Digital Video Creation, 2017), 56 mins.
241 Ibid.
Roghudi Vecchia (Calabria)

A breathtaking ghost town perched in the middle of a river in the Calabrian Mountains

 Abandoned: 1973
 Reason: Flood
 Current state: Ruins

The ancient village Roghudi is located atop a precariously high (600masl) perch above the Amendolea river in Calabria. While the town counted 1488 inhabitants in the 1911 census, a slow process of migration beginning in the 1940s started chipping away at the population. The village inhabitants definitively abandoned the old settlement in 1973 after two devastating floods in 1971 and 1973 (the last of a long series of natural disasters). The town is infamous for its sheer cliffs which drop away to the river five hundred metres below circumscribe the village. Local tradition dictates that children were fastened by their ankles to long cords fixed to the nails in the city walls (still visible today) to prevent them from falling into the deep chasm below.242 Vito Teti famously labelled Roghudi as ‘the unhappiest village in Italy, perhaps in the world.’243 The remaining community of Roghudi - who live in a reconstructed village closer to the coast ‘Roghudi Nuovo’, is one of nine Calabrian communities that still speak an ancient Greek dialect.244

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242 Dario Marani (dir.), Ghost town; Roghudi (Italy: Fish-Eye Digital Video Creation, 2017), 56 mins.
243 Teti, Il senso dei luoghi, p.65.
244 Ibid.
Romagnano al Monte (Calabria)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>Eleventh century (Castle founded)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned</td>
<td>1980 (23 November)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>Earthquake (magnitude 6.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current state</td>
<td>Ruins, foot access</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Romagnano al Monte is an ancient Calabrian village perched on the summit of a sharp, vertiginous peak (650 masl) above the Platano River in Calabria. Founded in the tenth century, it is characteristic for many steps and staircases, and sheer cliff edges the plunge into the chasm below. In 1656 the town was hit by a terrible plague that halved the recorded population of 500 to 251, but by 1881 the town’s population has risen again to almost 1000.\textsuperscript{245} An inexorable decline in population, beginning in the twentieth century took place as Romagnano’s inhabitants, exasperated by the isolation and severe living conditions, sought fortune elsewhere.\textsuperscript{246} A catastrophic earthquake the 23rd of November 1980 forced the town’s remaining inhabitants to abandon the village definitively. Today Romagnano is visitable in parts although its isolation and dangerous position suggest that the town will remain a ghost town for some time yet.\textsuperscript{247}


\textsuperscript{247} Ibid.
Roscigno Vecchia (Campania)
Abandoned and Rebuilt at Least Three Times


Roscigno Vecchia is an abandoned rural town hidden in the mountains above Salerno. Originally founded in the tenth century, continuous earthquakes and landslides throughout the centuries have forced the community of Roscigno to relocate and reconstruct their town at least three times. The first during the 1500s, again in the early 1700s and the latest reconstruction took place at the beginning of the twentieth century.\(^\text{248}\) The most recent relocation began in 1902 because of two laws which obligated the population to evacuate the old centre because of the risk of an impending landslide.\(^\text{249}\) The relocation took place over a long time, most of the original inhabitants unwilling to leave their town until the 1960s when the constant movement had left most of the village's buildings uninhabitable. Roscigno's last remaining inhabitant Teodora Lorenzi (Dorina) passed away in 2000. The abandoned town has one permanent resident Giuseppe Spagnuolo who moved to the deserted village in the 1990s.\(^\text{250}\) When asked about his decision to live alone in a deserted village Giuseppe Spagnuolo replied 'I don't lack anything. I wouldn't change my two-room-house with any other. I love to define myself as 'the only free and special squatter of Roscigno Vecchia'. I'm here alone, I don't deny it.

\(^\text{249}\) laws no. 301. on 7 July 1902, and no. 445. on 9 July 1908
But the world rotates around me.\textsuperscript{251} Some Italian film directors have used Roscigno as a film set including Sergio Staino in ‘Cavalli si Nasce’ (1989), Alessandro Valori in ‘Radio West’ (2003) and Mario Martone in ‘Noi Credevamo’ (2010).

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{251} Ibid.
Chapter 2: From Flourishing Cultural Centres to Shameful Ghost-Towns – The Rise and Decline of Italy’s Hamlets, Walled Towns and Rural Villages

Borghi, hamlets and rural villages

To understand the motives behind the significant number of historically valuable ghost towns in Italy, it is useful to consider the characteristics of rural villaggi or paesi (villages), borgate (hamlets) and Borghi (fortified towns) as they developed in medieval Italy. We will discover that some of their features considered fundamental at the time of construction, later became the primary motives for their abandonment. But first some definitions and comparisons between the three main typologies of small settlements found in Italy.252 ‘Borgata’ is the Italian equivalent of an English hamlet and is used to describe a small rural settlement composed of only a few houses and reliant upon an essentially rural economy. Italian hamlets do not typically have a church or a marketplace. Apart from single properties, the Borgata is the smallest form of lived settlement. ‘Villaggio’ or ‘Paese’ (village or town), are terms used to describe permanent settlements of modest dimensions built mainly for practical necessity close to important resources such as a quarry, arable land for farming or shepherding, or waters useful for fishing. Medieval villages in Italy grew and evolved spontaneously without any overriding formal urban planning. Although villages were sometimes surrounded by a stone wall or thorny hedges, they did not have proper defence fortifications. The villages’ strict dependence on an agricultural based economy (or, later, on mining activities), and its unprotected state differentiates it from a ‘borgo’ or fortified town. A ‘borgo’ is a small to medium sized village characterised by fortified walls and at least one marketplace or piazza. The medieval borghi had a commerce based economy within the defensive walls and played an overseeing role for the surrounding area and the rural periphery.

‘Borghi’ began to proliferate in Italy during the high medieval period – a period characterised by political fragmentation and social unrest. The constant threat of war and difficulties associated with

subsistence lifestyles including famine and disease drove peasants towards walled settlements which represented protection from enemy assault and lawless nobles and rogue bandits. Inhabitants of coastal towns and cities that had previously relied primarily on fishing became easy prey for pirates and foreign invaders such as the Saracens, Ottomans and Normans and gradually abandoned the coast in favour of safer areas. For this reason, most settlements founded in the high medieval period were constructed in the hinterland, far away from the coast. The constant fear of invasion led to new forms of settlements which placed greater emphasis on the security of local produce, people and architecture. Peasants and artisans aggregated around the fortified castles of counts, bishops or territorial abbots and transformed them into walled communities. They chose isolated and difficult to reach territories which provided natural protection in the form of rocky outcrops and high ground surrounded by steep slopes. In his renowned essay on the development of the Mediterranean, historian Fernand Braudel reminds us that human settlement in the mountains was not only for the protection from invading armies but also because the plains (which in the specific case of Medieval Italy were few and characterised by swamplands), were dangerous incubators of disease. He states, The difficult and lengthy process of land reclamation [...] explains why, paradoxically, human history in the Mediterranean often began on the hills and mountains; areas where agriculture has always been difficult and precarious, but which in compensation safeguarded from lethal malaria and the too frequent dangers of war in the plains.\(^{253}\)

Tall walls surrounded the extremity of settlements and the immediate encompassing fields were reserved for the rural population and farmlands. In the case of enemy attack, the agricultural community sought refuge within the city walls. Italy’s fortified towns are typically highly concentrated and dense settlements, having had to adapt to a limited construction surface. They are characterised by narrow streets that allow just enough space to let horses or carts pass. In the majority of cases, high and thick stone walls surrounded the town possessing few entry gates and several watchtowers from which the inhabitants could control the surrounding territory. In this way, the inhabitants created

\(^{253}\) Fernand Braudel, _Il Mediterraneo; lo spazio, la storia, gli uomini, le tradizioni_ (Milano: Bompiani, 2016 [1949]) p. 20.
‘unassailable’ towns and enjoyed an increased sense of security. This sense of security, however, came at a high price. Life was difficult for the inhabitants who were largely dependent upon natural phenomena and political stability for a subsistence lifestyle; unexpected climatic events or invasions could easily destroy harvests causing famine and epidemics. Villages evolved mainly in isolation with limited contact with surrounding villages. Customs and languages, products and recipes changed from village to village, even those barely a few kilometres apart. People from other close-by villages were considered strangers or ‘forestieri’. Local aristocracy lived within the walls and paid allegiance to distant higher authorities. For many towns, this was the only form of connection with the outside world. Given that these settlements developed in isolation from one another with limited communication with the surrounding world, they fostered the development of highly specific cultures, dialects, architecture and culinary and artisan traditions based on a dependence on their immediate landscape and locally available products and reliant upon community cooperation and organisation.
Socio-Economic Change (Industrialisation, Rural Flight and Urbanisation)

The census points to emigration as one of the leading causes for the abandonment of Italy's small communities. The dramatic socio-economic changes beginning at the turn of the twentieth century which accelerated to an unprecedented rate after the 1950s caused the greatest number of abandonments. However a dramatic change in the fate of small mountainous communities had already been set in motion at the end of the eighteenth century when the political situation began to stabilise in Italy and people were no longer forced to stay in fort-style towns for protection. Italy's medieval villages - built initially as compact fortresses in isolated and geologically fragile locations and dependent upon a small-scale agricultural and artisan economy - became a burden to their modern inhabitants who began to search for more significant economic opportunity and more comfortable lifestyles elsewhere. Hilltops and mountains (once considered strategic locations because they offered protection from invading armies), were slowly abandoned in favour of valleys and plains where there was less risk of natural disaster. The extensive land reclamation work following the unification of the Italian states in 1861 also played a significant role, reducing the dangers of diseases in the plains and amplifying opportunities for large-scale agriculture and industry in previously unfeasible areas. This migratory phenomenon - colloquially referred to as 'sliding down the mountain' - gradually accelerated as the impact of the tremendous social and economic changes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries began to be felt all over Italy.

The transition from the traditional Italian economic system based on agriculture, artisanship and commerce to an industrial economy caused profound socio-cultural and political changes in Italy. One of the most evident repercussions was the wave of economic migrants it provoked who abandoned rural and mountain areas in search of better living conditions and wages in large developing industrial cities in Italy and around the world. This trend, known as ‘rural flight’, became a mass migration, exploding in the fifties and sixties after the Second World War and provoked the decline and abandonment of a significant number of historical villages and fortified towns. Along with more

254 Pascolini, ‘Via dai margini,’ p. 1
255 Ibid.
isolated villages and towns, there were many other rural villages in less remote areas such as Borgo Del Canto (close to Bergamo, Milan) that were abandoned too. In a few short decades, the flood of migrants provoked the abandonment of vast stretches of agricultural land and the emptying out of rural towns and villages which consequently lost all capacity and reason for development. Italian social historian Nuto Revelli remembers, ‘But this improvised and chaotic growth, [...] brought the poor farmlands to its knees, already fragile, already drained of its lifeblood by past and recent haemorrhages. The youth abandoned the countryside; they searched for the industry, a factory. The exodus of large depressed areas of the hill country and mountain was on the precipice of becoming an avalanche.’

Cities were under enormous pressure faced with the problems of exponential population growth. National politics concentrated on regulating the impact of internal migration on the cities, allocating funding to solve problems in the industrialising cities rather than the small settlements left behind. Population decline in small towns led to the incremental loss of essential services such as healthcare centres and schools, which exacerbated existing difficult living conditions. Revelli condemned what he believed to be an arrogant and short-sited development model, he wrote;

The politicians were euphoric. They weren’t worried about the poor countryside reduced to a shocked anthill overturned by a hit of the mattock. [...] The politicians incentivised the arrival of new industries as if every town of the plain had to have a factory. ‘The era of the farmer with his four cows in the stable is over’, they said, ‘What counts is efficiency, production. The farmers that cannot keep up must surrender. The factories’ gates are open and are ready to receive them.’ The worst part was not the reigning law of profit, but the ignorance and arrogance of those that held political power.

In a hurry to modernise, many small settlements were left behind. The construction of newer, faster, more direct roads, bypassed many small villages and borghi. Many businesses in these small settlements relied upon the passing of clients to make a living, and the reduced traffic forced the inhabitants to move elsewhere for economic reasons leading to the town’s decline and eventual abandonment. Brento Sanico - a fortified town on the border between Tuscany and Emilia Romagna is

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256 Nuto Revelli, Il popolo che manca, p. 1
258 Ibid.
one example of a bypass leading to abandonment. Other infrastructure considered necessary for the modernisation of the Italian nation such as the construction of hydroelectric dams signalled the end of some other communities which were dispossessed and submerged in artificial lakes. Some examples include Fabbriche di Careggine in Tuscany, Stramentizzo in Trentino Alto Adige (submerged on 5 July 1956), and Curon Vecchia in Trentino Alto Adige. (Movada and Fabbriche di Careggine have been included in the present census because they still have the semblance of a village and have re-emerged on several occasions; the other two were not included because they were destroyed in the opening of the dam – only the tower of Curon Vecchia remains). Some other examples of poorly planned public and private development projects also contributed to the demise and abandonment of some small towns. One example is Craco Vecchia - a village with a thousand years of history that came to an end in the sixties when the infrastructural works to implement a modern sewage network provoked a landslide that destroyed most of the town. Another case is Consonno, a rural medieval village almost entirely destroyed by an eccentric entrepreneur in the nineteen-sixties to be converted into a 'Las Vegas' of the Brianza (a project that failed miserably). Ironically the Italian government’s attempts to improve the living conditions of small communities in rural Italy through modernisation and improved transport systems - envisioned as a way to stem the tide of urban migration - on several occasions contributed to the phenomenon. This paradox is acutely exemplified by the 1950s Agricultural Reform.

The end of the Fascist era saw the implementation of laws that dramatically changed the organisation of rural and agricultural work. The objectives of the Agrarian Reform, instituted on 21 October 1950 (law n.841), were more equitable land distribution and qualitative and quantitative improvement of land use. This reform also gave birth to the Cassa del Mezzogiorno, to fund public construction including land reclamation and the creation of new aqueducts, roads and farming towns. The traditional organisation of farm work known as ‘mezzadria’ – (sharecropping) a centuries-old system in which farmers shared 50% of their products with the local landowners in exchange for accommodation

259 See. Pier Carlo Tagliaferri, Firenzuola e il suo territorio (Poggiobonsi; Lalli, 1998), regarding the history of Brento Sanico and the Firenzuola territory.
260 The stories of Consonno, Craco Vecchia and Fabbriche di Careggine are recounted in greater depth in the present thesis in the section 'Italy's Most Iconic Ghost Towns'.

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- was overturned. While many Italian farmers achieved their dream of being landowners, the land division noticeably reduced the size of agricultural businesses which undermined the possibility to transform properties into more advanced companies. In some cases, farmers formed cooperatives which organised and centralised the production and sales of products to overcome this problem. Extensive methods of agriculture gave way to more intensive methods with concentrated exploitation of farming lands. One eyewitness remembers:

In the peripheries of the city and the open countryside, one could count dozens of concrete stains, the small and medium businesses that grew. Even large-scale farming became part of the ‘race towards progress’. The medium and big farmhouses of the plains – thanks to the millions invested in the ‘green plans’ – flourished, prospered, [...] the Lagnasco refrigerator warehouses, which emerged like cement ships in a sea of fruit orchards were so imposing and anonymous that they seemed like true and proper industries. New farming technology lessened some of the physical hardship of agricultural work and accelerated the process allowing greater production. Better communication with the outside world, enhanced hygienic conditions facilitated by better access to drinkable water, the reclamation of farmland and modern sewage systems improved the quality of daily life of rural populations. The Agrarian Reform also produced better transport infrastructure which linked previously isolated small and medium centres to main roads. Improvement of infrastructure in southern Italy led to a twofold increase in agricultural produce. In many of the reclaimed districts, such as Metapontino, the population quadrupled, and unemployment plummeted. Modern farming practices spread across a wider range of properties and gave birth to a new and widespread process of industrialisation. The development of active agricultural businesses produced a new and more consistent demand for industrial farming machines that was satisfied by the creation of new industrial businesses, and, at the same time, the evolution of the manufacturing industry in the food sector. New agricultural technologies which on the one hand improved the working conditions of farmers, on the other hand, replaced the need for human labour which left an increasing number of agricultural labourers unemployed and forced to search for work elsewhere. Ironically, better transport systems that were created initially to shorten physical and social distances of the rural communities and to enhance their quality of life accelerated and facilitated

261 Nuto Revelli, Il popolo che manca, p. 1
the process of abandonment. New railroad and road infrastructure led to a kind of duplication of villages with part of the population remaining in the original town, and part transferring to the valleys below.

Some scholars have criticised the haphazard implementation of the Reform demonstrating that many areas only benefited in a minor way.\textsuperscript{262} For many mountain settlements such as such as Lavacchielli in Emilia Romagna or Savogno in Lombardy, the necessary infrastructure to permit sufficient communication and connection with the rest of the world was never built and still today these isolated villages are accessible only via walking tracks. Many of the new rural communities that had formed in the 1950s with the enthusiasm of the Reform were later abandoned in the 1960s because they were poorly planned and lacked essential services such as roads, water and electricity.\textsuperscript{263} Some examples include the seven ‘Schisina’ villages (Schisina, Borgo San Giovanni, Bucceri-Monastero, Pietra Pizzuta, Malfitana, Piano Torre, Morfia) in Francavilla di Sicilia in the province of Messina in Sicily. In other cases, new roads were built without regard for the geomorphologic and environmental conditions that would lead to severe problems in the successive decades. While the Reform initially provided the basis for economic growth and prosperity in rural Italy, it could not compete with the attractive power of industry. While speaking at a conference in 1944 concerning the ‘Mezzogiorno Nudo e Mezzogiorno Alberato’, Italian economist and politician Manlio Rossi-Doria exclaimed ‘the real bane about this miserable reform is that we wanted to do it without the farmers.’\textsuperscript{264} In 1958, only eight years after the approval of the Agricultural Reform and the Special Commission for the Mezzogiorno, the number of workers employed in industry overtook those engaged in agriculture.\textsuperscript{265} The Agrarian Reform was not enough to stem the flow of migration away from rural areas towards the cities and, in some ways, accelerated the process. Some scholars have noted that, ironically, Italy only became a genuinely industrialised country after the implementation of the Agrarian Reform.\textsuperscript{266}

\textsuperscript{263}Ibid., p. 182.
\textsuperscript{264} Franco Armenio, Geografia commossa dell’Italia interna (Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2013).
\textsuperscript{265} Emanuele Bernardi, La riforma agraria in Italia e gli Stati Uniti (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006), p. 335.
\textsuperscript{266} Ibid., p. 342.
During the economic boom of the sixties and seventies, the settlement culture of Italians began to change definitively. In the cities, televisions and cars started becoming accessible for everyone. City-dwellers had free time, holidays. New roads and the spread of cars permitted people to move further and more freely. The growing disparity between lifestyles in the wealthier cities and struggling rural areas was laid bare by better communications and transport systems. While initially tied to economic motives - reasons associated with work opportunities and improved services, the ‘rural flight’ phenomenon became, over time, a cultural trend. The Italian post-war society - attracted by the capitalist ideal of industry and progress - began to idealise the city as the place of opportunity, development and growth. The sense of being excluded from the benefits of progress and social change that were taking place in urbanising areas of the country fuelled the discontent of inhabitants of small villages and encouraged urban migration.

Flavia Cumoli, captured the impression of an interviewee ‘Pietro’ from Sesto San Giovanni who admitted, ‘In my town or you were a farmer or you were a farmer, I didn’t like that kind of lifestyle, there were no industries, no nothing […] I liked the sound of the sirens […] hearing those sirens ringing early in the morning, at midday, in the evening, it was something… it was fabulous.’

This modernisation of Italian culture, especially after World War Two, generated a sense of shame about rural lifestyles and historic dwellings. Rural and medieval villages became associated with images of backwardness, underdevelopment, uncleanliness, deprivation and unnecessary hardship. The purely physical abandonment of towns shifted into a mental and sentimental dissociation in favour of the progressive ideals and lifestyles considered achievable only in the highly urbanised, industrial centres. The rural exodus was not only a top-down economic and political process but rather a revolution embraced from below, that found swathes of participants animated, in part, by a deliberate rejection of rural landscapes and hometowns. In other cases, emigration was a form of unintentional abandonment that inhabitants participated in with the intention of returning to their hometowns in the future but instead gave birth to new settlements elsewhere and temporary abandonment of their original homes and villages become permanent. Teti

267 Flavia Cumoli, Un tetto a chi lavora (Milan: Guerrini, 2012), p. 22
268 Ibid., p. 101.
269 Ibid., p. 102.
270 Tarpino, Il paesaggio fragile, p. 69.
explains, 'The experience of collective escape was lived with sadness and dismay, but the idea that the
town could die, that it could be closed-down was only a distant idea. It is only recently [...] that many
towns, ever more empty and silent, have been definitively abandoned.'\textsuperscript{271} This cultural change meant
that those villages abandoned by their former inhabitants remained abandoned and fell into decline
and ruin.

Another significant factor leading to a town's progressive socio-cultural decline is the depletion of a
town's primary economic resource such as a particular mineral or primary business. From the census,
we can see that the most frequent incidence of abandonment due to an obsolescent economy involved
towns dependent upon mining economies. The mining towns which were constructed ad-hoc for the
employees and those located in isolated positions were the quickest to be abandoned when the period
of extraction finished.\textsuperscript{272} Ingurtosu and Naracauli are two impressive abandoned mining villages in the
zone of Arbus in the heart of Sardinia - the region with the highest number of cases of abandonment
due to an obsolescent economy. The extraction of minerals (silver, lead and zinc), from the mines began
in 1855 and reached their peak at the beginning of the twentieth century. Many employees were fired
in 1943 during World War Two, and although there was a little reprisal immediately after the conflict,
the mining activities never reached their former productivity. In 1968 the mines were closed
definitively, and the villages, inhabited mainly by managers, workers and technicians, were abandoned
soon after.\textsuperscript{273} Today Ingurtosu has been converted into an industrial archaeological monument and is
part of the Sardinia region's Parco Geominerario Storico and Ambientale, as part of the UNESCO
Geoparks Network.\textsuperscript{274} Other examples of deserted mining towns in other parts of Italy include Rocca
San Silvestro and Castelnuovo dei Sabbioni in Tuscany. Another unique and recent case of
abandonment due to economic obsolescence is the island of Pianosa in the Tuscan archipelago which
was abandoned when the town's prison – the island's primary source of economy – closed in 1998.

\textsuperscript{271} Teti, Il senso dei luoghi, p.6.
\textsuperscript{272} Francesco Manconi. Le miniere e i minatori della Sardegna (Milano: Silvana, 1986), p. 17.
\textsuperscript{273} Bruno Cauli, Dall’ossidiana all’oro: sintesi di storia mineraria Sarda (Oristano: S’Alvure, 1996), p. 45.
\textsuperscript{274} http://www.parcogeominerario.eu/
Geological Instability Leading to Frequent Natural Disasters

The second most influential motive for the abandonment of small historical villages in Italy evidenced by the census is natural disasters. Natural disasters are a primary contributing cause of migration, relocation and reconstruction and, in Italy - a country characterised by geological instability - earthquakes, floods, droughts and landslides are particularly frequent events. Braudel reminds us ‘The Mediterranean has never been a paradise offered freely for humanity’s delight.’²⁷⁵ He says,

Everything had to be constructed here, often with greater difficulty than elsewhere. The ancient wooden plough hardly scratches the surface of the thin and crumbly earth. Unusually heavy rainfall is enough for the unstable land to slide down the slopes. The mountain prevents movement, and it steals space, it limits the plains, and reduces the plains to a few strips, to miserable handfuls of land. Access is via steep pathways - difficult for men and animals. The more significant plains were also, for a long time, victims of flooding [...] and malaria.²⁷⁶

Italy is a geologically young country characterised by unstable geographical features in constant evolution. Landslides, volcanoes and earthquakes are a constant presence, in fact, geologists and geographers have cited natural disasters in Italy since antiquity. Perhaps the most well-known is the eyewitness account of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79AD by Pliny the Younger in the form of two letters to the historian Tacitus. He describes the traumatic event;

You could hear the shrieks of women, the wailing of infants, and the shouting of men; some were calling their parents, others their children or their wives, trying to recognize them by their voices. People bewailed their own fate or that of their relatives, and there were some who prayed for death in their terror of dying. Many besought the aid of the gods, but still more imagined there were no gods left, and that the universe was plunged into eternal darkness for evermore.²⁷⁷

Mt Vesuvius is still an active volcano today and is the only volcano on the European mainland to have erupted in the last century. It is considered to be one of the most dangerous volcanoes in the world because of its history of explosive, violent eruptions and because of the large number of people that live

²⁷⁶ Ibid.
near its slopes - over three million. Italy has two other active volcanoes, Mt Etna located in Sicily and Stromboli, one of Sicily's islands. It is also home to many volcanoes considered moderately dangerous including Vulcano, Lipari, Ischia, the Campi Flegrei and numerous others submerged in the Tyrrhenian sea and the Sicilian canal.

The Italian landscape also stands out for the high frequency of earthquakes. The relatively high population density of Italy (201 inhabitants per square kilometre), coupled with an elevated concentration of the population living in seismic risk zones (48%), means that when earthquakes hit, they have a particularly disastrous impact. In the last five hundred years, Italy has been hit by 174 devastating earthquakes, with a catastrophic earthquake taking place on average every three to four years. The most affected areas are in southern Italy, especially Calabria and Sicily. Some of the most disastrous and most recent include the earthquake of Messina in 1908 (over 100,000 victims between Messina and Reggio Calabria), in Marsica in 1915 (30,519 victims), in the Tosco-Romagnolo region between 1917 and 1919, Belice in 1968, Friuli in 1976, Irpinia 1980, and Umbria in 1997 (11 deaths, 100 injured and 80,000 damaged buildings). Other more recent earthquakes took place in Aquila in 2009 (309 deaths and 1600 injured) and Emilia in 2012 (27 deaths). The most recent earthquakes that took place in 2016 and 2017 in various locations throughout central Italy (including Amatrice, Norcia and, Arquata and the Island of Ischia), claimed over 300 lives. Unlike abandonment for socio-economic reasons which takes place over an extended period of time, a natural disaster is a ‘fast’ process in which an emergency situation causes towns to be quickly deserted. These cited towns are still in phases of reconstruction today, and many former inhabitants have already moved away. Italy has had limited success with its attempts to reduce the impact and mitigate the consequences of earthquakes. One of the main criticisms is that national strategies focus mainly on reconstruction when what is needed is a systematic prevention scheme beginning in territories especially prone to seismic risk. Moreover, post-earthquake public restoration projects have been negatively affected by reoccurring phenomena

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279 Ibid., p. 81-82.
280 Ibid., p. 74.
281 Ibid., p. 81-82.
282 Ibid., p.19-20
of corruption and misuse of federal funds.\textsuperscript{283} (This problem was particularly evident in the case of the Irpinia earthquake, investigated by parliamentary inquiry in 1989.) The situation has bettered recently although there are still many problems relating to the issue of criminal corruption in post-disaster reconstruction.\textsuperscript{284}

Landslides and flooding also factored as significant causes in the creation of ghost towns in Italy. In these cases too, it is the particular geomorphic construction of the Italian landscape that is to blame. Over 70\% of the total land surface in Italy is composed of hills and mountains, and her plains - squeezed in between hills and mountains - are historically prone to swamping and hydrological problems.\textsuperscript{285} Two vast mountain chains, the Alps in the north and the Apennines, stretch along the more significant part of its breadth and length, in fact, mountainous areas (above 700m), comprise an impressive 35.2 \% of the total land surface with the remaining 41.6 \% constituted by hills. Italian geologists Giuseppe Gisotti and Marcello Benedini explain that the already geologically precarious situation in Italy is exacerbated by the Mediterranean climate - characterised by long periods of heat and drought interspersed with intense rainfall. Rain favours the erosion of sloping land – especially if not sufficiently covered by vegetation. Coastal zones, constructed upon particularly fragile terrain made up of sand and exposed to the forces of sea and wind are highly susceptible to erosion. Italy’s watercourses are affected by alternating drought and periodic flooding. Examples of Italian towns damaged and destroyed by floods and landslides abound. Roghudi and Africo in Calabria, for example, were victims of an overflowing river as well as the small village of California (Gosalda), which, located in the point of convergence of two rivers the Mis and the Gosaldam, was flooded on 4 November 1966 following a period of particularly heavy rainfall. The inhabitants of these towns were forced to relocate elsewhere because their towns were damaged to such an extent that they were considered not worth recuperating. The remains of California - today in ruins and covered in vegetation - have become a destination for excursionists in the Belluno valley, accessible by a recently built bridge. In some cases human settlements were submerged by the sea, evidenced in the cases of Costanziaco and Ammiana in

\textsuperscript{283} Ibid., p. 81-82.
\textsuperscript{284} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{285} Ibid., p. 6.
the Venetian lagoon. Sudden landslides, which can both destroy the footing of hilltop towns in the case of Craco and Campoggiore Vecchia in Basilicata or submerge lower placed villages in an avalanche of debris falling from an overhead mountain such as the case of Zambana Vecchia in Trentino Alto Adige, damage the buildings to such an extent that they become uninhabitable.

Human error exacerbates unexpectedly violent natural events in the evaluation of dangerous construction sites. First, many of the places that were chosen in the medieval period that offered increased protection are areas particularly prone to the risk of earthquakes and landslides. Often following natural disasters, the decision is made to reconstruct on the same site as the previously destroyed village (or close by), leading to perpetual cycles of destruction and reconstruction of the same town. A classic example is Roscigno Vecchia which was rebuilt in three different places (all of which have proven to be equally perilous choices), in the 16th, 17th and 20th centuries due to a landslide (still in motion).

We can identify war as another force that has led to the rapid abandonment and ruin of many Italian towns. Numerous cities and villages were damaged and destroyed during the First and Second World Wars and, while many were rebuilt following the conflict, some of them remained abandoned. Cirella in Calabria, Castrum Antoni (Antuni) in Lazio, San Pietro Infine in Campania and San Paolo in Alpe in Emilia Romagna are four of the numerous examples. Although not a factor in contemporary phenomena of abandonment, it is evident that epidemics such as the plague and malaria were a severe problem in the past, provoking the decimation of communities and causing the abandonment of numerous villages. The black plague killed between 25 and 35% of the entire Italian population between 1347 to 1350 and in some cases caused the death of the whole population of smaller towns and villages. Malaria also caused the complete abandonment of numerous towns including Galeria and Monterano. Galeria Antica was an ancient city at the edges of Rome, which, even though it had been abandoned and rebuilt...
numerous times in the past, a malaria epidemic in the 1700s caused by the stagnation of the river close by, drove the remaining inhabitants away. People escaped the settlement in a hurry, leaving not only work tools and decorated houses but also dead bodies on the funeral carts. 288 Monterano Vecchio is a fortified village near Rome with origins that date back to the Bronze Age. Already in a state of decline after being sacked by French troops in 1799, Monterano was also definitively abandoned because of malaria. 289 Widespread land reclamation campaigns have since resolved the problem of malaria in Italy.

While catastrophic natural events are undoubtedly a significant element in the phenomenon of abandonment in Italy's small villages, Vito Teti’s anthropological studies of Calabria’s abandoned villages led him to consider that natural disasters are rarely the sole cause of abandonment - they are rather the pretext. 290 This idea is supported by the census data that revealed that emigration was the leading cause of abandonment. Teti argues that the social, economic and cultural factors influence the decision to abandon a place as much as, if not more than, an event of natural disaster, demonstrating that in cities with the existing problem of population decline and socio-economic stagnation, an earthquake or a landslide functions as the catalyst (rather than the primary motive), that convinces the remaining tenacious inhabitants to abandon the village and resettle elsewhere. 291 Comparing the socio-economic causes for the abandonment of small villages with natural disasters, Teti states;

> In both cases abandonment is not to be taken for granted, human choice is the determining factor [...] the reaction of the community towards that disaster [...] . We are interested in understanding how the sentiment and perception of places influence the choice of abandonment and how the motives, knowingly or unknowingly, explicit or implicit, shared or not shared, are often dictated more by peripheral expectations, desires and personal interests rather than issues of safety or site stability. 292

Woodward likewise mused; ’It is interesting to note how rarely people abandon their cities after natural disasters: Lisbon, San Francisco, Anchorage in Alaska, and Managua in Nicaragua. Even

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290 Teti, Il senso dei luoghi, p. 43.

291 Ibid.

292 Teti, Quel che resta, p. 201-2.
Hiroshima was rapidly reconstructed and the survivors returned before knowing what the effects of radiation might be. In this understanding of abandonment, towns are deserted because they no longer satisfy the needs or desires of the present population (perhaps being left behind in processes of modernisation). Natural disasters exacerbate difficult living conditions in remote areas and accelerate processes of abandonment already in act. In the Belice Valley in Sicily, for example, abandonment was not exclusively related to the catastrophic earthquake in 1968 but was determined by the territory’s weak economic, political, and cultural infrastructure. Long periods of cyclic drought, frequent floods of the river Belice, the scarcity of fertile soil, an inefficient road network, and lack of dams and infrastructure contributed to the desertion of the town after the earthquake. The construction of a replacement village is also a factor of fundamental significance in the decision to abandon a village. Often relocation signals the end of hopes nurtured by some ex-inhabitants to return to the original towns. Architect Gennaro Giangregorio regarding the abandonment of Apice noted that once the new town is built and the old inhabitants are finally resettled, it is difficult for them to go back, not only because of the emotional effort required in transplantation but also because the residents, who are by now used to the large and modern houses in the new settlement would find it difficult to readapt to the small dimensions and lack of modern comforts in the old town. By examining the underlying causes of abandonment we can infer that the abandonment of one place in favour of another is a complex process and that it is based not only on dramatic events but also, and perhaps primarily, on the changing needs and desires of a given population.

Woodward, In ruins, p. 83.
Dario Marani (dir.), Ghost town; Apice, 56 mins.
Population Decline Today in Italy’s Small Villages

Today the abandonment of the built environment is a phenomenon that has many costly environmental and social consequences, and short-sighted development projects (alongside mismanagement and underuse of existing built structures and spaces), exacerbate the problem. The negative effects of abandonment are amplified when it concerns historically and culturally valuable places. The census demonstrates that migration, frequent natural disasters and human error have all contributed to a significant population decline in rural and mountainous areas. In some cases, these events lead to the complete abandonment of towns, in other instances, the progressive deterioration in population leaves many communities with a remaining population of seniors unable to regenerate their town’s flailing economy. The conditions that lead to degradation in many Italian villages are not solely dependent upon the initial cause for a decrease in the resident population (because of emigration, natural disaster, a drop in the birth-rate and an aging population), but rather the progressive political and socioeconomic repercussions of population decline. As the population diminishes, critical services and points of reference for the community such as schools, taverns, shops, hospitals and churches close down. A lack of essential services drastically lowers the overall quality of life and exacerbates existing problematic conditions. Workers leave, stables are closed, farmland is abandoned, and the forest slowly takes over. Areas at risk of abandonment suffer from structural weakness, and, having low appeal for outsiders, they are unable to attract and provide for new residents, families and businesses. This personal reflection by anthropologist Vito Teti who, after years of international travel decided to return to live in his hometown in the Calabrian hinterland, reminds us that population decline in small Italian communities is not only a statistical phenomenon but that it affects the personal lives of those who experience it.

My town’s empty houses upset me, they obsess me, they pain me and generate memories, regrets and nostalgia, but they cannot provoke the same effect, the same emotions, the same perceptions in my children or the younger generations. They have never known the people who used to sit on the house doorsteps or the women that used to pray and tell stories; they have

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grown up in a community on the brink of abandonment and also in new distant and virtual communities.\textsuperscript{297}

This is an accurate description of the current experience of many communities located in the Italian mountains and rural areas.

Italy is a densely populated country with over 200 people per square kilometre. However, since the 1950s most of the population is concentrated in medium and large cities. However, small villages in Italy, many with an extremely low residential density compared to the national average, control, administer and preside over a vast proportion of the Italian territory. These small inland villages and hamlets, concentrated in high areas in what were once considered strategic locations, are now overshadowed by newer development along the coast and in the valleys.\textsuperscript{298} Today Italy’s small villages are characterized by weak economy, low population density and devalued real estate, and are subject to the dynamics of economic impoverishment and a lack of services.\textsuperscript{299} About 96% of these municipalities are located in the interior parts of the country - the main reason for their fragility and of the necessity for investment (not merely economic) and intervention.\textsuperscript{300} The negative effects of abandonment have a tangible impact on the daily lives of inhabitants of disappearing communities. At a certain point a town’s population becomes too low to allow the functioning of fundamental services such as education, healthcare, postal services and banking. Schools, hospitals, doctors’ surgeries, post offices and banks shut and the remaining village inhabitants are forced to travel to find these services elsewhere. Without clients, even fundamental village businesses such as the bakery, butcher, coffee shop and bar close as they become economically unsustainable. The lack of basic services makes it hard to attract new residents or tourists and even the handful of stalwart inhabitants who would like to remain in their village are forced to make a difficult choice between living in a village without basic necessary services, or leave to search for an easier lifestyle elsewhere. The departure of youth has

\textsuperscript{297}Teti, \textit{Quel che resta}, p. 234.
\textsuperscript{300}Ibid., p. 10.
meant the average age of the towns at risk of abandonment exponentially increases.\textsuperscript{301} Many small towns are inhabited by an only elderly population which means that they too are destined for abandonment.

The public organisations \textit{Confcommercio} and \textit{Legambiente} recently undertook a study in collaboration with the private company \textit{Serico-Gruppo Cresme} regarding the risk of abandonment in Italy's small towns, which highlights the extent of the phenomenon.\textsuperscript{302} This longitudinal study demonstrated that while in 1996 there were 2830 communities at risk of decline and abandonment, this number rose to 3556 in 2006 and in 2016 it reached 4395 (one in two Italian towns).\textsuperscript{303} The research also pointed to the existence of 1650 settlements that might be considered ‘ghost towns’ - that is those towns that do not reach the minimum demographic, socio-economic and essential services ‘survival threshold’, and which, according to the study are destined to disappear.\textsuperscript{304} According to the study, these communities represent a fifth of Italy's towns, a sixth of the territory's surface and are home to 4.2\% of the Italian population.\textsuperscript{305} Characterised by an elderly and aging population, these struggling towns are home to 56,000 Italians over the age of 65 which is 20\% more than the national average.\textsuperscript{306} A lack of schools and students as well as essential healthcare centres worsens existing problems of marginalisation and decline and leads to further cycles of abandonment. In fact, only 2\% of overseas residents that live in Italy reside in these small communities which demonstrate their incapacity to attract new residents.\textsuperscript{307} The physical degradation of architecture and common spaces is also pronounced, given that a large proportion of the buildings are uninhabited.

To better understand the phenomenon of population decline in Italy's small villages it is useful to consider the national population statistics in relation to location between 1861 (when Italy became a
nation-state), and today (2017). The following statistics are provided by 'The Italian National Statistics Institute Archive' - l'Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, ISTAT.

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<tr>
<th>Town population</th>
<th>1861</th>
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<th>1981</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<td>18.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hilly land (coastal)</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>13.5</td>
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<td>Flat plains</td>
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<td>32.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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Table 3. Altimetric characteristics of the towns <5000 inhabitants whose population decreased between 1951-1981. The numbers refer to (%) of population loss.

Looking at Table 1. we can see that the number of communities with a population of fewer than 5000
inhabitants have progressively declined since 1861. This fact indicates that many small towns which existed at the birth of the Italian nation have since been completely abandoned and no longer exist. Table 2. provides an insight into the population decline in small villages. We can see that while in 1861 nearly half of the Italian population lived in small centres (48.5%), this percentage dropped dramatically over the next century. In 1991 only 19% of Italians lived in small towns and today only 16.49% of the Italian population lived in towns with a population of fewer than 5000 inhabitants. These numbers depict the increasing urbanisation of the Italian territory and population and demonstrate that Italians (since the unification of Italy), have preferred to move to towns with a population of over 5000. Table 3. illustrates the geographical characteristics of Italian urbanisation. It is evident that the hardest hit regions by the phenomenon of population decline and abandonment were the central mountains followed by the hills in the hinterland. These coordinates correspond to the Apennines and Alpine zones and demonstrate that small towns in coastal areas and those located on the centre-south plains have only been lightly affected by population decline. In Italy, the mountain is the most emblematic area that exemplifies the complexity of abandonment and the contradictions that lie within. The mountain is a home to places with a strong identity and acute senses of belonging but it is also one of the areas where abandonment is most prevalent, characterised by an elevated number of ghost towns, unused farmland and abandoned property. Braudel confirms; ‘It is easier to find the images inherited from the past, the utensils, the customs, the patois, the costumes, the superstitions of traditional life in the hills and mountains. Very ancient phenomena continue to exist in this space where modern technologies are unable to supplant the old agricultural systems. The mountain is the place par excellence for the conservation of the past.’

The following population statistics from the mountainous region Friuli Venezia Giulia provide a deeper insight into the phenomenon. Between 1921 and 1951 the mountain population of Friuli Venezia Giulia decreased by 0.4% annually. The number of people moving away increased slightly between

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308 Fernand Braudel, Il Mediterraneo, p. 21.

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1951 and 1961 (population reduction by 1%), and again between 1961 and 1971 (population reduction by 2.1%) but exploded in the twenty years between 1951 and 1971 in which the Friuli mountain lost 26% of its population. That trend continued in the following decade with another 4.8% of population decline. Communities located in the western Friuli mountains (such as Tramonti, Vito d’Asio, Clauzetto, Barcis, Frisanco, Andreis, Erto e Casso), have since lost over 80% of their inhabitants. The population statistics from Friuli Venezia Giulia are representative of the vast majority of Italy's mountainous and rural regions, characterised by noticeable social degradation and having an elderly (and aging), remaining population and a zero birth rate. Small villages are a fundamental part of Italian history, home to valuable relics and generational, site-specific knowledge – elements that are lost in the abandonment process. Aside from being places of emotional and cultural interest, many of the buildings themselves are of significant historical and architectural interest, given that they have remained mostly unchanged from their original condition and were constructed according to local traditions and in local materials. Italian villages are also valuable as a historical model of past lifestyles, architecture and culture, places that are characterised by a respect for the environment and a more natural pace of life. Even Italy's smallest communities abound in tangible and intangible examples of cultural heritage, but up until ten years ago, their abandonment went mostly unnoticed in both popular and political spheres. It is only in the last decade that the long-neglected issue of population decline in Italy's small historical communities and the spread of ghost towns across the peninsula have been treated as a national problem, catapulted to the centre-stage of legislative debate.
Chapter 4: From Rubbish to Resource – New interest and Action in Italy’s Hamlets, Walled Towns and Rural Villages

While the topic of endemic abandonment in rural and mountainous areas has been investigated for decades by anthropologists, historians and sociologists, it is only in the last ten years that the issue has attracted the widespread attention of popular and political spheres. Increasingly recognised as the custodians of an invaluable artistic, historical, architectural and cultural heritage, small historic villages are slowly overcoming historical connotations of ‘shame’, ‘backwardness’ and ‘deprivation’. And, although previously dismissed as sites of ‘minor’ cultural heritage, they are starting to be described as an important resource for the Italian economy and an opportunity to pursue more sustainable practices regarding tourism and development. Recently Italians have been increasingly active regarding the issue of abandonment. We are witness to an increase in campaigns to map and raise awareness about the abandoned environment as well as top-down and bottom-up projects and a variety of network initiatives to prevent the abandonment of towns in decline. In the last thirty years, many semi-deserted villages in Italy have been examined for requalification, and several have been re-purposed for contemporary use. We have also seen an increasing number of site-specific projects that have resurrected towns in ruins. The following chapter will examine the recent increase of popular interest in Italian ghost towns and the ‘rediscovery’ of Italy’s minor cultural heritage as cultural-historical, social and economic resources. It will also describe some of the initiatives undertaken recently by public institutions and cultural networks that demonstrate an active interest in preventing the phenomenon of abandonment in Italy’s small villages. The underlying motives for this new way of perceiving and interacting with Italy’s ghost towns will be more thoroughly discussed in chapter nine. The reevaluation of the worth and usefulness of Italy’s villages recently has led to an increasing number of popular and political initiatives to prevent their abandonment and to protect and promote them. The new perception of Italy’s small historic villages - no longer considered rubbish but resources - has significantly contributed to the revival of investment and interest in previously neglected sites, creating
increased appeal as tourist destinations, and attracting funding and outside investment in forms of purchase and tourism. This change in perception regarding Italian villages is well illustrated by the case of the Sassi di Matera. In 1952, 15,000 inhabitants of the Sassi were evicted from their traditional cave homes and were provided with alternative modern housing, ‘National Shame’ on 9 December 1993 the Sassi became a UNESCO world heritage site (the first in southern Italy) and on 17 October 2014 was named European Capital of Culture 2019. Matera has since been recognised as one of the oldest still inhabited cities of the world. Newfound enthusiasm for these small previously neglected Italian communities is also exemplified by the naming of 2017 as the ‘Anno dei Borghi Italiani’ (Year of Italian Villages).

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Rediscovered resources - sites of ‘Minor’ cultural heritage

Historical ‘borghi’, ‘borgate’ and ‘villaggi’ constitute and are the guardians of Italy’s so-called ‘minor’ cultural heritage. The term ‘minor’ is used to distinguish from sites of ‘major’ historical heritage such as the Colosseum, the archaeological site of Pompeii, The Vatican City, and innumerable others. Italy is so densely filled with layers of history and culture that it is almost impossible to conserve and celebrate each of the countless examples of cultural patrimony as they deserve. While the labels ‘minor’ and ‘major’ are useful for categorising purposes, it is evident that there is nothing very ‘minor’ about the heritage contained in small towns and villages. The variety of Italy’s fortified towns, hamlets and rural villages, regarding historical origins and architectural features, is immense. Given that the greater part of Italy’s medieval towns and villages were founded on earlier ancient settlements (many boasting foundations that date back to the Etruscans, Romans, ancient Greeks and even to the prehistoric, Neolithic period), it is not surprising that a large number of these villages and their immediate surroundings are home to an immense patrimony of relics and artifacts. The uniqueness of each historical village was also determined by the ingenuity and originality of the generations of its historical inhabitants which were able to adapt to the specific geological formation and resources of the chosen territory in a sustainable way, overcoming the extreme difficulties of building in remote locations. Italian villages are treasure troves of history and culture; they stand out for their outstanding aesthetic qualities (artistic and philosophical inspiration, site-specific architecture). Spiritual qualities (genius loci), Historical, anthropological and ethical qualities (remnants of lived communities). They safeguard innumerable treasures – not only material relics but also thousands of years of Italy’s historical memory including ancient knowledge, local know-how, languages and culture. They are the homes of traditional musical instruments and ancient songs, knowledge about plants and medicinal herbs, methods of food preparation and conservation. In these centres we can find the work of innumerable generations of artisans and artists; religious sanctuaries, towers, castles, abbeys, churches, noble palaces, necropolis, villas, mausoleums, sepulchers, cloisters, frescoes, statues and paintings, amphitheaters, archaeological sites, city walls, roads, city gates, thermal baths, cisterns, aqueducts and uncountable others. Places also play an important role in creating and sustaining
memory. Maurice Halbwachs, the most authoritative scholar on social memory suggests that places
have an autonomous capacity to remember.\textsuperscript{311} This idea is expanded upon by historian Antonella
Tarpino who highlights the way that places act as ‘mental deposits’ allowing the spatial ordering of
images which aids memory.\textsuperscript{312} The phenomenon of abandonment in small villages has the pejorative
collateral effect of the disappearance of many professions and expertise tied to artisanship and
agriculture. It is increasingly recognized that the neglect and ruin of Italian villages, many boasting a
cultural heritage over 1000 years old, represents a significant loss, not only for the ex (or exiled)
inhabitants, but also for the broader community no longer able to engage with or learn from the
collective historical memory and unique, local-specific knowledge of these once vibrant communities.
This reappraisal of the value of small historical centres has contributed to the current popularity of the
topic of abandonment and the figure of deserted towns. A renewed interest in Italy’s minor historic
centres - the beauty of their landscapes and the richness and complexity of their public and private
spaces - has also resulted in a more widespread sensitivity to the idea of cultural conservation in non-
traditional heritage sites.

\textsuperscript{311} Maurice Halbwachs, Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire, Mouton, Paris, 1976.
\textsuperscript{312} Tarpino, Antonella, Geografie della memoria; case, rovine, oggetti quotidiani, Einaudi, Torino 2008, p.28.
Increased Popular Interest and Action in Italy's ghost towns

Popular interest in Italy's ghost towns has intensified over the last decade. Recent popular interest in Italy's ghost towns has acquired at least three different forms. The first are individuals, or associations that explore, document and map abandoned sites – either for sharing with other ghost-town enthusiasts and explorers of abandoned places or with the goal of gaining attention, ideas and investment for their eventual repurposing. The preferred sharing methods are via online platforms although there has also been an unprecedented number of travel guides on the specific topic of abandoned villages published in the last ten years. The second group of ghost town enthusiasts are inspired by their potential as private property. Real estate agencies, groups and individuals are purchasing whole or significant parts of ghost towns with the intention of renovating them either for residential purposes or new businesses. A third group is interested in using ghost towns as they are (in a state of abandonment), for temporary events such as concerts or cinema sets. The motives for choosing an abandoned village as a temporary venue are sometimes driven by the objective of reviving struggling areas or merely for aesthetic reasons.

Mapping and Re-use

One way that Italy's ghost towns are gaining popularity is through an increasing number of projects that use online platforms to map them for exploration or for generating ideas and investment for their potential re-awakening. It is important to highlight here that current initiatives to map and reuse abandoned elements of the built environment in Italy do not solely deal with abandoned villages but with a range of other abandoned spaces. In fact, the number of projects that deal with a variety of abandoned spaces - such as discarded warehouses, historic buildings, urban spaces, railways and many more - is much higher than those that deal solely with historical abandoned villages. A significant number of associations, research teams, groups and individuals are occupied in this venture. Their primary focus is on identifying, mapping and regenerating abandoned or derelict parts of urban zones to become useful spaces for social and cultural purposes. Environmentalists have also played a determining role in promoting the regeneration of abandoned sites as an alternative to unnecessary
consumption of natural and agricultural land and other natural resources. In 2012 the WWF Italia led a participatory community campaign to map Italy's abandoned and underutilised places to propose solutions for their reuse. The census took place between June and November in 2012 and identified 575 sites matched with citizen proposals for their eventual reuse. The widespread popularity and participation of this project testified to the growing awareness, sensibility and enthusiasm of many Italians towards the issue of reusing the abandoned built environment. The census of abandoned places was followed by a national conference that took place in Rome 2013 which gave birth to a lengthy report with contributions from a network of over forty-two scholars and WWF directors published in October of the same year. Some of the principal proposals that came from this experience were to severely limit urbanisation, prioritise the reuse of existing infrastructure and ensure that the adaptive reuse of historic architecture is coherent with its cultural, architectural and environmental heritage. What also emerged from the Dossier was an extensive request on behalf of citizens for more public places of sharing and inclusion and spaces for socialisation and creative and cultural activities.

Likewise, the successful projects Greenways (1998) that converts abandoned railways into walking and cycle ways, :Esibisco (2011) that maps and regenerates neglected zones in Tuscany, Tempo Ri-Uso (2008) that negotiates the temporary use of discontinued sites in Lombardy for startup businesses, and Spaziindecisi (2009) that identifies and revives obsolete spaces in Emilia Romagna for social purposes, are typical examples of this trend. The association Disponibile! Il Diritto dei Cittadini a Riusare Spazi Abbandonati (2014) has documented these, and other leading initiatives in a report published in 2015. Re-purposing movements 'from below' are also numerous. The region of Puglia, for example, has numerous examples of the reuse and the regeneration of her abandoned industrial artifacts, rural

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settlements and historical centres. These projects have not been included in the present research because they do not deal specifically with abandoned villages; however, they are mentioned here because they demonstrate that reusing the abandoned environment has become a central topic of discussion and action in Italy in the last ten years. In fact, by examining the frequency and timeline of reuse projects, it is evident that the vast majority of projects began after the turn of the century and their number exponentially increased after 2010. Out of the 38 case studies undertaken by Disponibile!, four were implemented in the 1990s, eight were implemented between 2000 and 2010 and twenty-six were implemented between 2010 and 2017. Initiatives like these are spread all over the Italian territory and are enacted by the increasing number of citizens, and small local groups, that dedicate time and resources to redeem areas and buildings from degradation and abandonment.

There are also a growing number of mapping and exploration projects specifically dedicated to the topic of Italian ghost towns. One of the most comprehensive sites; ‘Paesi Fantasma’, was created by Fabio di Bitonto in 2011. Paolo de Lorenzi manages a similar database called ‘Paesi Abbandonati,’ created in 2010. One website specifically dedicated to the topic of re-awakened abandoned villages is ‘Borghi Reloaded’, which is the online version of an architectural research project undertaken by Martina Menconi in 2013 to map and catalogue previously deteriorated or abandoned villages that have been reactivated through renovation and being given renewed purpose. This website provides information regarding the practical aspects of the renovation and valorisation projects undertaken in fifty-one Italian villages. It also includes an evaluation regarding the impact that the individual projects have had on the respective communities including population growth, and an analysis of its international success. Menconi’s analysis demonstrates that the sole recuperation of a village is not a guarantee for its success but that it needs to be connected to a specific idea and supported by activities coherent with the specific cultural and natural context.

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319 Cfr. il convegno dal titolo: Dismissioni & riuso in Puglia. Problemi, buone pratiche, buone idee organizzato da WWF Italia e la regione Puglia/ Assessorato del Territorio il 21 marzo 2013 presso la Camera di Commercio a Bari
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Increased interest in Italy's ghost towns as real estate

A growing number of groups and individuals have become attracted to Italy’s decaying borgs, deserted villages and ruined hamlets not only for their aesthetic and historical charm but for their investment potential. While the purchase of dilapidated rural villas in Italy has been a popular investment choice for a wealthy international clientele for decades - the new frontier of real estate property investment in Italy are whole abandoned villages. Ghost towns are filling a new expanding niche of the real estate market – targeted mainly at an international clientelex. The sale of Italy’s ghost towns has frequently caught the attention of international media. Headlines seen in the New York Times; ‘An Opportunity to Invest in an Abandoned Italian Village’, or Curbed magazine ‘You can buy an Entire Italian Village for $44.6 million’ or The National ‘Historic Tuscan Village now on Sale in its Entirety’. Long abandoned by their Italian residents, rural villages and hilltop hamlets have become attractive for an international clientele. It seems that the charm exerted by small Italian villages in ruins often has more appeal for non-Italians or Italian non-locals – in fact in the following chapters we will see that there a relatively high number of resurrection projects are envisioned and carried out by foreigners. An Italian real estate agent says that ‘[...] the hunt for abandoned or semi-abandoned villages in Liguria, Tuscany and Umbria began in the early nineties when they hardly cost anything at all. In the meantime, however, the range of quality has shrunk and the prices have risen. [...] The size of an uninhabited village oscillates between 2000mq and 11,000mq and the price range between 3 million euro up to even 30 million euro [...]’ At first sold for nothing, today prices have risen although some zones are still very cheap. The cost of renovation can be high, especially if the newly purchased village is in a zone at risk of natural disaster. Valle Piola is a town that recently made international headlines for its

(accessed 17 June 2017).
mayor’s decision to sell the whole village on eBay for 550,000 euro. Prices of ghost towns on the property market range wildly in price from the small mountain settlement of Ambornetti for sale via auction bidding beginning at only 120,000 euro, to Rocca d’Evandro in Campania for sale at 230,000 euro, Monteleone d’Orvieto in Umbria for sale at c. 500,000 euro and for larger budgets Consonno in Lombardy can be purchased for 12 million euro or Poggio Santa Cecilia in Tuscany, for forty million euro.

Temporary Re-use of Ghost Towns

A third group is interested in using ghost towns as they are (in a ruined state of abandonment), for temporary events such as concerts or cinema sets, festivals or route tourism. These uses of ghost towns exploit their aesthetic power as ruins, and emphasise signs of ruination, rather than removing them through renovation. Two of the most well-known annual events held in abandoned and semi-abandoned villages (aside from traditional religious rites and festivals which we will consider later on) include the Pentedattilo Film Festival held in Pentedattilo in Calabria, and the Festival of Paesologia held between Aliano and Alianello in Basilicata. The idea to use these abandoned villages as venues was undertaken with the hope of reviving the surrounding area struggling with population decline and a weak economy. These temporary events, in fact, have had a positive and lasting effect on the surrounding areas and stimulated the economy of nearby communities. Some other towns have harnessed the aesthetic appeal of abandoned villages located nearby as tourist attractions, inserting them in sightseeing itineraries. These ruins are included in a broader vision of regional tourism initiatives and re-used as part of ‘route-tourism’ in which the ruined village is inserted in a network of trails for hiking, biking, trekking. In this case, the image of the ruin and the atmosphere of decay are interpreted and highlighted as part of the tourist attraction. One example is the Il Museo Archeologico dell’ Incompuito (The Archaeological Museum of the Incomplete); ironic ‘grand tour’ of Sicily’s ruins of

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the recent past. The semi-abandoned towns Pietrapertosa and Castelmezzano have also drawn on the aesthetic power of derelict architecture and the natural environment by installing the *Il Volo del Angelo*, a state of the art flying fox which provides partakers with sweeping views over the small villages and the valley below. The nearby community of Sasso di Castaldo (a town that has lost over two-thirds of its population since 1871), followed suit in 2017 constructing a Tibetan bridge ‘Il Ponte Alla Luna’ as a tourist attraction.

Recently film directors and location managers have increasingly harnessed the aesthetic appeal of Italy’s semi-abandoned villages and ghost towns using them as film locations and backdrops. This has given rise to new forms of film-induced tourism in previously neglected areas which have catapulted Italy’s abandoned villages to an international stage. Using uninhabited villages temporarily as cinema sets can have a longer-term impact on the surrounding communities and provide economic opportunities connected to cine-tourism. One of the most well-known examples of Italian ghost towns used as a movie set is the abandoned village of Craco Vecchia. It has featured in several films including the ‘Passion of the Christ’ by Mel Gibson (2004), Quantum of Solace by Marc Forster (2008), ‘Christ Stopped at Eboli’ by Francesco Rosi (1979), and ‘Basilicata Coast to Coast’ by Rocco Papaleo (2010). The ruined ancient towns near Rome of Galeria Antica and Monterano Vecchio immersed in forty hectares of national park and covered in vegetation have also been used as the backdrop for numerous films including Ben Hur (1959) and Il Marchese del Grillo (1981). Some other examples of ghost towns that have benefitted from iconic portrayal in movies include I Sassi di Matera, Roscigno Vecchia, Castelnuovo dei Sabbioni, Consonno and Balestrino.

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332 Sue Beeton, *Film Induced Tourism* (Great Britain: Cromwell Press), 2005.
Increased Political Interest and Action in Italian Ghost Towns

The phenomenon of abandonment is not specific to Italy but is common to many different countries all over the world. In Europe, for example, the issue is widespread in Spain, Portugal, Greece, Ireland and Great Britain. While many of the other European countries have long-standing national programs that deal with the problem of abandonment, it is only recently that the Italian government has begun to implement strategies of this kind. Although we will see that there are several Italian examples which have triggered a process of revitalisation of the socio-economic fabric of abandoned territories through the valorisation of local artistic, environmental and cultural heritage, there is not yet any national program overseeing site-specific initiatives. Some recent indicators, however, point to a renewed political interest in historically marginalised areas with institutional attempts to incentivise the recuperation and repopulation of small communities and rural areas. The year 2017 marked an important turning point in the national treatment of communities suffering from population decline and abandonment with the approval of the Legge sui Piccoli Comuni\textsuperscript{333}(Law for Small Towns) - a major step towards the conservation of settlements with less than 5000 residents.

The Italian hinterland was the subject of a wide-ranging national research program for territorial cohesion, led by Fabrizio Barca between 2011 and 2013. The idea was to develop a national plan for counterbalancing the demographic, social, environmental differences between the ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’ and offer long-term prospective for employment and the better use of natural resources in marginalised areas. Critical themes including biodiversity in agriculture, silviculture, animal raising, tourism, social farming, educational farms, the small-scale production of renewable energy, recycling and artisanship, are all promoted as a potential stimulus for the rebirth of rural areas. Places where the Italian agricultural civilisation prospered for centuries but which have been neglected in the last half-century. The final report stresses that revival will only be possible if essential services (including schools, hospitals and transport), will remain open in rural areas and conserve their fundamental roles.

\textsuperscript{333} Law number 158 (6 october 2017).
On 22 April 2016, a new Research Centre for Italy’s internal areas and the Apennines opened in Campobasso, Molise - an Italian region at high risk of natural disaster and abandonment. The Italian President Sergio Mattarella participated in the Centre’s inauguration in which he congratulated the Centre’s objective to further the understanding, valorisation and recuperation of Italy’s internal and mountainous zones which he referred to as the nation’s ‘spine’. Drawing attention to issues of hydrological and seismic instability, diminishing populations and the impoverishment of architectural heritage of internal areas, he stressed that these issues have a negative impact not only on those zones directly affected but on the whole Italian nation. He warned against the homogenization of lifestyles based on urban models, arguing that the diversity of lifestyles, places and internal cultures in Italy enriches the nation. By participating in the Centre’s inauguration, the President confirmed that reversing the decline and abandonment of Italy’s internal regions has become a national objective. In fact, later in the same year a law to save small towns from abandonment passed with unanimous bipartisan approval on 28 September 2016. The bill will provide a fund of 100 million euro (active between 2017 and 2023) to finance investments in small villages (those with fewer than 5000 inhabitants). The project involves 70% of Italy’s towns (5591 towns), home to 11 million Italians. Spending focuses on creating jobs and mitigating geographical isolation through subsidised internet and telecommunications services, improved transport, promotion and exportation of site-specific products, promotion through cinema and the structural renovation of centres of cultural interest.

The year 2017 was declared the ‘Anno dei Borghi Italiani e del Turismo Sostenibile’ (The Year of the Italian Villages and Sustainable Tourism). The announcement was made by The Italian Ministero dei Beni e Delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo (The Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism), at the convention ‘La Valorizzazione del Patrimonio Naturalistico, Umano, Culturale e Artistico’, held at Rome in February 2017. The aim of the proclamation was to enhance the value of Italy’s landscape heritage by promoting high quality ‘slow’ tourism to an Italian and international clientele. Numerous

335 ibid.
336 The law is an extension of an earlier ruling proposed in 2003: Legge Realacci-Bocchino n.1941 of 2003: ‘Misure per il sostegno e la valorizzazione dei comuni con popolazione pari o inferiore a 5000 abitanti.’
programs were carried out; the most important being ‘Borghi - Viaggio Italiano’ which identified and mapped a thousand small villages of extraordinary cultural, historical and natural value. It celebrated Italy’s small villages, traditionally left out of the mainstream flow of visitors and conventional tourism routes. When Minister Dario Franceschini presented the project, he said, ‘These towns are places of knowledge and beauty that are abandoned because there isn’t any work. But work can be created by responsible tourism.’\(^{337}\) Another significant regional project to safeguard towns at risk of abandonment commenced in 2016. The ‘Progetto per il Recupero dei Borghi Abbandonati’ (Project to Recuperate Abandoned Villages), has so far generated a series of meetings between the mayors of ten villages in the Irpinia and Sannio zones (Centola-Palinuro, Cerreto Sannita, Romagnano al Monte, Apice, Tocco Caudio, Melito Irpino, Conza della Campania, Roscigno, San Pietro Infine, and Aquilonia), to discuss the possibilities for regenerating the abandoned villages in their municipalities. The project was envisioned by architect Donato Tartaglia who has recently passed away. The objective is to create an idealistic ‘bridge’ between Rome and Matera. The first was held on 27 February in 2016 at the Ethnographical Museum ‘B. Tartaglia’ in Aquilonia, the second took place on 18 March 2016 at Apice. So far the program has consolidated the Archeological Park in Aquilonia Vecchia (Carbonara) – a town destroyed by bombing in 1930. The town’s abandoned buildings have been converted into a ‘Research Centre for Local Cultures and the Mediterranean’ and a ‘Museum of Itinerant Cities’.\(^{338}\)

**Financial incentives for new residents in struggling communities**

Local councils are also key actors in the effort to prevent small towns from abandonment. The innovative project; ‘Case per un Euro’ (Houses for one Euro) - first proposed in 2008 by Mayor of Salemi Vittorio Sgarbi - is an innovative strategy to attract new residents to abandoned villages and renew their physically deteriorated buildings. Buyers - agreeing to resettle in the town and cover the costs of renovation - can purchase the town’s abandoned homes at the symbolic price of one euro. The project aims to increase the population of struggling towns and boost stale economies. Other local


councils throughout Italy have since adopted the novel idea. Today houses are available for purchase at the symbolic price of one euro in the communities of Gangi, Salemi, Regalbuto and Nicosia in Sicily, Patrica in Lazio, Fabbriche di Vergemoli and Montieri in Tuscany, Ollolai and Nulvi in Sardegna, Carrega Ligure in Piemonte, and in Lecce nei Marsi in Abruzzo.\footnote{Redazione, ‘Borghi della lettura sbarca a Pizzone, il primo comune del Molise a vendere case a 1Euro agli scrittori’, Il Giornale del Molise, 14 May 2015, http://www.ilgiornaledelmolise.it/2015/05/14/borghi-della-lettura-sbarca-a-pizzone-il-primo-comune-del-molise-a-vendere-case-a-1e-agli-scrittori/, (accessed 22 October 2017).} In 2015 the small town in Molise; Pizzone also offered its abandoned homes for one euro but only to writers as part of the project ‘Borghi Della Lettura.’\footnote{Silvia Marchett, ‘Candela: The Italian Town Paying People to Move There’, CNN Travel, (23 October 2017), https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/candela-the-italian-town-paying-people-to-move-there/index.html, (accessed 3 March 2018).} In 2016, the small town of Montesegale in Lombardy, pitched a \textit{Patto di Residenza per le Giovani Coppie} (Residency Pact for Young Couples), pledging financial support and a variety of economic and social incentives for young couples willing to move to the area and live and work there for five years. In 2017 the picturesque hilltop town Candela in Puglia made international headlines (featured in the American \textit{CNN} and the British \textit{The Independent}), with the local council’s announcement that they would pay people to move there.\footnote{Julia Buckley, ‘Italian Mayor Offers 2000 Euro to Anyone Willing to Live in a Small Idyllic Village in Puglia,’ \textit{Independent} (19 October 2017), https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/italy-mayor-puglia-reward-anyone-willing-live-village-remote-small-candela-bormida-a8008876.html, (accessed 3 March 2018).} New families received two thousand euro as a bonus for relocating to Candela and subsidised fees on council taxes, childcare costs and bills. The first six northern Italian families settled in Candela in 2017. At the beginning of 2018, the small village of Macchiagodena in Molise inaugurated the program ‘Scuole Aperte’ (Open Schools), which provides financial incentives for families with school-aged children who choose to send their children to schools in the small community. The local council pays new families one hundred euro per month for each enrolled child and covers school lunch and transport fees.\footnote{BaiBlog, ‘A Macchiagodena scuole aperte per ripopolare il borgo’ (22 January 2018), http://www.baiblog.it/it-tema-della-settimana/a-macchiagodena-scuole-aperte-per-ripopolare-il-borgo/, (accessed 3 March 2018).} These are a small selection of the variety of initiatives enacted by local councils recently to incentivise the arrival of new residents and regeneration. In other parts of Europe, there is more emphasis placed on the transformation of abandoned sites into cultural places of convergence or research and education centres with the aim of rediscovering and promoting rural traditions. In Spain and Ireland for example, – two countries
profoundly affected by abandonment – they are experimenting with repopulation programs in neglected towns. In Ireland, the ‘Rural Resettlement Ireland’ (RRI) was born in 1990, a non-government organisation that seeks to promote the repopulation of some rural areas suffering abandonment. The RRI is involved in organising courses for preparing new arrivals for a rural lifestyle and educating existing inhabitants about the benefits of new residents.
Network Initiatives

The research and activism of some networks that act to regenerate abandoned towns and towns at risk of abandonment have played a vital role in amplifying sensibility and raising national awareness of the value of Italy’s neglected towns. They attempt to modify the condition of marginality of small communities by promoting their strong cultural and territorial identities as resources. The work of cultural networks in drawing attention to the enormous ongoing social, economic and environmental costs of abandonment has contributed to increased financial and popular support (public and private) to prevent the abandonment and decline of Italy’s towns and villages. In turn, the increased popular and political attention regarding the issue of abandonment and ghost towns has also empowered a variety of grassroots and state-supported initiatives that act to revive dwindling communities and abandoned architecture through events, site-specific projects and support networks.

There are a number of state-supported, network initiatives that support the protection, promotion and development of small villages that have been certified as having architectural, historical or natural patrimony. They aid cultural re-evaluation of historical centres through activating exchange between the local community and outside entities. The following section provides an insight into the main Italian networks involved in promoting and safeguarding towns at risk of abandonment. While these networks provide an effective service, they would undoubtedly benefit from a wider political territorial vision of areas that risk abandonment of Italy and of the formation of a comprehensive network of information, exchange and cooperation.343

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343 Paolella (ed), Disponibile! pp. 2.
Networks that act to promote villages at risk of abandonment

1996 RIVE- Rete Italiana Villaggi Ecologici

‘RIVE’ (The Italian Ecovillage Network), created in December 1996 aims at connecting, supporting and promoting experimental community projects based on solidarity, cooperation and environmental and economic sustainability called eco-villages. Entirely abandoned villages have been a popular choice for people seeking to establish an eco-village, and creating an ecovillage has proven to be a valid method for bringing ruined towns back to life. Some examples of abandoned villages converted into ecovillages include Corricelli, Torri Superiore, Upacchi, and Mogliazze.

www.ecovillaggi.it

1998 Bandiere Arancioni (Touring Club Italiano)

The Bandiere Arancioni (Orange Flags) is a hallmark of quality tourism awarded by the Touring Club Italiano to small towns in Italy (with a population not greater than 15,000 inhabitants), for excellence in historical, cultural and environmental heritage and for welcoming tourists. The idea originated in Sassello in Liguria, as a way to prevent abandonment in the region’s struggling hinterland. The distinctive trademark has since been promoted to a national level and involves over 184 villages. The project is part of the World Tourism Organisation and is a leading international example of sustainable tourism. Some previously abandoned reactivated communities have received the Orange Flag award including Airole, Calcata, Labro and Mondavio.

www.bandierearancioni.it

2000 Villaggi Della Tradizione (project)

Villaggi Della Tradizione is a European project involving rural settlements with a significant heritage value characterised by a definite connection to site-specific traditional activities, products and the natural environment and whose population actively participates in the safeguarding of these values. The project works to increase the flow of tourism in ‘off the tourist map’ locations, encourage cultural exchange between locals and newcomers and preserve endangered, centuries-old traditions. Visitors to a ‘Traditional Village’ can expect to find accommodation in one of the traditional houses in the historical centre and typical experiences and products connected to the
town’s environmental, cultural, architectural and culinary traditions. The Italian villages involved are Calabritto, Castelvetere sul Calore, Taurasi and Volturara.

www.villagesoftradition.it

2001 Borghi Più Belli D’Italia

In March 2001, the Consulta Del Turismo dell’Associazione dei Comuni Italiani (ANCI) decided that something needed to be done to valorise the great number of small Italian villages that, despite their great historical, artistic, cultural, traditional and environmental values, risk population decline and abandonment. The club I Borghi Più Belli D’Italia came to life to enhance the viability of worthy villages by protecting them and promoting them for tourism. The association admits towns with specific prerequisites. To become ‘One of Italy's Most Beautiful Towns’, it must have no more than 15000 inhabitants, possess nationally certified sites of cultural or environmental heritage, uniform architecture and seamless interaction between the village and its surrounding nature. The chosen Borghi must make an effort to maintain the beauty of village by rigorous cleanliness, authentic facades and well maintained public green spaces. Today the club includes 271 villages (2017) including some re-awakened abandoned villages such as Castelmezzano, Pietrapertosa, Colletta di Castelbianco and Santo Stefano di Sessanio.

www.borghipiubelliditalia.it

2003 Borghi Vivi®

Borghi Vivi® was created in 2003 by the Comunità Montagna Della Lunigiana in Tuscany as a model of sustainable local development with the purpose of revitalising villages, historical centres, rural villages and peripheral maritime villages in abandonment or at risk of being abandoned. The project focuses on reusing the town’s existing abandoned or underused buildings for tourism, craft workshops, small businesses, residential homes or essential services. The aim is to use these new spaces as a way of regenerating the landscape, environment, economy, society and culture of marginalised places. Borghi Vivi® is the evolution of a European funded pilot initiative at the end of the nineties with the same aims called ‘Villages d’Europe’. The lesson was that individual initiatives need to be inserted into a greater national network of valorisation and promotion to be successful. One previously abandoned village involved in this initiative is Sieti (Giffoni Sei Casali) in Campania.
The project ‘Aperti per Ferie’ (Open for holidays), envisioned and managed by UNPLI (Unione Nazionale Delle Pro Loco D’Italia), worked to save the existence of small towns and villages and incentivise their demographic and economic development. The programme operated in villages at risk of abandonment and directly collaborated with the local community to identify and promote local resources that could be attractive for tourism. Community members were directly involved in sharing with visitors the town’s specific cultural, architectural, culinary and environmental heritage. Between 2004 and 2005, Aperto per Ferie selected twenty localities with fewer than 2000 inhabitants and valuable characteristics and promoted these small villages in a tourist guidebook called ‘Il Turismo Dei Sogni’.

www.apertiperferie.it

Azione Matese

Azione Matese involved a series of initiatives to recuperate and regenerate abandoned villages in Campania that gravitate around three main projects: Urban Node, Art Village and a Centre for Environmental Education. The project led participatory workshops and performances involving local inhabitants as well as international participants and artists who joined together to alter the negative perception of places and generated ideas and energy on the possibility to reinvent them. The project is a successful example of how a temporary event can have a lasting positive impact. The project involved 15 towns and led to the recuperation and renovation of 40 living units converted into tourist accommodation. The project also gave birth to a workers union which aids over 70 small businesses in reception, artisanship, gastronomy, technical support and tourist operation. Azione Matese took place in the struggling and abandoned villages of Prata Sannita, Gallo Matese, Letino, Fontegreca and Capriati al Volturno.

www.milliondonkeyhotel.net

2008 (July) Borghi Srl.

Borghi Srl is a company created in July 2008, which advises, actively participate and promotes the
tourist and residential development of so-called ‘minor’ historical centres. The company recognises the underexploited cultural, traditional, historical and lifestyle authentic value of Italy’s villages and sees their recuperation and requalification for tourism and residential purposes as a key strategy in protecting the heritage value of these places, while also improving the economies of previously marginalised centres and providing previously unexploited investment opportunities. The company’s primary activities are business planning for the creation of alberghi diffusi, marketing initiatives, scouting and counselling for building development projects. Borghi Srl participated in the reawakening of several abandoned villages such as Casteldilago, Laino, Postignano, Vagli and Riccia.

www.iborghisrl.it/new/

2010 Borghi Solidali (Pro Pentedattilo Onlus)

The Agenzia dei Borghi Solidali has been working in the semi-abandoned and abandoned municipalities of Pentedattilo, Roghudi and Montebello in Calabria since 2010. The project is called I Luoghi Dell’accoglienza Solidale nei Borghi dell’Area Grecanica and involves a variety of associations. The Agenzia’s headquarters are in Pentedattilo in the Villa Placanica, a site confiscated from the mafia. They recuperate and reuse abandoned and confiscated buildings in the town’s centre for social uses such as the Botteghe Solidale, artisan workshops which create traditional products using traditional manufacturing methods, offering work to immigrants and disadvantaged locals. The focus is on promoting intercultural cooperation, legality and solidarity. Among the numerous initiatives in action, the Agenzia organises summer camps that attract hundreds of youth from all over the world each year. An increasing number of struggling villages are involved in the projects including Melito Porto Salvo, Montebello Jonico, Bagaladi, San Lorenzo, Roghudi (Nuovo) and Roccaforte.

http://www.esperienzeconilsud.it/luoghidell’accoglienzasolidale/scheda-del-progetto/

2010 Abarchive Associazione

Abarchive was born in 2010 as an academic enquiry into the topic of ‘dismissione’ (abandonment) of Italian villages. The project called ‘Geografie Dell’Abbandono’ adopted a meta-design methodology to map the widespread phenomenon of abandonment in the Italian hinterland (with a
focus on the region of Abruzzo), and to investigate the potential of abandoned villages as territorial assets. This was the first major academic project undertaken involving numerous scholars on the specific topic of investigating the potential of abandoned villages to become resources. The project used a variety of methods and produced a wide range of multifaceted datasets. The research has given birth to one project called ‘Civitella Del Tronto Cittadella del Consumo Critico’. Abarchive involves a variety of academics from the architecture and urban planning disciplines of the Politecnico di Milano and the Università di Camerino in Ascoli Piceno including Gennaro Postiglione, Lorenzo Bini, Agostino Petrillo, Michela Bassanelli, Marco Di Nallo, Marco Lampugnani and Elena Naldi.

www.abarchive.info

2011 Rete Tramontana

The Rete Tramontana (Tramontana Network) is a valuable cultural project that focuses on several European mountain rural areas and brings together seven different associations. It aims to conserve the site-specific languages and cultures of these regions that risk abandonment through researching, recording and sharing examples of language, culture, architecture and lifestyles. The project has undertaken 790 field surveys (linguistic, anthropological, ethnomusicological, and others). The collected materials which include photographs, written material sound and audio-visual documents and audio-video interviews, provide a rich database of information. The Tramontana Network has organised many conferences and four international forums in Italy, France and Portugal. The Network has also produced many scientific and popular articles, radio and television broadcasts and a project website with over 200 testimonies.

https://bambun.webnode.com/progetti-e-ricerche/tramontana/

2011 Rete del Ritorno (Ai Luoghi Abbandonati)

In 2011 a group of scholars of abandonment, cultural associations and an interested public met together for the first ‘National festival of Return to Abandoned Places.’ The convention took place at Paraloup - a reawakened abandoned village in the Alps. Two years later the nucleus had already met in many other abandoned places such as Irpinia, Calabria, Aquila and Riace, and formed a network ‘La Rete del Ritorno ai Luoghi Abbandonati’ officially presented to a public audience at the
Frigoriferi Milanesi the 19th of February 2013. The network's website publishes a range of contributions including theses, articles, reviews, interviews or stories, photos and videos regarding the topics of abandonment and ‘return.’ Their slogan is ‘Ritornare per Ripartire’ (Return to Restart). The renowned academics Vito Teti and Antonella Tarpino regularly contribute to the network. Other promoters include the Associazione Thara Rothas, Fondazione Nuto Revelli, Crissa-Centro Studi sullo Spopolamento Calabrese, Doppiozero, Comunità Provvisoria dell’Irpinia, Associazione Davide Lajolo, Terre di Mezzo Street Magazine, Re.Co.Sol and Rete Comuni Solidali.

www.retedelritorno.it

2015 Borghi Autentici D’Italia

The Association Borghi Autentici D’Italia (Italy’s Authentic Villages), is a network of small towns spread out across the Italian territory that have adopted an innovative model of local and tourist development called ‘Comunità Ospitale’ (Hospitable communities). A ‘hospitable community,’ stands out for taking outstanding care of its visitors and providing them with the tools and services they need to feel like locals.344 With the fund ‘Genius Loci’, the Association supports pilot initiatives for the requalification of public and privately owned urban heritage, the adoption of bio-architectural methods in building recuperation, the study of more efficient administrative processes, and the safeguarding of cultural identity, social cohesion and local manufacturing traditions. Each year the association organises a National Festival of Borghi Autentici and an annual competition ‘Di Borgo in Borgo’. Nearly 160 villages of varying dimensions are part of the ‘Borghi Autentici’ network. The Manifesto cites thirteen fundamental points: cohesion and community life, culture and identity, open and supportive communities, youth and future, local welfare, new technologies, urban streetscape in villages and territorial quality, hospitality and tourism, food and agriculture, artisanship and productive know-how, health and security, a sustainable future and governance. Re-awakened villages involved in this programme include Aliano, Calabritto, Comeglians, Riace, Sauris and Soandri.

www.borghiautenticiditalia.it

344 ‘Hospitable Communities’ is a new form of accommodation that seeks to treat visitors as ‘temporary citizens’. It is based on innovative tourist businesses that participate in the sustainable recuperation of the town’s public and private property and make a special effort to involve the whole community.
Part Two: Reawakening Italy’s Ghost Towns: A New Study and Database

Introduction

The second part of the thesis documents and analyses projects which have brought Italian ghost towns back to life. Unlike the networks we cited earlier, these programs focus on the revival or resurrection of only one particular village. The following chapters present a new database of fifty-one different re-awakening projects and ten detailed examples which reveal the principal actors, locations and historical development of the phenomenon of resurrecting derelict towns in Italy. The examples are divided and discussed according to the following strategies adopted so far in Italy for reviving her ghost towns: re-awakening through tourism, re-awakening through new business, re-awakening through repopulation and re-awakening through socio-cultural initiatives. Other specific information about each case is also presented to provide greater insight into each case and to aid comparative analysis of the different strategies found in chapter eight. Information such as who is involved – the main actors and specific protagonists, the kinds of modifications carried out and the ‘key themes’ of each revival project. The recording of specific dates relating to the town’s origins and abandonment and dates concerning the revival project – its beginning, evolution and inauguration, is another essential feature of the research. The following section explains the various terms used in the data sheets and cases.

Purpose for Re-awakening

<p>| Tourism | These are projects which have converted derelict towns to provide accommodation and related services for tourists. A variety of formulas have been used – some abandoned villages are transformed into exclusive luxury resorts, others recuperate a number of abandoned buildings in a semi-deserted town, converting them into an ‘Albergo Diffuso’ – an innovative kind of hotel whose accommodation rooms are not in one single block but spread out among the town’s buildings. Renovation projects that convert towns for tourism typically involve restoring not only the village’s housing but also the streetscape and provide the village with essential touristic services such as a restaurant. |
| New | In this case a business or company purchases and renovates the abandoned |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Businesses</th>
<th>village to manufacture a specific commodity or provide a particular service. This category includes internationally renowned and small-scale manufacturing businesses as well as public and private research institutes. Although there is still only a limited number of examples of reviving ghost towns for businesses not related to the tourism industry or property market, the few existing cases are all highly successful. The detailed examples in this section exemplify the importance of the global consumers which have contributed to the success of economic enterprises in isolated areas.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Communities or Repopulation</td>
<td>The resurrection or revival of an abandoned village can also happen thanks to the arrival of new residents who choose to relocate to and renovate either the whole town or individual houses. This category includes examples of neglected villages being newly colonised, either in the form of spontaneous repopulation processes or through the premeditated settlement of an entire village by a consolidated group. Repopulation is the most long-standing method of reawakening deserted towns, with some examples as early as the nineteen sixties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Cultural Initiatives</td>
<td>This category includes a wide range of projects that range from museums and cultural centres to town cooperatives and struggling villages that volunteer to house refugees. These projects recuperate abandoned towns for the promotion and recuperation of site-specific culture and traditions. Rather than resurrecting empty villages, social and cultural initiatives chiefly focus on preventing abandonment in communities in drastic socio-demographic decline. Socio-cultural initiatives require innovative use of abandoned spaces and the implementation of programs to improve the town’s economic and social services and the daily life of its inhabitants. This kind of reawakening often relies on the involvement of the local community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Projects envisioned and implemented by public institutions such as local councils or regional governing bodies. These projects rely primarily on federal funds (European and National).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Projects envisioned and implemented by private citizens, or private businesses and associations created ad-hoc for the specific purpose of purchasing, renovating and reusing the abandoned village. These projects involve the purchase and restoration of the whole town in question or a significant portion of it. Private investment is often directed towards the tourism industry or for new businesses. In the majority of cases, private investment is made by people who have a weak or no historical connection the village. Public funding often aids private investors that recuperate a ghost town.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Local Community Projects envisioned and implemented by the remaining residents of a moribund town or by neighbouring populations with attachment to the place. Renovation or reactivation takes a variety of paths including socio-cultural activities, artistic initiatives or tourism.

**Protagonists:** The name of the primary actors involved, this is sometimes the name of an individual, a cultural association, a business or a local council.

**Renovation Design**

All the villages that have been re-awakened for contemporary use required significant restorative intervention to reanimate them. At the time of initial interest and investment, they were all in moderate to advanced states of deterioration with severe structural damage. All the re-awakening projects have had to modify the original villages to some extent to make them viable for their new contemporary uses. Adaptations range from improving access to the ruined village (by removing invasive vegetation, clearing and fixing roads and pathways) to the physical restoration of the ruined village, the installation of modern technologies, and, in some case the resuscitation of endangered agricultural, artisan and culinary traditions. To be able to compare the alterations enacted by the various projects they are divided into categories identified in the preliminary research classified as conservative, innovative, or spontaneous.

Particular approaches to the renovation such as the adoption of bio-architecture methods, or traditional construction techniques and site-specific materials were also noted. Almost all projects equipped the new village with some form of new technology including anti-seismic architecture and contemporary communications technology such as the internet. Many projects have also adopted policies to make the renovation process and the renewed village more ecologically friendly. 'Green' adaptations include favouring the use of sustainable and local materials, incorporating more environmentally efficient systems - insulation, heating. An increasing number of projects have also installed technologies to produce sustainable energy in the form of solar, photovoltaic and geothermal systems – labelled as ‘green technology’. Some projects stand out for being energetically self-sufficient. This space also indicates whether the protagonists pursued a policy of exclusively using existing spaces or whether they extended the village's original layout and constructed...
additional buildings. We have also noted whether the project has reactivated any local ancient traditions (agriculture, artisan, culinary), and what kind.

**Key themes**

The success of each of the revival projects depends upon the favourable reception by both residents and visitors. A set of key strategies guides each project which varies depending on the purpose of the re-awakening. These themes are often highlighted in the promotion of the project to arouse interest in the place, event, product or service provided by the reawakened village. Projects emphasise what they believe to be the desirable qualities or features of the project to promote it. The reoccurring key themes adopted by the various revival projects and identified by the researcher are listed below.

- History – investment in historical research and conservation
- Unique – celebrates and accentuates the uniqueness of place
- Authentic – strong sense of genius loci, beyond architectural renovation, attempt to conserve the spirit of place
- Inclusive – acts as a normal village (permanently open to the public)
- Exclusive – acts as private property (can close to the public)
- Rurality – celebrate rural setting, opportunity to interact with rural process e.g. Organic farming
- Culture – Conservation, reactivation and promotion of local traditions and cultures
- Nature – Safeguard surrounding natural landscape
- Jobs – Increase local employment opportunities
- Experimental – Pioneering idea and a unique project with few precursors
- Km 0 – Prefers locally sourced products
- Innovation – emphasises the use of new technologies and innovative methods
- Global – the possibility to be simultaneously ‘isolated’ (physically) and ‘connected’ (virtually)
- Ecological sustainability – Favours green technology and sustainably sourced materials
- Luxury – provides guests with indulgent accommodation, products and experiences
- International - Predominantly international clientele
- Residents – to improve inhabitants’ daily life
- Quality of life – considered to provide visitors with high quality of life (food, relaxation,
- Philanthropic – invests in the social, cultural and economic growth of individuals and the wider community
- Cooperation – Relies upon the involvement of community members
- Events – hosts regular events
- Art-specific focus on the promotion and production of art in various forms
## Italy's Re-Awakened Ghost Towns - Synopsis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Description Project</th>
<th>Actors</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1. Airole</td>
<td>Liguria</td>
<td>repopulation</td>
<td>spontaneous repopulation by artists</td>
<td>private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Aliano</td>
<td>Basilicata</td>
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<td>literature park</td>
<td>public</td>
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<td>3. Bajardo</td>
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<td>borgo albergo' and residential</td>
<td>private &amp; public</td>
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<td>4. Bastia Creti</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Borgo Casa al Vento</td>
<td>Tuscany</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Borgo Finocchieto</td>
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<td>hotel village</td>
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<td>8. Borgo Santo Pietro</td>
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<td>9. Bussana Vecchia</td>
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<td>repopulation</td>
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<td>10. Calabritto (Quaglietta)</td>
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<td>11. Calcata</td>
<td>Lazio</td>
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<td>12. Calitri (Borgo Castello)</td>
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<td>Puglia</td>
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<td>14. Castelbasso</td>
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<td>20. Codeglia</td>
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<td>24. Labro</td>
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<td>25. Lanciano/Castelraimondo</td>
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<td>28. Montegridolfo</td>
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<td>Piemonte</td>
<td>repopulation</td>
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<td>Town</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Project Type</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
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<td>museum &amp; mountain hut</td>
<td>private &amp; public</td>
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<td>centre for advanced design and research</td>
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<td>tourism</td>
<td>albergo diffuso</td>
<td>private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stignano</td>
<td>Calabria</td>
<td>socio-cultural</td>
<td>housing for refugees</td>
<td>public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succiso</td>
<td>Emilia R.</td>
<td>socio-cultural</td>
<td>town cooperative</td>
<td>local community &amp; public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terravecchia</td>
<td>Calabria</td>
<td>socio-cultural</td>
<td>cultural events &amp; creative media institute</td>
<td>local community &amp; public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonda</td>
<td>Tuscany</td>
<td>tourism</td>
<td>luxury resort</td>
<td>private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torri Superiore</td>
<td>Liguria</td>
<td>repopulation</td>
<td>eco-village</td>
<td>private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upacchi</td>
<td>Tuscany</td>
<td>repopulation</td>
<td>eco-village</td>
<td>private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vagli (Borgo di Vagli)</td>
<td>Tuscany</td>
<td>repopulation</td>
<td>private residence club</td>
<td>private</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. 'Italy’s Re-Awakened Ghost Towns – an alphabetical list of towns revival projects
Itay's Re-Awakened Ghost Towns – Location

Map 2. ‘Map of Itay’s Re-Awakened Ghost Towns’
Map Key 2. ‘Map of Italy's Re-Awakened Ghost Towns’

Diagram 5. ‘Number of Projects Divided by Re-awakening Strategy’
Table 4. Number of Re-awakened Ghost Towns per Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuscany</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campania</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umbria</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liguria</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calabria</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abruzzo</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basilicata</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emilia Romagna</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friuli Venezia Giulia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazio</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marche</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piemonte</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puglia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lombardy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molise</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sardegna</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sicily</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valle D’Aosta</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veneto</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trentino Alto Adige</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A comparison of the regional spread of re-awakening projects with the data and maps regarding Italy’s ghost towns and population decline, demonstrates that the highest percentage of re-awakening projects were not implemented in the regions with the greatest number of ghost towns (Abruzzo, Liguria, Campania), nor the regions with the greatest difficulties with population decline (Calabria, Basilicata, Molise, Abruzzo, Sardegna). The greatest number of projects – twelve in total – were implemented in Tuscany. This is probably owing to the high tourist vocation of the region and because of its popularity with foreign second-homeowners. As early as 2013, 7.67% of accommodation in Tuscany’s small municipalities (with a population of under 5000 residents) was dedicated to tourism (farm-stay or bed and breakfast style accommodation), followed by Umbria with 5.52%. Tuscan still has a relatively high number of ghost towns (twenty-three), despite the high number of recuperation projects. Campania, Umbria and Liguria had the second highest number of recuperation projects with five in each region followed closely by Calabria with four. Another point to highlight is that most of the projects implemented in the central and northern regions were privately operated and those in the south were dominated by public and community-led initiatives. This point raises some questions (such as whether more economically

347 Atlante dei piccoli comuni 2015, ANCI. Data from January 2013.
advanced regions are more capable of attracting outsider investment), that do not enter the scope of the present thesis but which would be insightful to examine in future study.
Chapter 4. Re-awakening for Tourism

Dutch artist Van Mossevelde was the first to propose the idea of using a ghost town for tourism. His conversion of the deserted medieval hamlet Labro in the region of Lazio, into a niche tourist destination, began as early as 1968 but would not be finished until 2012. In the meantime, Tonda in Tuscany became the first rural village to be transformed into a luxury resort by the international company Hapimag between 1970 and 1975. This was the first example of what would later, beginning in the early 2000s, become a wave of transformations of rural towns into exclusive luxury holiday residences. Beginning with these first pioneering examples, tourism has since become the number one motivator for bringing abandoned communities back to life in Italy. New forms of niche tourism emerging recently have turned a spotlight on Italy's small neglected rural settlements and isolated hilltop towns, traditionally excluded from conventional tourist routes. An increasing number of tourists are swapping long-established tourist localities (such as famous seaside and mountain resorts, sizable historical cities, internationally renowned archaeological sites) in favour of less exploited destinations. The demands of a new clientele seeking 'sustainable', 'authentic', 'hidden', 'rural' and 'natural', have led to the rediscovery of Italy's small villages and ghost towns as potential tourist destinations. A significant flow of visitors in off-the-beaten-track parts of the country is creating new economic opportunities and has encouraged external investment in previously depressed areas. The idea of redirecting Italy's small neglected villages for tourism has even reached the innovative online rental service Airbnb, which recently decided to invest in twenty of them. In October 2017, in accord with MIBACT and ANCI, Airbnb identified twenty small neglected settlements (one per region), that would be given a prominent position on their website and in the international tourism and rental market. Some of the towns identified by Airbnb include Aieta in Calabria, Cividale del Friuli, Bitti in Sardegna and Torella del Sannio in Molise.

348 Ministro dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo (Minister of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism)
349 Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani (National Association of Italian Municipalities)
The variety of new forms of tourism in Italy that involve small communities and ghost towns (including rural tourism, eco-tourism, cultural tourism and the Italian concept of the ‘Albergo diffuso’), can all be collocated under the banner of sustainable tourism. A thorough definition of sustainable tourism is fundamental to be able to evaluate the practice of recuperating and re-using abandoned historical villages for tourism, concerning long-term impact and opportunity. The earliest definition of sustainable tourism can be found in the Brundtland Report of the World Commission Environment and Development instituted by The United Nations in 1987. This document states that ‘Tourist businesses are sustainable when they develop in such a way as to endure in a touristic area for an unlimited time, they do not alter the environment (natural, social and artistic), and they do not obstruct or hinder the development of other social and economic activities.’ A charter for Sustainable Tourism (the Charter of Lanzarote), was later drafted in 1995 by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation · UNESCO, the European Union, the World Tourism Organisation and the United Nations Environment Program at the first World Conference for Sustainable Tourism. This document set out the basic principles of sustainable tourism. It appeals to governments to establish plans for sustainable tourism, defining priorities and objectives and suggesting practical measures to be implemented. It also appeals to business operators and individual tourists urging them to adopt new behaviours to enable rational and responsible tourism. In 1996, the ‘World Travel and Tourism Council’ (WTTC) in conjunction with the World Tourism Organisation and the Earth Council defined sustainable tourism as that which ‘[...] meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, the Biological Diversity and the living systems.’

The World Tourism Organisation UNWTO provided the most recent set of guidelines for sustainable tourism in 2004. These management practices apply to all forms of tourism and all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various sectors of niche tourism. According to this document, to be included under the banner of sustainable development, a project must make

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352 Agenda 21 per l’industria viaggi e turismo: verso uno sviluppo sostenibile dal punto di vista Ambientale, 1996.
exceptional use of environmental resources, maintain essential ecological processes and facilitate the maintenance of natural resources and biodiversity. Sustainable tourism ventures should also demonstrate respect for the socio-cultural traditions of host communities by conserving the architectural heritage, lifestyle and culture and promote intercultural understanding and tolerance between existing and incoming populations. They should ensure long-term economic profitability with the benefits (including employment stability, ability to earn an income, and social services to host communities) distributed equitably among all social partners. Sustainability – which places ecological and socio-cultural compatibility and long-term profitability as its most essential features, must be considered of fundamental importance for tourism strategies in Italy’s small towns given that their popularity is primarily dependent upon the integrity of limited and irreproducible resources such as the beauty of the natural environment and cultural heritage. In fact, we will see that the concept of sustainability has played an essential role in the planning, renovation and new businesses of nearly all examples of this recent phenomenon.

Rural tourism is a particular branch of sustainable tourism in rapid evolution in Italy, stimulated by the increasing demand of a new type of consumer that rather than simply visiting a place, seeks an authentic experience of an alternative lifestyle. Given that the panorama of studies regarding this kind of tourism is fragmentary and composed of a multitude of reflections that draw on differing schools of thought and methodologies, there is no established definition for ‘rural tourism’ although the following insights can help us to identify its primary characteristics. 353 The European Commission provides a tautological description, as ‘any tourist activity that takes place in rural zones’. 354 In some cases, it is used indiscriminately to include all tourist-recreational businesses that are carried out in a rural area, in others it is reserved for those that are explicitly involved in farming, and the transformation of agricultural products. In 1994 the ‘Journal of Sustainable Tourism’ defined rural tourism as a business that integrates the allure of cultural heritage and demo-anthropologic features – such as history and economy – to environmental ones. 355 Lane identifies some typical features: 'it should be small-scale, allow for contact with the environment

354 (comma 88 501, 1986).
and nature, offer the tourist to help with or participate in traditional farming activities. In this description, the consumer’s involvement and interaction are seen as a fundamental aspect of the development of sustainable tourism.

Another branch of sustainable tourism that has become exceedingly important in Italy is cultural tourism, also known as ‘turismo dei borghi’ (village tourism), which is based on the valorisation of the natural, architectural and cultural resources of small villages and their surrounding areas. The popularity of this kind of tourism has also evolved thanks to the work of networks including ‘I Borghi Piu Belli d’Italia’ and ‘I Borghi Autentici d’Italia’, which promote sites of cultural heritage as points of departure for sustainable growth. The concept of cultural heritage (no longer associated solely with exceptional monuments), has expanded to embrace small historical settlements as well as intangible components such as traditional knowledge about objects, places, the environment and nature. This new perspective has led to a reevaluation of wrongly disdained towns as carriers of an immense historical-architectural and landscape heritage. The objective of cultural tourism is to contrast the progressive impoverishment of rural zones and the abandonment of small villages by promoting them for tourism. It also guarantees the maintenance of monuments and memories that would otherwise be lost. Strategies of communication and promotion are based on the idea of strategic positioning; targeted at a niche audience interested in alternative travel destinations. Cultural tourism has played an important role in altering the previously negative perception of neglected towns to such a great extent that today they are considered the ‘eccelenze turistiche’ of the Italian peninsula.

One of the most popular methods for regenerating abandoned towns through cultural tourism in Italy is the concept of Albergo Diffuso. Albergo Diffuso; translated in English as ‘scattered’, ‘diffused’ or ‘horizontal’ hotel - is an innovative concept of hospitality in which the hotel’s structures (its rooms, restaurant, common spaces and reception), are distributed among existing buildings in the town’s historic centre, rather than in a single block. It was envisioned as a strategy to promote and revive small towns with artistic and architectural valuable historical centres but which are neglected by popular tourist routes and suffer from population decline and economic stagnation.

\[\text{iibid. p. 9}\]
Italian poet and writer - Leonard Zainer, was the first to propose the idea of converting abandoned homes for tourist accommodation during the reconstruction following the disastrous earthquake that hit Friuli Venezia Giulia in 1976. An early pilot project with the name ‘Albergo Diffuso’, was designed in Comeglians (Borgo Maranzano) in 1982 directed by the architect Carlo Tosen; however, it was only in 1994 that the first Albergo Diffuso came to life in Sauris – a community nearby. The small town of Bosa in Sardegna followed suit in 1995 and, in 1998, Sardegna was the first Italian region to formally recognise and regulate the Albergo Diffuso model. Tourism marketing professor at the University of Perugia - Giancarlo dall’Ara, is attributed with being the ‘creator’ of the Albergo Diffuso model, having promulgated and defined the concept and formed the National Association of Alberghi Diffusi the 15th of June 2006. The Association seeks to promote and support the various experiences and to certify and protect the Albergo Diffuso brand name. An Albergo Diffuso must offer guests an experience of genuine community life in the historical centre of a village as well as typical hotel services including assistance, catering, and accommodation, all within a distance of 200m from the reception and common spaces. It provides the tourist with the opportunity to be a part of the community, to mix with residents rather than only tourists like in a traditional hotel. It is also an environmentally sustainable tourism strategy which does not require new construction but readapts existing abandoned buildings. It is a way of conserving and celebrating the uniqueness and authenticity of Italy’s small villages. An Albergo Diffuso can stimulate economic and social initiatives in a struggling town and can provide a focal point for a variety of local businesses because it involves local producers and artisans as key attractive elements. The concept of the Albergo Diffuso has since spread to other countries with Switzerland, Croatia and Corsica. (Today the popular accommodation website Airbnb – created in October 2007, provides a similar service.) According to Dall’Ara, foreign tourists make up 71% of the guests in Italy’s Alberghi Diffusi. At the beginning of 2018, the official number of structures included in the National Association of Alberghi Diffusi was ninety-four. This number is expected to grow given that the number of Alberghi Diffusi in Italy increases every year. Sardegna is the region with the highest number of Alberghi Diffusi.

358 Ibid., pp. 99-104.
(twelve) followed by Lazio (ten) and Tuscany (nine). Italy’s northern areas are the least represented with only Lombardy (five) and Friuli Venezia Giulia (four) with a modest number of structures. The following table provides an insight into the spread of Alberghi Diffusi across the different Regions. It is also an environmentally sustainable tourism strategy. The most recent abandoned villages converted into an Albergo Diffuso is Codeglia (a project which began in 2006 but only opened in 2017).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sardegna</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umbria</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lombardy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campania</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piemonte</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazio</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marche</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puglia</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abruzzo</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trentino. A.A.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuscany</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molise</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emilia. R</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calabria</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veneto</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sicily</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basilicata</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friuli V.G</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liguria</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valle D’Aosta</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table. Number 5. Alberghi Diffusi per Region belonging to the Associazione Nazionale Alberghi Diffusi (01/02/2018)

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361 data from the Associazione Nazionale Alberghi Diffusi website: http://www.alberghidiffusi.it/, (accessed 01/02/2018).
Re-awakening through Tourism - Examples

Bastia Creti (Umbria)

*A fourteenth-century hamlet converted into a five-star luxury resort*

![Image of Borgo Bastia Creti](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>14th century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Urban Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>Late 1990s (Wirth family purchase Borgo di Bastia Creti), Renovations beginning in 2009 - Ongoing (Luxury Resort)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Borgo di Bastia Creti</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Tourism: Luxury resort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private (foreign project, predominantly international clientele)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Roberto Wirth (owner) and Peter Wirth (manager) (fifth generation luxury hoteliers)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Renovation Design</th>
<th>Conservative - minor extensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Luxury, Exclusive, Km0, Rurality, International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bastiacreti.it">www.bastiacreti.it</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bastia Creti is a small rural hamlet built in the 1400s on the border between Tuscany and Umbria. In ancient maps, it is called Bastia di Croce.\(^{362}\) When fifth-generation luxury hoteliers - brothers Peter and Robert Wirth - first visited the country village, it was already empty due to urban migration in the 1960s. The brothers purchased and renovated the village buildings including its church, creating five spacious private residences and a variety of shared spaces. The project favoured a mix of traditional decoration such as ancient terracotta tiles and modern fixtures including large glass windows. The Wirth brothers also equipped the rustic town with a pool, tennis courts, barbeque area and over six acres of private gardens. Today Borgo Bastia Creti is a luxury, five-star holiday destination providing its guests with private catering, cooking classes, truffle

hunting, and wine tours. The hotel employs some local families as caretakers and has a predominantly international clientele.\footnote{Borgo Bastia Creti Luxury Resort, \textit{Luxury Resort in Umbria}, http://www.bastiacreti.it/, (accessed 2 January 2017)}

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**Borgo Cardigliano (Puglia)**

*Redundant tobacco village becomes resort run entirely by green energy*

Cardigliano is a rural settlement located in Salento - the most easterly province of the Italian peninsula. An ancient underground oil press from the Bronze age and archaeological remains of the Messapian occupation between 250–90BC testify to the village's ancient origins however the first official documentation of the town is in an Aragonese document dated 1452 regarding its exchange

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>250–90 BC, first mentioned 1452</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1970s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Obsolescent local economy (end of the monopoly on tobacco - town’s main economic resource)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>1990 - 28th September (project for the recuperation of the village approved and funded) 1991 – 2013 (albergo diffuso, agriturismo) 2013 (administration problems leading to re-abandonment) 2018 (plans to re-open with new management)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Hotel Borgo Cardigliano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Tourism: Albergo Diffuso / Agriturismo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Specchia local council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - minor extensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Luxury, Ecological Sustainability (energetically self-sufficient), Rurality, Jobs, Exclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.comune.specchia.le.it/territorio/da-visitare/item/cardigliano">www.comune.specchia.le.it/territorio/da-visitare/item/cardigliano</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of ownership. Cardigliano expanded between 1920 and 1930 under the fascist rule and became an essential point of reference for the local tobacco industry. More than 100 people lived in the village at this time, and over 600 employees migrated there daily. After the Second World War a strong phenomenon of emigration and the end of the monopoly of tobacco – the town’s primary economic resource meant that by the 1970s, the town was empty. In 1990 the local council of Specchia purchased the abandoned settlement and initiated a long process of restoration and renovation to convert the ruined buildings into a tourist centre with accommodation, a restaurant (serving local specialities) and a pool. The renovation project maintained the town’s original layout and recuperated the town’s old post office, cemetery and church – which is available for wedding services. It is entirely powered by green energy financed by the Environmental Ministry as a pilot project. The newly created resort had some administration problems beginning in 2013 leading to its re-abandonment. The Cardigliano Resort should reopen with new management in 2018.

**Borgo Casa al Vento (Tuscany)**

*From global manager to local Farmer: Francesco Giofredda returns to Tuscany to give an abandoned rural hamlet new life as an organic olive oil and wine farm*

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365 Ibid.

366 Ibid.


Borgo Casa al Vento is a small thirteenth-century rural hamlet located in the Gaiole territory hills in the Chianti region – famous for the cycling competition ‘Eroica’. Abandoned because of emigration in the 1960s, Casa al Vento was purchased and renovated by the Giofredda family in the early 1990s. At the beginning of the 2000s the family first opened their winery and newly renovated tourist accommodation to the public. The renovation project accentuated the traditional character of the buildings such as stonewalls, exposed wooden beams, and terracotta tiled floors. Guests can access spa services, cooking classes, winery tours and wedding receptions. The village hosts a Km0 restaurant that prepares traditional Tuscan cuisine based exclusively on local produce. In 2008 the family decided to convert the olive and grape production to organic farming methods and produce organic oil and wine which guests can buy onsite or online.

In an interview with journalist Matteo Putti, Francesco Giofredda provided some insights regarding the revival of Casa a Vento. First he acknowledged the challenge involved saying ‘When my dad bought the Borgo in the early nineties, many thought it was an impossible challenge. The houses were dilapidated, and the surrounding land was in a state of total abandonment. It was quite hard to believe it would be possible to bring the past splendour of the place back.’ Giofredda also would like to see more cooperation among local farm-tourism ventures saying that through collaborating and forming associations, it ‘could help to contain the monopoly of global travel websites that tend to standardize the tourist offer, even in areas like the Chianti, where this should not be happening. [...]This is the most important lesson that local businesses must learn: to overcome feelings of envy and fear towards their neighbours, and recognise the great opportunities that come with being united.’ And finally, he offers an unorthodox idea in the new world of tourism when he states, ‘my dream is to re-educate my guests by offering a ‘detox’ vacation, starting right with

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renouncing to WI-FI connection for a day, and accepting that if the room doesn’t have a TV it’s a good thing, not a bad one.’

**Borgo Finocchieto (Tuscany)**

*Dilapidated hamlet becomes a luxury resort*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>14th century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1950s (last remaining inhabitant departed 1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Urban migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>2001 (purchased by American John Phillips) 2001 – 2008 (hotel renovations), 2008 - Spring (Hotel Village opened)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Borgo Finocchieto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Tourism: Hotel Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private (foreign project, predominantly international clientele)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>John Phillips (American lawyer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - minor extensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Luxury, Rurality, Exclusive, International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.borgofinocchieto.com">http://www.borgofinocchieto.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Borgo Finocchieto is a fourteenth-century rural village in the Tuscan countryside near Bibbiena in the Province of Siena. The original, tightly knit community of sharecroppers progressively abandoned the town beginning in the 1950s with the last inhabitant departing in the 1980s. Renowned American lawyer and former U.S Ambassador to Italy (2013 – 2017), John Phillips discovered the ruined village in 2001 and immediately decided to invest in its recuperation. In a press release, he admitted ‘The whole place was dilapidated, but there was such tranquillity,’ he said, ‘I’d never heard quiet like that. You could see it had amazing potential.’ Phillips purchased the village in 2001. Renovations took place between 2001 and 2008. Renovations respected the

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original design, methods and materials of the original town and were undertaken by a local architect and local builders - specialised in traditional building methods and materials. The Hotel Village ‘Borgo Finocchieto’ – with 22 bedrooms arranged around a central piazza, opened in Spring 2008. Common spaces include a formal dining hall, an outdoor dining terrace and courtyard, a media room and library, a living room with study and grand piano, a cantina and wine tasting room, a bar and a conference facility and ballroom accommodating up to 70 people. Recreational facilities include a fully equipped gym, a 60-foot swimming pool, spa, tennis and basketball and bocce courts.375

Scopeto (Tuscany)

Abandoned village transformed into a Luxury Hotel focusing on local produce – and used in Feature Film

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>11th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Urban migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Borgo Scopeto Relais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Tourism: Luxury hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private (Italian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Italian entrepreneur and wine expert Elisabetta Gaudi Angelini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - minor extensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Luxury, Ecological Sustainability, Km0, Exclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.borgoscopetorelais.it/">www.borgoscopetorelais.it/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Borgo Scopeto is a village built in the eleventh century in the Chianti wine hills overlooking the Tuscan city of Siena. Owned by the illustrious Sozzini family for over five centuries, Scopeto suffered the same fate of the surrounding rural villages with population decline, as its inhabitants

375 Borgo Finocchietto, ‘About the Borgo’.
migrated to urban areas following World War Two. Italian entrepreneur and wine connoisseur Elisabetta Gnudi Angelini purchased the town in 1995. Renovations took place between 1998 and 2006, creating fifty-eight guest rooms and suites from the original village buildings as well as a restaurant that serves locally sourced products and traditional Tuscan cuisine. The property also has two pools, a gym and a luxury spa - with a line of organic beauty products made from the estate's olive oil. The property covers an area of 504 hectares with 70 hectares dedicated to winemaking grapes and 50 hectares devoted to oil producing olives. The villages cover an area of six hectares, and a natural forest covers the remaining 350 hectares. Hollywood director Gary Winick chose the resort as one of the principal locations for the movie 'Letters to Juliet' filmed in 2010.

San Felice (Tuscany)

Medieval village becomes first luxury resort in the Chianti Classico hills

San Felice is a medieval village located in Castelnuovo Berardenga near Siena in Tuscany, with

origins that date back to the fourteenth-century. By 1979, when the German insurance company Gruppo Allianz purchased Borgo San Felice, it was already in a state of advanced decline having been abandoned by its former residents in the nineteen sixties. Extensive Renovations took place between 1978 and 1991 to convert the ancient dwellings and estate into the first (of what would become a long list), of luxury resorts in the Chianti Classico hills. The ancient village turned five-star hotel and ‘wine resort’ has twenty-five rooms and twenty-four suites spread out across the town’s original, renovated buildings. The architects outfitted the complex with the necessary ingredients of a modern luxury resort including two restaurants (one with a Michelin star), a bar, a pool, a gym, tennis courts, a helipad and a spa surrounded by the village’s winery and olive grove. The resort also boasts two conference rooms (with seats for 120 people), each equipped with innovative telecommunications technology. The resort hosts a predominantly international clientele.

### Borgo Santo Pietro (Tuscany)

*Rural village in Ruins becomes a five-star luxury hotel*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>13th - 14th Centuries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Urban migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>2001 (purchased by Jeanette and Claus Thottrup) 2001-2010 (renovations and a new building for Luxury five-star Hotel), 2008 (first suites open to the public)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Relais Borgo Santo Pietro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Tourism: Luxury Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private (foreign project, predominantly international clientele)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Danish entrepreneurs Jeanette and Claus Thottrup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - significant extensions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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379 Ibid.
Santo Pietro is a rural, two hundred acre estate in Chiusdino near Siena. The village’s villa dates back to the thirteenth century, while the other buildings were constructed in the fourteenth century. When Danish entrepreneurs Jeanette and Claus Thottrup purchased the village in 2001, it was already in a state of advanced decline, its original inhabitants having emigrated to urban areas after World War Two. Renovations on the original buildings and the construction of a new building in traditional style to host the resort’s spa took place between 2001 and 2010, although the Relais Borgo Santo Pietro’s first suites opened to the public in 2008. Thirteen acres of landscaped gardens with over 300,000 freshly planted trees, shrubs and flowers, surround the renovated settlement. The estate’s organic vegetable garden supplies their Michelin star restaurant and a more informal trattoria, based on the ‘farm to plate’ philosophy. A boutique cantina offers local organic speciality wines. Guests can participate in a variety of activities – horse riding, sports, cooking classes, onsite cooking and painting classes with local experts and resident artists. The resort also makes a range of natural skincare from the Borgo’s honey, herbs and sheep’s milk. The Borgo has been awarded numerous prizes including second place in the prestigious Condé Nast Traveller’s award for Top Resorts in Europe in 2016.

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Borgo Giusto, ‘Soccolognora’ (Tuscany)

Stone hamlet transforms into Luxury hotel village, Spa and Conference Centre

Village Origins
17th century

Abandonment
1950s

Cause for Abandonment
Emigration

State of Abandonment
Total

Re-awakening Timeline

Project Name
Borgo Giusto

Strategy
Tourism: Luxury Hotel Village/Spa & Conference Centre

Actors
Private (Italian)

Protagonists
Architect Stefano Montemagni, Owner Eraldo Gaffino

Renovation Design
Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture

Key Themes
Ecological Sustainability, Luxury, Nature, Exclusive, International, Km0, Global

Website
http://borgogiusto.com

Borgo Giusto is a medieval stone hamlet built in the 1600s, nestled in the Tuscan hills. The village’s original name in the seventeenth century was Soccolognora, which later became Borgo Giusto – inspired by the surname of its original owners – the Giusti family.\textsuperscript{383} The village was abandoned in the 1950s because of emigration. Some of the ex-inhabitants moved to urban centres close by, but many migrated to England and Scotland where their descendants still live today.\textsuperscript{384} In 1995 journalist and economist Eraldo Gaffino – who lives in Rome but grew up in Partigliano, a town near Borgo Giusto – purchased the entire village. Between 1995 and 2000 architect Stefano Montemagni renovated the town to its original form adopting a strictly conservative restoration design and green principles. Solar and photovoltaic sources power Borgo Giusto during the summer and a sustainable supply of locally produced wood during the winter months. The village has a restaurant with a strictly km0 philosophy. The Internet is accessible from the whole complex. Today Borgo Giusto is a luxurious hotel village with a Spa and Conference Centre.\textsuperscript{385}

\textsuperscript{384} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{385} Ibid.
Casteldilago (Umbria)

*Castle town revitalised through property sales and ceramics museum*

![Image](image_url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>9th – 10th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1950s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Emigration - earthquake in September 1997 damaged historical buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>1997 (post-earthquake reconstruction) 2004 – 2009 (Albergo diffuso)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>La Meridiana Albergo Diffuso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Tourism &amp; Real Estate: Albergo diffuso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Public &amp; private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Arrone local council, Cooperative Ergon and the Casteldilago Pro-locotch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Culture, Residents, Authentic, Inclusive, Quality of Life, Events, Jobs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Founded between the ninth and tenth centuries, the walled castle town Casteldilago is located on a rocky outcrop in the national park 'Fluviale del Nera' and is part of the municipality of Arrone. In 2009 the council of Arrone (in collaboration with the coop Ergon and the Pro-Loco), completed a five-year-long conservative restoration of the entire historic town. The aim was to revitalise the area's socio-economic and cultural value by integrating the borgo with the surrounding landscape, reactivating local artisanship and promoting the area's site-specific culture through tourism and property sales. The restoration works renovated 14 homes (12 of which were ready for sale), recuperated the churches San Valentino and San Nicola and restored their 13th and 14th century alfresco paintings. The project also involved the creation of an albergo diffuso, a restaurant and a bar, as well as a cultural centre that hosts a ceramics exhibition and an artisan workshop.

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Toscana Resort Castelfalfi (Tuscany)

International sale brings Luxury International Resort to medieval village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>7th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Urban migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Toscana Resort Castelfalfi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Private (foreign project, predominantly international clientele)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Entrepreneur Virginio Battenta, post-2007 sold to German company TUI AG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - significant extensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Luxury, Exclusive, Quality of Life, Nature, Global, International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.castelfalfi.com/">http://www.castelfalfi.com/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The abandoned medieval village Castelfalfi, along with its castle and surrounding land, was purchased in 1982 by the Milanese entrepreneur Virginio Battenta, who slowly began restoring the village between legal battles regarding the previous ownership. In 2007 the whole village was sold to the German company TUI AG. The project to convert the village into a luxury international resort began in 2011 amid some controversy regarding the development proposal which projected the building of new buildings along with the restoration of the original village. The resort opened its doors on 7 June 2014.

387 See. Detailed Example ‘Castelfalfi’
Castelvetere sul Calore (Campania)

*Niche culinary tourism*

| Village Origins | 10th Century |
| Abandonment | 1960s - 70s |
| Cause for Abandonment | Urban migration (newer section of town on the plain below) |
| State of Abandonment | Partial |
| Re-awakening Timeline | 1996 (receives public funding for restoration) 2007 (part of the project ‘I Villaggi Della Tradizione’), 2013 Albergo Diffuso Opens |
| Project Name | Borgo di Castelvetere Albergo Diffuso |
| Strategy | Tourism: Albergo diffuso |
| Actors | Public |
| Protagonists | Comunità Montana Terminio Cervialto |
| Renovation Design | Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture |
| Key Themes | Culture, Residents, Authentic, Inclusive, Quality of Life, Events, Jobs |
| Website | www.borgodicastelvetere.it |

Castelvetere sul Calore is a tenth-century village in the province of Avellino in Campania. The small town is famous for being one of the first communities to build its cemetery outside of the city's walls (before it became law under Saint Cloud). Castelvetere sul Calore was one of the 21 villages involved in the project ‘I Villaggi Della Tradizione’ that began in 2007. Its aim was to create an integrated network of tourism based on the valorisation of the area’s rich cultural heritage and the recuperation of abandoned buildings to provide infrastructure for niche culinary tourism.

Inaugurated in July 2013 after nearly twenty years of starting and stopping (the project received its first funding in 1996), today the hotel sleeps 52 in 17 apartments and includes a conference hall for 70 guests and a restaurant-bar that promotes local produce and traditions. It is a pioneering example in Campania regarding tourism based exclusively on the recuperation of existing abandoned buildings.

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Castiglioncello del Trinoro 'Monteverdi' (Tuscany)

A vision for a place 'unlike any other'

Village Origins 13th Century
Abandonment 1960s
Cause for Abandonment Urban migration
State of Abandonment Extreme: eight remaining residents
Re-awakening Timeline 2005 (Michael Cioffi begins purchasing and restoring the village's buildings) 2005–present (Luxury Resort)
Project Name Monteverdi Tuscany
Strategy Tourism: Luxury resort
Actors Private (foreign project, predominantly international clientele)
Protagonists American lawyer and academic Michael Cioffi and Italian architect and interior designer Ilaria Miani
Renovation Design Conservative - moderate extensions
Key Themes Luxury, Exclusive, Quality of Life, Nature, Global, International, Art, History

Castiglioncello del Trinoro in a rural Tuscan town in the province of Siena. In 2005, when the village had lost all but eight of its original inhabitants, American lawyer and academic Michael Cioffi began purchasing and restoring the village’s empty buildings. The restoration project provided the town with tourist accommodation in the form of rooms and private villas, an Artists and Scholars in Residence program, a spa, contemporary art gallery, a fine-dining restaurant, a wine bar, sleek lounge and privately sponsored archaeological dig. When Cioffi was asked about his experience of discovering the neglected town he said, ‘It was like stepping back in time,’ he recalls, ‘like coming back to rediscover your lover, albeit a little tarnished. I had found this place of quietude – an ideal place for thinking, for conversation, for the arts and the humanities. […] My vision for Monteverdi was to create a place unlike any other,’ explains Cioffi. ‘A place of incomparable beauty, stunning architecture and design, all further complemented by the cultural amenities of art, music and the
Codeglia (Liguria),

*Abandoned medieval settlement close to Cinque Terre comes back to life as an Albergo Diffuso*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>14th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Emigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Extreme: five remaining families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>2005 (European Union funds project for Albergo Diffuso), 2006 - 2007 (renovations suspended for several years due to problems related to electricity connection), 2017 (Albergo diffuso)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Borgo di Codeglia Resort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Tourism: Albergo diffuso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Antonio Fabbri della ‘Teknika’, Architect Francesco Moscatelli, local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Innovative - bio-architecture, exclusive use of existing architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Residents, Authentic, Quality of Life, Jobs, Nature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2005 the council of Riccò del Golfo in Liguria announced a public request for the design, renovation and a thirty-year management lease for the small medieval settlement Codeglia. Despite being only 10 km distance from the famous tourist destination Le Cinque Terre, the tiny village built in the 1300s was almost empty - the vast proportion of its historical residents having migrated after the Second World War. The winning idea was an Albergo Diffuso to be managed by Codeglia’s eleven remaining inhabitants. Financed by the European Union, a group of businesses including the Teknika Group under the direction of architect Francesco Moscatelli renovated the town’s buildings according to ecological principles while maintaining its original characteristics, materials and structure between 2006 and 2007. Today the Borgo di Codeglia Resort can host up to sixty guests and the hotel’s restaurant (which is also the reception), seats fifty-five. A multimedia library, new

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Monteverdi Castiglioncello del Trinoro Tuscany, *Michael L. Cioffi*,
internet connection and improved transport services have given a new possibility to the historic ghost town.

Comeglians (Friuli Venezia Giulia)

‘Albergo Diffuso’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>13th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>73% population decline between 1951 (1947 inhabitants) and 2012 (532 inhabitants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Urban migration post-1950, earthquake 1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>1978 (Decision by Leonard Zanier to revive Comeglians) 1982 (‘Progetto Pilota Comeglians’), 1999 (Cooperativa Albergo Diffuso Comeglians formed), 2001 – March 10th (‘Albergo diffuso Comeglians’ opened)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Albergo Diffuso Comeglians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Tourism: Albergo Diffuso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private &amp; public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Leonardo Zanier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Culture, Residents, Jobs, History, Unique, Authentic, Events, Quality of Life, Km0, Nature, Inclusive, Experimental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="https://www.albergodiffuso.it/it/comeglians">https://www.albergodiffuso.it/it/comeglians</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When academic Leonard Zanier first decided in 1978 to implement a revival plan for the thirteenth-century village Comeglians, the town was already in steep decline, battered by profuse post-war emigration and a disastrous earthquake in the same year. In 1982 in collaboration with the Politecnico of Zurig, Zainer created the ‘Comeglians Pilot Project’ that proposed an ingenious strategy to reverse the town’s continual decline. They presented an innovative idea of renovating and converting the abandoned houses and buildings into tourist accommodation - an original hotel whose rooms are not centrally located but spread out across the village. They coined the concept of ‘Albergo Diffuso’ - what has today become the leading strategy in Italy for re-awakening abandoned towns. After many years of stopping and starting, finally, on 10 March 2001, the Albergo Diffuso Comeglians opened its doors. The cooperative Cooperativa Albergo Diffuso Comeglians (born in 1999), played an essential role in transforming the town’s abandoned homes into guest
accommodation and managing the hotel and associated cultural, environmental and social activities.

I Sassi di Matera, [Rione Civita] (Basilicata)

*Cave dwelling at a World Heritage Site*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>Neolithic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Eviction - poor sanitary conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>1986 (law to permit renovation) 2006 – 2009 (Albergo diffuso)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Sextantio Grotte della Cività</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Tourism: Albergo Diffuso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private (Italian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Entrepreneur Daniel Kihlgren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Innovative - modern architecture and decoration were removed, signs of passing time were enhanced, exclusive use of existing architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Culture, Residents, Jobs, Nature, Unique, Authentic, History, Global, Experimental, Exclusive, Km0, Luxury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://legrottedellacivita.sextantio.it/en/">http://legrottedellacivita.sextantio.it/en/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 'Sassi' has been the object of renovation and re-use projects connected to the cultural valorization of the historical centre and the rehabilitation of the residential and commercial spaces that allow 'normal' use of spaces - avoiding a process of musealisation. Kihlgren has applied the successful Albergo Diffuso method in a similar project in the historic 'Sassi' of Matera, a UNESCO World Heritage Site characterized by the widespread presence of cave dwellings inhabited by the poor up until the sixties. The complex *Le Cave della Cività* is located the Parco della Murgia within caves in the cliff above the river, divided into 18 rooms with a shared space and reception in an ancient cave church. The unique architectural setting of the Sassi and the complexity of its history and the stark minimalism practised by its previous inhabitants meant that the restoration project undertaken here proved to be even more complex than that undertaken in Santo Stefano.
Labro (Lazio)

*Authentic town renovation*

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**Village Origins**  
10th Century

**Abandonment**  
65% population decline between 1931 (831 inhabitants) and 1991 (293 inhabitants)

**Cause for Abandonment**  
Emigration due to inadequate infrastructure

**State of Abandonment**  
Total

**Re-awakening Timeline**  
1968 (Belgian Architect Mossvelde decides to invest in Labro)  
1968 – 2017 (Town hotel)  
2012 (Albergo diffuso Crispolti opens)

**Project Name**  
Albergo Diffuso Crispolti

**Strategy**  
Tourism: Albergo Diffuso

**Actors**  
Private (foreign project, predominantly international clientele)

**Protagonists**  
Belgian architect Ivan Van Mossevelde, Countess Ottavia Nobili-Vitelleschi

**Renovation Design**  
Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture

**Key Themes**  
Culture, Residents, Jobs, History, Unique, Authentic, Events, Quality of Life, Km0, Nature, Inclusive

**Website**  
[www.albergodiffusocrispolti.com](http://www.albergodiffusocrispolti.com)

Labro is a scenic tenth-century fan-shaped hilltop village in the shadow of the Terminillo mountain chain overlooking the lake of Piediluco in the province of Rieti. Labro was famous for being at the centre of numerous battles in the medieval period. Gradually abandoned over the 20th century and entirely abandoned by the 1950s, Labro became the first ‘resurrected’ abandoned town of Lazio. In 1968, Belgian architect Van Mossevelde discovered Labro and accepted the challenge proposed by one of the town’s patrons the Countess Ottavia Nobili-Vitelleschi, to rejuvenate the abandoned village back to life. Van Mossevelde devised a project based on the exclusive use of traditional building methods and materials and, beginning in 1970, renovated the village back to its original form. In 2012 Van Mossevelde opened his own albergo diffuso (L’Albergo Diffuso Crispolti) in the restored town. He said that he was profoundly touched by Labro’s ‘architectural uniformity and homogeneity […] with its introverted but protective character, the strong sensation of peace and
Lanciano/ Castelraimondo (Marche)

Rural town becomes luxury Spa and research centre

Village Origins 19th Century
Abandonment 1950s
Cause for Abandonment Urban migration
State of Abandonment Total
Re-awakening Timeline 2000 (purchased by entrepreneurs Vittorina e Giovanni Zuffellato)
          2000 – 2008 (Renovation) 2008 (Luxury resort, spa and albergo diffuso ‘Relais Benessere Borgo Lanciano’ opened)

Project Name Borgo Lanciano
Strategy Tourism: Luxury Resort, Spa & Albergo diffuso
Actors Private (Italian)
Protagonists Entrepreneurs Vittorina e Giovanni Zuffellato
Renovation Design Conservative, Bio architecture - significant extensions
Key Themes Luxury, Nature, History, Exclusive
Website http://www.borgolanciano.it/en/

Lanciano is a medieval rural town built at the foot of the hill of the fourteenth century Castle Lanciano in the municipality of Castelraimondo. Ferrarese Entrepreneurs Vittoria e Giovanni Zuffellato purchased the abandoned village in 2000 and converted it into an exclusive luxury spa hotel. The renovation project took eight years and resulted in a four-star hotel with 49 rooms and one suite, a state of the art wellness centre and related research centre, a restaurant and a conference hall. ‘Relais Benessere Borgo Lanciano’ opened in 2008 and has since contributed to growth in local employment and tourism in the area which was previously excluded from the tourist market.

Montegridolfo (Emilia Romagna)

*Italian stylist Alberta Ferretti gives abandoned hamlet a makeover*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>13th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Emigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>1988 (purchase by stylist Alberta Ferretti and co-investors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1988 – 1994 (Luxury hotel and town recuperation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Relais Palazzo Viviani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Tourism: Luxury Hotel &amp; Town recuperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private (Italian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Italian Stylist Alberta Ferretti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Luxury, History, Authentic, Residents, Culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1988 the Italian stylist Alberta Ferretti and some co-investors purchased the medieval hilltop castle of Montegridolfo. Over the following six years the team transformed the crumbling castle into the four-star luxury hotel ‘Palazzo Viviani’. Ferretti and co. also renovating the entire town including its clock tower, the defensive walls and the homes of Montegridolfo’s six remaining residents. The renovation was conservative in style maintaining the original urban layout and features of the town.

Calabritto 'Borgo di Quaglietta' (Campania)
A new hotel from the destroyed ancient hamlet

Village Origins 13th Century
Abandonment 1980 (23 November)
Cause for Abandonment Earthquake
State of Abandonment Total
Re-awakening Timeline 2007 (funding from the Province of Campania as part of the project ‘Recuperi Borghi Medioevali’) 2007 – 2016 (renovation - Albergo diffuso) 2018 (planned opening of Hotel)

Project Name Borgo di Quaglietta
Strategy Tourism: Albergo diffuso
Actors Public
Protagonists Calabritto Local council and Pro-Loco
Renovation Design Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture
Key Themes Culture, Residents, Authentic, Inclusive, Quality of Life, Events, Jobs
Website http://www.comune.calabritto.av.it/index.php?action=index&p=259

On 23 November 1980, a catastrophic earthquake hit Campania. It destroyed the ancient hamlet of Borgo di Quaglietta and forced her inhabitants to abandon the ruined village. In 2007, the European Union provided funds to recuperate the damaged historic centre as part of the programme ‘Recuperi Borghi Medioevali’. The council spent the next ten years restoring the abandoned town and, in April 2016, made a public request for a business to manage the new Albergo Diffuso del Borgo di Quaglietta. The new hotel should open its doors in 2018.
Castello di Postignano (Umbria)

'The Archetypal Italian Hill Town' renovated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>9th - 13th centuries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Landslide &amp; Emigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>1992 (purchased by the company Mirto srl), 2007 – 2015 (Luxury resort and Real Estate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Castello di Postignano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Real Estate &amp; Tourism: Housing - renovated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private (Italian project, predominantly international clientele)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Architects Gennaro Matacena and Matteo Scaramella, La Società Mirto srl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - moderate extensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Luxury, Unique, Quality of Life, History, Inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="https://castellodipostignano.it/it">https://castellodipostignano.it/it</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1992 two Italian architects Gennaro Matacena and Matteo Scaramella fell in love with the medieval village of Postignano that had been abandoned for many decades following a landslide in 1966 that forced its residents to leave. The architects formed the company Mirto Srl and began to purchase the village properties from the original owners. The restoration of the village (that only began in 2007 because of another destructive earthquake in 1997 and because of the long process of gaining building approval), were completed in 2015. Today the renovated village homes can be rented or purchased for residential and tourism purposes. Keywords are ‘high-tech’ ‘eco-sustainable’ ‘modern comforts’ ‘investment’, ‘Refuge from city chaos’

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393 http://borgodipostignano.wre.it/panoramica/
Prata Sannita 'Castello' (Campania)

A 'million donkey hotel'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>10th - 14th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Old centre abandoned in favour of newer Prata Inferiore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Emigration, New town built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>2005 (The art collective Feld72 arrive in Prata Sannita with the project 'Villaggi dell'Arte'), 2005 (Albergo diffuso)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Million Donkey Hotel (Azione Matese)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector</td>
<td>Tourism: Albergo diffuso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Local community &amp; public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>FELD72 (Austrian collective of architects), local volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Culture, Residents, Authentic, Inclusive, Quality of Life, Events, Jobs, Unique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.milliondonkeyhotel.net/">http://www.milliondonkeyhotel.net/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prata Sannita 'Castello' was built between the tenth and fourteenth centuries. Its greatest population was in the 16th century counting 1700 inhabitants. In 2005 the Austrian collective ‘Feld72’ arrived in Prata Sannita with the project 'Villaggi dell'Arte' as part of the regional program ‘Azione Matese’. With the help of community members, the architectural team converted a number of the castle's abandoned homes into an albergo diffuso known as the 'Million Donkey Hotel'.

Rocchetta, Acquasanta Terme (Marche)
In 2003, entrepreneur Simone Mariani chanced upon the ruined thirteenth-century tiered hamlet of Rocchetta - definitively abandoned in 1977 after an increasing flow of migration away from the town beginning in the 1950s. With the help of his family and company Sabelli, Mariani purchased the village with the intention of creating an Albergo diffuso for nature enthusiasts. Mariani enlisted the help of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Florence to oversee the restoration design. Renovation work began in 2012, and the first accommodation was complete in 2017. Fundamental values driving the project ‘Borgo Rocchetta’, include enhancing the value of the surrounding landscape, local agriculture, silviculture and artisanship and to increase local employment opportunities.
Sauris (Friuli Venezia Giulia)

World’s first Albergo Diffuso

Village Origins 13th – 14th Century
Abandonment 1976
Cause for Abandonment Earthquake
State of Abandonment Partial
Re-awakening Timeline 1976 (Sauris was abandoned in 1976 because of a violent earthquake)
1978 (Politecnico of Zurigo with Leonardo Zannier produce theses re. revival of the town)
1981 (Project ‘Progetto Sauris: Sistema di Progetto Integrato’ approved)
Project Name 1981 -1994 (Albergo diffuso)
Strategy Borgo San Lorenzo
Project Name Tourism: Albergo diffuso
Protagonists Private & public
Restoration Design Leonardo Zanier
Protagonists Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture, celebrate and safeguard 'Minor' heritage
Renovation Design Culture, Residents, Jobs, History, Unique, Authentic, Events, Quality of Life, Km0, Nature, Inclusive, Experimental
Key Themes

Built between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Sauris was abandoned in 1976 because of a violent earthquake. In 1981 the project ‘Progetto Sauris: Sistema di Progetto integrato’ was approved. Prior to that, in 1978, Leonardo Zannier with the Politecnico of Zurigo produces theses regarding the revival of the town. Sauris became an albergo diffuso ‘Borgo San Lorenzo’, which was opened in 1994.394

394 http://www.albergodiffusosauris.com/it/home/
Senarega (Liguria)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>13th – 15th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Population decline beginning in 1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Emigration (isolation) industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total (re-inhabited during summer months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>2012 (purchased by il Parco dell’Antola), 2012 (Cultural events, Hospitality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2013 (farm holiday and trattoria ’Il Pioppo opens)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Borgo di Senarega e Castello Fieschi (Parco Naturale Regionale dell’Antola), Agriturismo il Pioppo (manages rental homes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Cultural &amp; Tourism: Hospitality, Cultural events, Farm Stay, Trattoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Parco Naturale Regionale dell’Antola, Valbrevenna local council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Culture, Residents, Jobs, History, Unique, Authentic, Quality of Life, Km0, Nature, Inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.parcoantola.it/borghi-dettaglio.php?id=2059">http://www.parcoantola.it/borghi-dettaglio.php?id=2059</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Constructed between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, Senarega was completely abandoned - although partially re-inhabited during summer months. In 2012 it was purchased by il Parco dell’Antola. Restoration enabled opportunities to host cultural events and provide hospitality. Borgo di Senarega e Castello Fieschi (Parco Naturale Regionale dell’Antola) and Agriturismo il Pioppo have revitalised the village.
Sieti [Giffoni Sei Casali] (Campania)

An annual cultural festival and tourism resurrect a deserted hilltop village

Village Origins
9th Century

Abandonment
Population decline in favour of newer towns during the 1900s

Cause for Abandonment
Emigration

State of Abandonment
Partial

Re-awakening Timeline
1997; First edition of the festival ‘Rivive il Borgo Antico’, in 2000 renovations for Paese albergo begin, 2016 the hotel village opens to the public

Project Name
Sieti Borgo Antico / Giffoni Sei Casali

Strategy
Tourism: Paese albergo

Actors
Public

Protagonists
Mayor Rosario D’Acunto, Giampiero Fortunato, and community members

Renovation Design
Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture

Key Themes
Culture, Residents, Jobs, History, Unique, Authentic, Events, Quality of Life, Km0, Nature, Inclusive

Website
www.sietipaesealbergo.eu

Sieti was founded in the ninth century by the original inhabitants of the coastal plains near Salerno who retreated into the mountains to escape from the Saracen invasions. Over the course of the 20th century, the inhabitants of the ancient hilltop town Sieti gradually moved away in search of better economic opportunities and living conditions. Following the Second World War, many residents of the Sieti moved into the more easily accessible towns of the same Municipality (Giffoni Sei Casali), leaving the ancient village almost deserted. In 1997 the remaining inhabitants of Sieti formed a cultural association ‘Borgo Sieti’ and organised the first (of what would become an important annual event), ‘Rivive il Borgo Antico’ (The old Town Lives), festival. This initiative, led by local community members in collaboration with the Giffoni Sei Casali local council, was undertaken with the purpose to revive the struggling town transforming its streets, piazzas and courts into an open-air theatre. In 2000, Sieti became part of the project ‘Villages d’Europa’ – the international network that seeks to recuperate particularly valuable villages in abandonment. This project led to the renovation of the old village’s streetscapes, important sites of cultural heritage (such as the Renaissance Palazzo Pennasilico), and the recuperation and transformation of its abandoned buildings for tourism accommodation and related services. The new ‘hotel town’ can host up to

395 http://www.sietipaesealbergo.eu/percorsi/en/#/history/the-prosperous-period/
eighty guests spread out among the village’s historical homes. Tourism has provided the remaining inhabitants with an alternative source of income outside of the traditional farming economy. A conservative renovation design based on the exclusive use of existing buildings and respect for the original layout of public spaces has meant that Sieti Borgo Antico still conserves much of its original medieval atmosphere and today has become a popular destination for culinary and cultural tourism, farm-stay tourism and ecotourism. In 2017, Sieti celebrated the 21st edition of the much evolved ‘Rivive il Borgo Antico’ festival, organised by Giampiero Fortunato which represented the culmination of a long process of territorial regeneration focused on the recuperation and re-animation of the local community's traditions and culture.

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**Santo Stefano di Sessanio (Abruzzo)**

*Desolate hilltop village becomes world-class 'Albergo Diffuso'*

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>9th – 13th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>&gt;90% population decline beginning in 1901 (1489 inhabitants), with a rapid decline post-1951 (791 inhabitants in 1951, 111 in 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Emigration (isolation, difficult living conditions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Partial/ followed by extreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Sextantio Santo Stefano di Sessanio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Tourism: Albergo diffuso/Wellness Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private (Italian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Entrepreneur Daniel Kihlgren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Innovative - modern architecture and decoration were removed, signs of passing time were enhanced, exclusive use of existing architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Culture, Residents, Jobs, Nature, Unique, Authentic, History, Global, Experimental, Exclusive, Km0, Luxury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://santostefano.sextantio.it/en/">http://santostefano.sextantio.it/en/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1994 the Milanese entrepreneur Daniel Kihlgren chanced upon the hilltop town Santo Stefano di Sessanio in Abruzzo in an advanced state of decline and abandonment. Immediately struck by the village’s authentic charm and fragility, he decided to purchase and renovate the village’s abandoned buildings to become an Albergo Diffuso. In 1999 Kihlgren founded the Società Sextantio and began an ultra-conservative renovation between 2001 and 2006. Kihlgren’s Albergo Diffuso created new economic possibilities for the dwindling resident population of Santo Stefano di Sessanio and played a significant role in recording, preserving and reactivating the disappearing traditional cultures, languages, crafts and architecture of the peasant civilisation in Abruzzo.396 Santo Stefano di Sessanio is a successful sustainable tourism business.

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**Tonda (Tuscany)**

*The first example of re-using an abandoned village for tourism in Italy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>13th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1950s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Emigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Borgo Tonda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Tourism: Luxury Resort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private (foreign project, predominantly international clientele)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Swiss company Hapimag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - (use of local workforce and materials)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Luxury, Quality of Life, Ecological Sustainability, International, Exclusive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abandoned following the second world war, the entire thirteenth-century hamlet of Tonda was purchased by the Swedish business ‘Hapimag’ in 1970. Renovated to its original form between 1970 and 1975, the ‘Tonda Resort’ became the first Italian example of reusing an abandoned village for tourism. Eberhard Fellmer, the President of Hapimag, said ‘Tonda is a symbol where tradition

and modernity mix, where something new is born without destroying the old. The resort has become an indispensable source of economy for the residents who make up 100% of the workforce.

Re-awakening Through Tourism - Detailed Examples

Castelfalfi (Tuscany)

_Village History_

Castelfalfi is a fraction of the municipality of Montaione in the province of Florence in Tuscany. In 754, Walfredo di Ratgauso della Gherardesca cities Castelfalfi on occasion of a donation to the Badia di Monteverdi in Maremma. Legend dictates, however, that the first settlement was built around 700ad. by the Longobard Faolfi hence the name _Castrum Faolfi_, evolved to Castelfalfi. In 1139 it was sold by Ranieri della Gherardesca to the vescovo of Volterra for 100 lire. In 1475 the owners Giovanni di Francesco Gaetani and his wife Costanza de Medici structure the castle and constructed the adjoining villa. The village was sacked and burnt in 1554 by the militants of Piero Strozzi in the period of war between Siena and Florence. It thus went to the Medici-Tornaquinci family. During the second world war, the castle was headquarters for a division of the German army, it was thus bombed by the Allies during the liberation of the territory. Today the most characteristic part of the city is its castle, originally constructed as an observatory tower in one of the first Longobard settlements in the province of Florence and after, expanded at different moments throughout the centuries. The Medician village is also notable which, positioned in the centre of the village, dominates the entire valley. It was originally built as a hunting house of the Medici-Tornaquinci family. The church of San Floriano is still today in a state of abandonment. Within the village that are 36 houses that date from various eras, the most noteworthy are the Cerchiaia and the Castelluccio; the first, a stazione di posta along the _via del sale_, the second a medieval castle from the 15th century. The village was chosen by Roberto Benigni to film the movie ‘Pinocchio’ and thereafter by the Holland group _Endemol_ as the set from the first season of the series ‘La Fattoria’.

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399 Ibid.
400 Ibid.
Re-awakening

In 1982, the Milanese entrepreneur Virginio Battenta took charge of the medieval village and its 1320 hectares of agricultural land that made up the Tenuta di Castelfalfi including the thirty-six houses and golf course. These were previously owned by various businesses that had gone bankrupt. After having rectified the enormous debts revealed by the Tribune of Florence, the engineer Battenta began to recuperate the village from ruins beginning with the most prestigious buildings, the Castel, the Medicean Villa and their buildings in the historical centre.\textsuperscript{401} In 2007 the whole property was purchased by the German company TUI AG which, continued the recuperation and restoration program to bring the ancient village, its surrounding land and typical Tuscan architecture back to life. The project covered over 1000 hectares with an investment of 250 million euro.\textsuperscript{402} After an extensive public consultation with citizens and environmental associations, in 2011, the Municipal Administration of Montaione approved the restoration project of the TUI AG and committed to supporting it in its efforts as an opportunity to re-launch the territory. The Castle, after only two years of renovations, opened on 7 June 2014. The renovation design followed a conservative renovation on the external areas but with international decoration inside to accommodate to an international clientele. The aim was to create a village for an international clientele with opportunities for real-estate investment and high-quality accommodation and services. The ‘ideal’ combination for the administration would be 25% German, 25% English, 25% Italian and another 25% from Switzerland, France and the Scandinavian countries.\textsuperscript{403} The massive project added to the rural town eight shops, four pools, a wellness centre with solarium, a gym and two saunas (indoors and outdoors). TUI AG renovated the historical centre of Castelfalfi. It also created a farming business to care for the thousand hectares of surrounding agricultural land with 10,000 olive trees and twenty-two hectares of wine-producing grape vines. Ten hectares of the twenty-two dedicated to grapes are already producing wine with the current count at 10,000 bottles of Cerchiaia Chianti, 10,000 bottles of San Piero IGT, and 5,000 Poggionero barrelled IGT.\textsuperscript{404}

\textsuperscript{401} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{402} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{403} Francesco Tortora, ‘E’ polemica sul borgo toscano che diventerà’ un’enclave per milionari’. Corriere della Sera (16 June 2011), http://www.corriere.it/cronache/11_giugno_15/tenuta-castelfalfi-tortora_f00cbdee-975a-11e0-83e2-2963559124a0.shtml (accessed 23 May 2017).
\textsuperscript{404} Ibid.
Results and Recognition

In 2007, after a period of public consultation, an ‘Appello per la Tutela di Castelfalfi’ was launched by the community members of nearby towns seeking amendments to the restoration project to be implemented by the German multinational corporation TUI AG. The points that they disagreed on were, first; the dimensions of the restoration that would involve a 77% expansion of the existing structure. They pointed out that the project went against the protocols of Piano d’Indirizzo Territoriale della Regione Toscano which states that intervention should be limited to restoration and conservative renovation, with no change in use for the existing buildings. The community members sought to ‘demonstrate the irreversibility and irresponsibility of an intervention which impoverishes the irreplaceable intertwining of nature, culture and human effort that they [TUI AG] paradoxically claim to promote.’ The second point of disagreement regarded the quality of the restoration project. The community stated, ‘We are witnesses to a complete reinvention of the genius loci of Castelfalfi. The TUI freely interprets the anthropological and cultural history and composite architecture of the Tuscan hillside even trying to arbitrarily re-baptise places and place-names.’ They went on to criticise the project as ‘[…] a giant work of falsification of the cultural and landscape heritage of Castelfalfi,’ exclaiming that,

There is nothing more pretentious […] than mimicking the ancient and the beautiful without first revealing genuinity, temporality, and the limits of the restoration project itself. It is not a restoration act of ‘com’era dov’era’ (how it was, where it was) but ‘how it could have been and where the TUI would have liked that it was.’ The Tuscan landscape is has been produced by progressive stratification, built upon harmony, parsimony and good sense, without sudden scrapping and titanic reinterpretation! A third objection was made concerning the negative ecological impact, criticised as not being proportional to the capacities of the local ecosystem.

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405 Regione Toscano, Piano d’indirizzo territoriale della Regione Toscano (2007).
407 Ibid.
408 Ibid., p.2.
Santo Stefano di Sessanio, ‘Sextantio’ (Abruzzo)

Desolate hilltop village becomes world-class ‘Albergo Diffuso’

Village History

Santo Stefano di Sessanio is a fortified medieval hilltop village located in the Gran-Sasso-Monti della Laga National Park at 1251 metres above sea level. The fascinating medieval town that we see today has neolithic origins, and in the Roman era the village then named ‘Sextantio’ was an administrative settlement for the surrounding towns known as ‘pagus’. After the Lombardic invasions in the sixth century that led to the abandonment and degradation of the original settlement, the area was repopulated again after the monastic intervention created arable land.\(^{409}\) The earliest documents that we have about Santo Stefano are from the twelfth century which mentions its church dedicated to Saint Paul.\(^{410}\) The original twelfth-century urban layout has remained unchanged until the present day. The village is entirely built of white limestone that has darkened with age. An impressive cylindrical tower known as the Medici Tower dominates the town. In the 1500s, in fact, the Florentine De Medici family became the feudal owners of the village who took over from the Piccolomini family.\(^{411}\) A terrible plague decimated the population in 1656. Although in 1901 Santo Stefano was a thriving centre home to 1489 inhabitants, emigration saw the population diminish progressively over the next fifty years and by 1951 there were only 791 inhabitants. From this point, the population began a rapid decline with only 111 official remaining inhabitants in 2011 and much of the town empty and in an extreme state of abandonment.

Re-awakening\(^{412}\)

In 1994 charismatic Milanese entrepreneur Daniel Kihlgren ‘discovered’ Santo Stefano di Sessanio while travelling by motorbike in the Abruzzo hinterland. He describes the experience like this; ‘When I first got here on my motorbike, I was wandering, totally lost. This unspoilt place, with no

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\(^{410}\) Named in the Bolla corografica di Papa Lucio III (1183).

\(^{411}\) Comune di Santo Stefano di Sessanio, Storia.

\(^{412}\) Specific details about the re-awakening project come from Samuele Briatore, Valorizzazione dei centri storici minori, strategie di intervento (Reggio Emilia: Edizione Diabasis, 2011), pp. 40 – 52.
traces of modernity, struck me like Saint Paul on the road to Damascus.’ In 1999 he founded the business Sextantio Srl. and immediately set about purchasing the village’s abandoned buildings. He said, ‘When I knocked at people’s doors offering to buy their dwellings, they thought I was crazy.’ Kihlgren’s first purchase was a house ‘sold for 60 thousand lira per MQ’. The idea was to create an ‘Albergo Diffuso’ or ‘horizontal hotel’ in which the hotel’s rooms would be spread out throughout the village and visitors could participate in the daily life of the village. Between 2001 and 2003, an intensive research and design process took place alongside experts from the museum of the peoples of Abruzzo. The restoration work began in 2003 orchestrated by Daniel Kihlgren with the help of architect Lelio Oriano di Zio. The project consisted in renovating and furnishing the village’s buildings in the exact same style and spirit of the originals following the principle of ‘dov’era com’era’ (where it was, the way it was). The renovation design was to reveal the original form and character of the buildings, erasing traces of modern editions of the sixties and seventies. Kihlgren says, ‘I kept the cracks in the walls and the fireplace hearth soot: these are layers of history.’

The desire was to restore the village to its most authentic appearance while also integrating and concealing sophisticated technologies such as low-tension electric implants, remote controls, floor heating, internet and intranet to respond to the needs of contemporary lifestyles. The renovation project maintained the original use, form and materials of the buildings and employed traditional construction techniques and locally sourced building materials such as lime mortar and local stone and locally sourced furniture and decorations.

By 2005 the first six rooms and two shared spaces were open to the public and by the end of 2006 Kihlgren inaugurated an extra thirty-five rooms and related spaces. In addition to the accommodation there is also a convention hall, a local craft shop, a traditional weaving workshop, a tea room offering locally produced herbal teas and traditional sweets such as the ‘ferratelle’, a cellar producing local wine and a restaurant opened in 2004 - the ‘Locanda Sotto gli Archi’ - which celebrates traditional Abruzzo local cuisine and uses native, locally grown foods to produce

414 Ibid.
416 Silvia Macchetti, ‘Rescuing Ancient Villages’.
traditional Abruzzo cuisine. In 2008, Sextantio inaugurated a wellness centre designed along the same guidelines as the rest of the hotel. The total investment covering an area of 4000 squared metres amounted to 4.500.000 euro of which 90% was private and 10% public. Local women using traditional fabrics and techniques make materials such as bed covers. One central element of the Kihlgren method is the complete prohibition of new buildings to favour the recuperation of existing buildings, which was made possible through a common agreement between the public administration and Sextantio.

**Results and Recognition**

The albergo diffuso at Santo Stefano di Sessanio has become an internationally renowned tourist destination and has received consistent positive interest and praise in the national and international press.\(^{417}\) Santo Stefano di Sessanio has become one of the *Borghi Più Belli d'Italia*. In 2001, 75.5% of Santo Stefano's homes were unused, the population had diminished by 90% over the last century and tourist development was 0%.\(^{418}\) In 2001, three hotels with accommodation for 79 with an annual turnover of 285 visitors per year compared to 2008, which saw 7300 visitors to Santo Stefano. The Sextantio project was also crucial in the rise in property value that rose by 90% between 2006 and 2008.\(^{419}\) The use of kilometre zero products and local labour contributed to eliminating the unemployment rate of the territory, demonstrated by the town’s employment which rose thirty-fold after Kihlgren’s intervention.\(^{420}\) The Sextantio example inspired a series of high-quality commercial activities that recreated economic possibilities for the dwindling resident population. Through the creation of artisan workshops and small, sustainable activities, the project also helped to preserve and reintroduce elements of the disappearing traditional cultures, such as loom weaving. Nunzia Taraschi, an anthropologist who worked alongside Kihlgren’s team in 2007, marvelled at the project’s recuperation of agricultural products including native lentils, wild fennel.

\(^{419}\) Ibid.
\(^{420}\) Ibid.
and parsnip, some of which had not been available for the past fifty years. Sextantio Srl. has already replicated the Santo Stefano experience in the Cività rione of the Sassi di Matera and has purchased another nine villages in Abruzzo with the intention to export the Santo Stefano model throughout southern Italy. Some of Sextantio’s additional purchases so far include Montebello sul Sangro, Scanno, a castle fortress at Rocca Calascio, Martese, and the Rocchetta al Volturno. In the 2009 earthquake at Aquila, the renovated parts of the village of Santo Stefano were unscathed but the Medici tower was heavily damaged, its fragility thought to be caused by an earlier shortsighted renovation that had improperly installed reinforced concrete.

**Insights from Daniel Kihlgren regarding re-awakening Santo Stefano di Sessanio**

Kihlgren is one of the leading public promoters of Italy’s so-called ‘minor’ cultural heritage. He has spoken on numerous occasions about the underestimated value of small communities in the Italian hinterland. He emphasizes; ‘the rural heritage we are speaking about here is not the result of a single authority, of architects or stylistic fashioning – but is developed from local artisan traditions rooted in the community. This heritage is the antithesis of classical architecture – which offers a unified, predetermined aesthetic based on stylistic considerations.’ The patrimony that Kihlgren seeks to protect is that created by small, hardworking communities that bear the marks of local conditions and the stratification of time. He describes it as a heritage ‘intimately connected to the territory,’ he reminds us,

The colour, style, and form of the buildings constructed were determined by the availability of materials and poverty which meant that these were sourced locally. Despite (or, perhaps because of) the widespread phenomenon of abandonment, Santo Stefano di Sessanio, and other hamlets of the Apennine mountains, has maintained a sense of the intimate

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relationship between people, architecture and landscape constructed through time. Signs of modernity and the rampant post-war urbanization are almost non-existent in this region.\textsuperscript{425} He laments, in fact, the impact of modernization on many of Italy’s small communities stating that the construction of new buildings in many Italian villages has brought about the loss of identity, of the uniqueness and of the link between village and territory.\textsuperscript{426} Kilhgren has also expressed his views on and the necessity to protect Italy’s small villages, not only from decline and abandonment but also from poorly implemented development and tourism projects, which, he argues, deprive them of their inherent values. He says, ‘The fortified villages sitting on top of mountains are some of the most iconic and appealing structures in the Italian landscape. Unfortunately, they suffered at the hands of poor quality post-war development and, in more recent times, unsympathetic attempts to turn them into tourist honeypots.’\textsuperscript{427} On another occasion, he stated, ‘The global market absorbs everything that is not specifically protected. This deprives places of their own identity. Safeguarding policies should be emplaced in ‘marginal’ areas such as the Apennines in southern Italy where abandonment, poverty and migration have ironically preserved ancient civilizations and cultures until today.’\textsuperscript{428} According to Kihlgren, it is the sense of authenticity of these places rather than immitable touristic proposals that provide the basis for attracting contemporary clientele. He argues, ‘this ‘minor heritage’ is considered (by the Anglo-Saxon and northern Europeans), as the remainders of an increasingly endangered but very authentic Italy. The protection of this heritage would ensure the safeguarding of ethical and cultural values, as well as an economic return, not only for the investor but also the whole territory – as our first experience in Santo Stefano di Sessanio, taught us.’\textsuperscript{429} Kihlgren emphasizes that the Sextantio model caters for ‘locals and tourists that not seek imitable medieval rhetoric but an authentic experience.’\textsuperscript{430}
Postignano, ‘Castello di Postignano’ (Umbria)

‘The Archetypal Italian Hill Town’

Village History

Castello di Postignano is a small hamlet in the municipality of Sellano in Umbria founded between the ninth and tenth centuries. Originally built by its artisan and farmer inhabitants, by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Postignano had a flourishing economy based on agriculture, timber, cloth and metalwork. The church of San Lorenzo, also known as the church of the Santissima Annunziata is particularly noteworthy for its walls decorated with frescoes from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The town was contested for a long time between the nearby cities of Foligno and Spoleto. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the population began to dwindle and progressively declined until the beginning of the twentieth century when many of the remaining inhabitants migrated, mostly to the United States. The gradual abandonment and decline of Postignano concluded definitively with a landslide in 1966.

Re-awakening

In 1992, two Italian architects; Gennaro Matacena and Matteo Scaramella, saw the future potential in the abandoned medieval village and began to purchase the village properties from their original owners. Gennaro Matacena happened upon the ancient village while travelling for tourism in the Valnerina.

‘When I first set foot in this place in 1992 I was fascinated by its magical atmosphere.’ The idea was to safeguard not only the architectural features of the town but its historical memory and material culture too. Restoration works began soon after the village purchase but were interrupted in 1997 because of a damaging earthquake. Legal problems and the difficulty involved with locating the buildings’ original owners meant that the work did not start again until 2007. In 2004 the Ministry for Cultural Heritage declared Postignano a site of national interest. Between 2007 and 2015 a conservative renovation project using original materials and

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431 In 1979, the American photographer and architect Norman Carver Jr published a book Italian Hill towns in which he described Castello di Postignano as ‘The archetypal Italian hill town’, using a photo of the village as the cover of the book.


433 Ibid.
architectural styles was implemented by a group of thirteen architects. The renovation included 60 houses, 10 commercial spaces and a medieval church. Modern technology such as anti-seismic architecture, heated pavements, telephone lines, WiFi in the whole village and DSL internet in the apartments were included in the renovation. Importance was placed on the ecological sustainability of the project such as rainwater for water & sanitary systems, energy efficient lighting, heat and sound insulation fixtures, use of local materials such as wood and terracotta. As well as the restaurant there is an enoteca-bar 'Vini&Oli', an outdoor swimming pool, a wellness centre (sauna, Bagno Turco, Jacuzzi, massage), a pool room and a library with reading room.

**Results and Recognition**

The rent of the village houses is controlled by German and English organisations. A house can be rented for a weekly fee of €450–€1300. To buy a house the average price is between €3100 and €3500/mq. (The website emphasises the investment potential of the apartments - buy to lease). The intended market is for wealthy internationals. ‘the creation of a new community of people from all over the world, a network of enthusiasts of beauty, art, the culture of relaxation, of good food and wine.’ The first buyers were British. The village also features a restaurant offering traditional local food, a hotel and a newly built wellness centre. In July 2015 several newspapers and websites led readers to believe that the entire village of Postignano (‘95 rooms and 87 bathrooms’) could be purchased via the British real-estate agency Jackson Stops and Staff for the sale price of 22.8 million euro. Since then, the Mirto Srl. have denied the possibility for a block sale of the village, confirming that the village’s restructured apartments and houses will be sold individually on a case by case basis.

The Societa Mirto provides a range of cultural initiatives tied to boosting high-quality tourism in the Valnerina and Umbria. The program ‘Un Castello all’Orizzonte’ is held from May to October – with theatre and music performance and concerts, art and photography exhibitions, opportunities to mingle with authors and actors such as Daniel Pennac and Renato Carpentieri, conferences about wine, food and arboreal archaeology. They have master classes for piano (led by the Parigian Beate Perrey), painting (led by Canadian painter Michele Delisle) and seminars on shiatsu conducted by highly qualified physiotherapists. A documentary was filmed about the project, ‘Castel of Postignano; Spontaneous Architecture, From Abandonment to Recovery’ it was nominated for Official Selection at the Festival International des Films d’Art di Montreal in 2015. Postignano was also a shortlisted finalist for the Premio di Eccellenza 2016 Conde’ Nast Johansens for Best Villa or Serviced Apartment, competing with Europe and the whole Mediterranean Basin. In October 2014, the World, European and Italian UNESCO Clubs awarded Mirto srl a Certificate of Distinguished Service for the Restoration of Castello di Postignano. The 17th of March 2014, the Mirto srl received a letter from the Italian Presidente delle Repubblica Giorgio Napoletano that congratulated them for their efforts and success in restoring the village of Postignano and for the program of cultural activities in act. These are all positive signs that point towards the continued success and sustainability of the valorisation project in Postignano.

**Insights from the Protagonists**

As early as 1992 Scaramella declared; ‘There are twenty-two thousand villages in Italy, and if they are able to transform, they can live again.’

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439 Paolo Barone (Dir), Castello di Postignano: Un’architettura spontanea dall’abbandono al recupero (Italy, 2015).
Re-awakening through New Businesses

Some long-abandoned villages have been brought back to life to become the headquarters of a new business. Several innovative companies have purchased and renovated Italian abandoned villages to manufacture a specific commodity or provide a particular service. New economic opportunities in previously deserted towns have interested both internationally renowned and small-scale manufacturing businesses as well as public and private research institutes. The act of resurrecting an abandoned historical village has also become a kind of status symbol which adds considerable value to commodities associated with that enterprise. The avant-garde entrepreneurs; the stylist Alberta Ferretti and ‘cashmere king’ Brunello Cucinelli were the first to purchase whole abandoned villages which they envisioned would become a symbol and a brand name for their respective businesses. Cuccinelli was the first in 1985 to buy an Italian ghost town (Solomeo in Umbria) for a non-tourism related business, although significant renovations would continue well into the nineties and early 2000s. The other examples of companies that chose to convert and work from a previously deserted settlement took place after the year 2000.

The samples in this section exemplify the importance of global developments that have revolutionized business all throughout the world. These include better transport, the internet and the globalisation of the economy which permits lifestyles and economies not strictly dependent on local resources or a local clientele. Isolated retailers can expand their traditional clientele using innovative ideas to attract extra-locally connected consumers. Some innovative Italian small-scale farming businesses, for example, are beginning to offer online consumers the opportunity to ‘adopt’ a particular product such as a goat, a fruit tree, a vegetable patch, a row of wine-producing grapes, a beehive. In return for their donation, the consumer receives a seasonal supply of his or her adopted product such as organically produced meat and cheeses (from goats or sheep), fresh fruit, preserves, honey and many other products. Another way that abandoned towns have benefitted from new economic opportunity connected to the web and globalisation is the possibility to choose non-traditional locations. While industries and businesses have been historically dependent upon connection and proximity to highly urbanised and industrial zones, today new forms of work

442 Some successful examples include ‘Biorfarm’ https://www.biorfarm.com/ and ‘Made in Langhero e Roero’ https://madeinlangheroero.it/
connected to the internet have permitted an increasing number of individuals (but also important companies and businesses), to choose to invest and live in places wherever they chose. One of the detailed examples – Colletta di Castelbianco – was an abandoned town specifically resurrected to provide a living space for people who work in a virtual workspace but who also desire to live in an ‘authentic’ historical place. New businesses in re-awakened abandoned villages often appeal for their unique mix as places that on the one hand have a firmly rooted sense of historical and site-specific identity and on the other, are in immediate connection with the rest of the globe via the use of the latest technologies. Although there a still only a limited number of examples of reviving ghost towns for businesses (which are not related to the tourism industry), the few existing cases are all highly successful.
Re-awakening through New Businesses - Examples

Borgo della Conoscenza (Tuscany)

Abandoned Rural Settlement becomes Prestigious Business Education Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>18th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Urban migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Il Borgo della Conoscenza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Business: Prestigious Business Education Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private &amp; public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Architect Paolo Portoghesi, Camporlecchio Educational Srl. Owner and Administrator Susanna Bina, Vittorio Campione</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - moderate extensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Ecological Sustainability (zero ecological impact), Global, Rurality, Innovation, Exclusive, International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://bcvassociati.it/clienti/camporlecchio/">http://bcvassociati.it/clienti/camporlecchio/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Borgo della Conoscenza is an eighteenth-century settlement located in the Camporlecchio estate in the heart of the Senese hills. The original rural community abandoned the village in the 1960s because of the promise of greater work opportunities in urban centres. Between 2000 and 2003 Italian architect Paolo Portoghesi restored the small abandoned community to its former beauty on behalf of the company Camporlecchio Educational. Today it is home to a prestigious business education centre. An essential part of the project was the investment in environmentally sustainable principles. Portoghesi was able to create a site with zero ecological impact.443 The program places importance on global connectivity and innovation and collaborates with businesses all over the world.

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E-Village Colletta di Castelbianco (Liguria)

From Ghost town to Italy’s first ‘E-Village’

Village Origins 13th Century
Abandonment Gradual population decline after the disastrous earthquake in 1887
Cause for Abandonment Urban migration and Earthquake
State of Abandonment Total
Re-awakening Timeline 1980s – end (Colletta di Castelbianco Srl. -Vincenzo Ricotta) 1993 – 1999 (e-village)
Project Name 2007 (’Borghi più Belli D’Italia’)
Strategy Cittadella Telematica Colletta di Castelbianco
Actors Real Estate & New Business: e-village
Protagonists Private (Italian project, predominantly international clientele)
Renovation Design Architect Giancarlo De Carlo
Key Themes Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture
Innovation, Global, Nature, History, Unique, Exclusive
Website http://www.colletta.it/

Gradually abandoned by its traditional inhabitants following an earthquake in 1887, the thirteenth-century hilltop village Colletta di Castelbianco, located near the Italian Riviera in Savona, became the site of a pioneering architectural project in the 1990s, led by renowned Italian architect Giancarlo De Carlo. The restoration project, which respected the town's original aesthetics, traditional building techniques and materials, also incorporated sophisticated technological infrastructures such as optical fibre for internet and ecological energetic solutions. In 2007, Colletta became one of the ’Borghi più Belli D'Italia’.
Pischiello (Umbria)

Ruined rural village becomes The European Centre of Advanced Research and Design.

‘Il Pischiello’, Photo by Giacomo Bianchini (December 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>15th - 18th centuries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1950s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Urban migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>2004 (purchased by the company Tracosin spa) 2005 – 2008 (European Centre for advanced design and research)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>‘Il Pischiello’ Advanced Research Technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Business: Centre for Advanced Design &amp; Research/ART(Advanced Research Technologies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private (Italian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Entrepreneur Giancarlo Luigetti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - minor extensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Innovation, Global, Nature, Unique, Exclusive, Experimental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="https://www.artgroup-spa.com/innovator-in-automotive-market/la-sede/">https://www.artgroup-spa.com/innovator-in-automotive-market/la-sede/</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The rural village of Pischiello was built in the 17th century and abandoned in the 1950s due to emigration. The village lay in a state of abandonment for decades, subject to the damage of passing time, vandalism and plundering until 2004 when entrepreneur Giancarlo Luigetti led a group of investors to purchase the abandoned town and convert it into the European Centre of Advanced Design and Research. Many saw the initiative as an enormous opportunity for the entire territory and, as such, in 2004 a framework agreement was signed by a host of public and private institutions.

The restoration work began in 2005 and was completed in 2008. Today Pischiello is home to an advanced technology facility owned by ART (Advanced Research Technologies) and hosts about fifty engineers and technicians engaged in the design and industrialization of advanced components and systems for the high-tech sector. The centre is an important node for discussion and collaboration among private and public Italian and international researchers. When the Mayor of Passignano, Claudio Bellaveglia, attended the Centre’s opening ceremony in 2007, he declared

444 Including the Region of Umbria, the Province of Perugia, the Municipality of Passignano, the University of Perugia, the Mountain Community, SviluppUmbria, Umbria Innovation, the Superintendency of the APSAD and Confindustria Umbria.
that ‘Today is a historic day for the community of Passignano in which a book that seemed permanently closed, has been reopened.’

Both public and private institutions in the territory have welcomed the Institute and see its potential for fostering opportunities, growth and development for the whole territory.

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**San Vitale [Borgonato di Corte Franca] (Lombardy)**

![Image of San Vitale village](image_url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>9th – 18th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Emigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>2001 (Gozio brothers - Giulio, Antonio, Luigi - express interest) 2003–2010 (Artisan distillery, an International research centre for distillery, Museum, Restaurant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Borgo Antico San Vitale: Distilleria in Franciacorta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Business: Artisan distillery, an International research centre for distillery, Museum, Restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private (Italian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Giulio, Antonio, Luigi Gozio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - moderate extensions, emphasis on local materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Culture, Residents, Exclusive, Jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="https://www.borgoanticosanvitale.it/eng">https://www.borgoanticosanvitale.it/eng</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the town was initially founded in the ninth century, most of the buildings that are visible today were built in the eighteenth century. The town was abandoned because of emigration during the twentieth century and was totally deserted in 2001 when the Gozio brothers (Giulio, Antonio, Luigi) expressed interest in purchasing and recuperating the abandoned village. Their idea was to convert the whole town into a distillery using locally sourced materials and employees. Between 2003 and 2010 the brothers transformed the rural buildings into an Artisan distillery, an International research centre for distillery, a Museum and a Restaurant. The ‘Borgo Antico San Vitale: Distilleria in Franciacorta,’ opened in 2013.

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Solomeo (Umbria)

*From neglected rural town to manufacturing headquarters of a world-renown cashmere business*

In 1985, Brunello Cucinelli purchased and renovated the abandoned castle of Solomeo as the headquarters of what would become one of the world’s most prestigious cashmere industry brand names - ‘Brunello Cucinelli’. Cucinelli implemented a project to restore the village and the surrounding context with a focus on dignity and beauty. The objective pursued by the Cucinelli business has been to guarantee the right business profit without causing damage to the surrounding context and to reinvest business profits in the collective growth of the village.
Re-awakening Through New Businesses – Detailed Example

Solomeo (Umbria)

From neglected rural town to manufacturing headquarters of a world-renown cashmere business

**Village History**

Immersed in a typical Umbrian landscape dominated by green hills and evergreen forests, fortified villages, castles and frescoed churches, rises the hamlet of Solomeo, fraction of Corciano. The hamlet of Solomeo was built between the late 12th century and the first half of the 13th century. It was built on the site of a former rural settlement known as Villa Solomei that was used as a base for the local men working on reclaiming the plain below. It was near a road that, in the Middle Ages (and most likely in Roman times too), linked Perugia with Castiglion del Lago and Chiusi. In 1361 the village of Villa Solomei was made up of a palazzo, casamentum, twelve Domus, two farmhouses and the Church of Saint Bartholomew. In the spring of 1391, the inhabitants chose to fortify the village and the owner of the largest Palazzo, Meo Iohannis Cole, sponsored the construction of a castle. In council records, Meo is referred to as the ‘purchaser’. The fortress was built adjacent to his Palazzo. Solomeo Castle must have been completed by the late 14th century, but it was still referred to as the ‘Villa’ for some time afterwards. It was in the sixteenth century, probably due to a population boost, that the small nucleus expanded beyond the fortified walls and, in 1729 the village expanded along the southeastern wall. After World War II, the predominantly agriculture community of Solomeo began leaving the town for manufacturing jobs in nearby cities of Perugia and Assisi or houses on the plain. By the sixties, the historical centre of Solomeo was almost completely abandoned.

**Re-awakening**

In 1985, while searching for a new and larger workspace for his growing cashmere company, Brunello Cucinelli was struck by the beauty of the ancient hamlet of Solomeo and decided that it would be the ideal location for the company workspace. He describes the experience of finding Solomeo like this,

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One evening, on my way home, I happened to see the Solomeo hill, with its evergreen woods, the hamlet, the castle and the ancient Villa Antinori. It was the hometown of my then fiancée and now wife, Federica and I knew it well. That evening, however, it looked different somehow. It was as if I were seeing it for the first time. I felt that what I had been searching for so long was now before me.\textsuperscript{447}

Cucinelli purchased Solomeo’s castle in 1985. In 1987 he transferred his small cashmere business headquarters to Solomeo. Today Brunello Cucinelli – also known as ‘the Cashmere King’ – is the proprietor and namesake of one of the world’s wealthiest and most renowned brands of top-end luxury cashmere clothing. A large portion of the profits has been directly invested in the restoration of the small hamlet of Solomeo and his ‘Humanist Enterprise’ located there. His innovative business is based on the philosophy of ‘ethical capitalism’, that considers the dignity and well-being of each individual worker, and the beauty and sustainability of the work environment and company as necessary for overall business growth.

The initial restoration work involved the conservative restoration of the castle and 14 houses, which are used as offices. In September 2008, Cucinelli completed the ‘Forum of the Arts’ built exclusively by Umbrian master craftsmen with the aim of providing spaces for social interaction and cultural development. One of the most important features of the Forum of the Arts is a Renaissance style theatre that seats 240 guests and hosts an eminent array of performances and cultural activities with internationally renowned artists. Another important element of the Forum is the ‘Aurelian Neo-humanistic Academy’ inaugurated in 2010. It is an educational centre containing four schools: Art, Religion, Enterprise and Science. The idea is based on the Arts and Trade Guilds of the Middle Ages where artisan techniques are taught alongside English, architecture and philosophy. It hosts an extensive library full of precious modern and ancient texts. In 2013 Cucinelli added an ‘Arisan School’ – a school and accommodation that provides classes in four different subjects; mending and linking, cutting and assembly, tailoring and restoration (masonry, gardening and horticulture). Students are selected through an open selection procedure and receive a monthly grant.

In early July every year, Solomeo hosts a village-wide medieval street far in which visitors and tourists can enjoy in spectacles of falconry and weaving demonstrations and are invited to partake in wine and grappa tastings. Art exhibitions, concerts, a photography competition and market stalls selling artisan products including hand-made soaps and intricate ironwork such as hinges and box locks are part of the spectacle. Inhabitants dress in medieval costumes and the grandmothers of the village prepare a variety of traditional foods for the inhabitants and visitors to enjoy. Solomeo also hosts one of the most significant regional classical music festivals in Italy the ‘Villa Solomei Festival’.

**Results and Recognition**

When Brunello bought his first property in Solomeo the village was in ruins. Today it is thriving with a population of over 400.\(^{448}\) The Brunello Cucinelli Group and its founder have since received numerous prizes and recognition in both national and international spheres, not only for the quality of the collections but also for the town’s cultural initiatives and for the particularity of the business organisation based on the respect of fundamental human values. The Cucinelli business model is studied as an exemplary case of a modern economy in prestigious universities including Milano’s *L’Università Commerciale Luigi Bocconi* as well as the *Harvard Business School*.\(^{449}\) In addition to the many awards earned for the beauty and quality of his products and the ethical workplace, he has also received awards related to the restoration of Solomeo and restoring and exalting Umbrian and Italian culture and architecture in the world. In 2009 he won three significant awards including the ‘Imprenditore Olivettiano’, ‘Italian Entrepreneur of the Year’ from Ernst & Young and the prestigious ‘Leonardo Qualità Italia’. In 2010 the Brunello Cucinelli group received the Italian Industrial Federation Award for Excellence and Cucinelli was knighted by the Italian President and was awarded an honorary degree in Philosophy and Ethics of Human Relations from the University of Perugia. In May 2011 Brunello Cucinelli received the ‘Guido Carli’ prize his double vocation of philosopher and entrepreneur based on the fundamental values of respect for people and the environment. In April 2012 Brunello Cucinelli’s clothing brand became listed on the Milan Stock Exchange and has since experiences enormous international success. Solomeo’s coat of arms and

\(^{448}\) Ibid.

\(^{449}\) Ibid.
the image of the Castel both feature in the ‘Cucinelli’ brand. In many ways, the Cucinelli brand and
the hamlet of Solomeo have grown together with profit and beauty, past and future, local and global
economies inextricably intertwined. Bergdorf Goodman from New York ‘In Umbria, there is
ferment and creativity and phenomena of spiritual impoverishment and loneliness that afflict the
working world in the big cities, are completely absent. It’s a magical land, even if it risks being
invaded in the coming years. They need to stay careful and defend it.’

**Insights from Brunello Cucinelli regarding re-awakening Solomeo**

He declared his foremost desire that through renovation and renewal of function he might bring
Solomeo back to life, he says, ‘That was my first commitment and my first dream: through my
business, I wanted to return Solomeo to its former glory and restore the lifeblood that had allowed
it to grow and prosper for centuries.’ Cucinelli had pondered deeply about the impact of his
restoration and revival project on the village of Solomeo acknowledging the risks involved when
giving new form and function to a historic community. He said ‘Restoring the village of Solomeo has
been like waking a sleeping genie. Breathing new life into an old building is not simple because one
runs the risk of removing its original charm forever. But we found the key to the simplicity of our
most ancient value: humanity. People still mindful of artisan traditions and the techniques their
fathers set to work with the love for their Umbrian land and, with an almost Franciscan
commitment, slowly but surely restored the spirituality of the place and, with it, its history.’

Cucinelli demonstrates a keen interest in reversing the phenomenon of abandonment in Italy’s
hinterland and rural areas by implementing strategies to ensure the sustainability of his program to
avoid new cycles of abandonment. A favourite motto is ‘A company must plan for the next three
months, three years, and three centuries.’ In an interview with journalist Christopher Petkanas,
Cucinelli said, ‘From the beginning I knew that to convince 25-year-old kids from the region to
come and work for me—and to repopulate Solomeo, which had been practically abandoned—I had

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451 Ibid.
453 Ibid.
454 Cucinelli & De Fico Fallani, *Solomeo*, p. 18.
to offer them something special.’455 He promotes sustainability at three levels – construction, lifestyles and products. Regarding development, Brunello promotes the reuse of existing architecture instead of constructing from scratch. He declares; ‘There are many abandoned warehouses, why don’t we start renovating the existing ones instead of constructing new ones? Of course, it costs a little more but in the end, we will all gain.’456 Another of the key goals of long-term sustainability includes the wellbeing of the people working for and cooperating with the Cucinelli company. He argues that ‘work is entitled to the utmost dignity, economic and moral, to repay all the fatigue and monotony,’457 and his business philosophy is based on the idea that, ‘A pleasing work environment stimulates creativity and people work better.’458

While Cucinelli is concentrated on enhancing site-specific culture and community, he is also is a keen advocate of accepting and improving globalization and technological innovation. He states, ‘For me, Globalisation means integration. For twenty-five years I have been going to source cashmere in China and Mongolia. They have the finest wools; those taken from the necks of goats that live above the altitudes of 4000m. We can only win with quality. There is no need to be fearful or paranoid about the future.’459 In fact, the success of the Cucinelli brand name depends upon its combination of local and global elements using local particularity to market to an international audience. The articles produced at Solomeo are directed towards an expanding demand for ‘exclusive luxury’ – evolving customers that seek not only quality and prestige but also the sustainability, and are interested in the manufacturer’s ethics. The humanist and environmental values adopted by Cucinelli’s company enhance the exclusivity of the brand name.

458 Ibid.
Cucinelli considers culture and beauty as treasures to be safeguarded, ideals to strive toward and resources to use.\footnote{Brunello Cucinelli, \textit{A Humanistic Company}, http://investor.brunellocucinelli.com/en/a-humanistic-company/culture-and-beauty, (accessed 13 November 2017)} They enable modernity and tradition to be blended, encourage human creativity permit the unification of human needs and corporate objectives and allow global and local dimensions to exist harmoniously. \footnote{Ibid.} 'Italy's richest treasure is craftsmanship, our craftsmanship is loved the world over: we should not let it be swallowed up by the rapacious velocity of our technological times. If we lose it, we will lose our memory and ourselves.'\footnote{Pensiero Solidale, ‘Assumiamo più giovani e il made in Italy sarà salvo’, \textit{Il Corriere}, 8 June 2014, http://buonenotizie.corriere.it/2014/06/08/cucinelli-assumiamo-piu-giovani-e-il-made-in-italy-sara-salvo/, (accessed 13 November 2017).} Cucinelli’s advice about resurrecting ghost towns is that ‘We must listen to the genius loci, the spirit of place: for centuries Solomeo has produce olive oil and wine, and now it produces cashmere. The hamlet has rediscovered its ancient manufacturing heritage.’\footnote{Veneziani, ‘Cucinelli: un parco e l’oratorio’.
Colletta di Castelbianco (Liguria)

Deserted ghost town becomes Italy's first 'E-Village'

Village History

Colletta di Castelbianco is an ancient medieval hilltop village entirely built in stone located near the Italian Riviera in the Province of Savona in Liguria. It was built in the thirteenth century as a defence against the Saracen invasions in this period. The earliest document that cites Castelbianco was written in 1202 regarding the feudal owners of the village - the Marchesi di Clavesana. Castelbianco reached its greatest population in the mid-nineteenth century although a violent earthquake in 1887 left much of Castelbianco (spread across four separate hamlets), in ruins. The hamlet ‘Colletta’ was particularly damaged and its traditional inhabitants gradually abandoned the village. The damage caused by the earthquake combined with the exodus of migrants moving away from the mountains and countryside towards the industrialised plains especially after World War Two meant that Colletta di Castelbianco was definitively abandoned by the 1950s. Many ex-inhabitants of Colletta settled in Marseilles where their descendants can be found today. The population statistics of Castelbianco provide an indication of the demographic change in these years but they do not account for the individual fractions such as Colletta and Vesalio which were heavily damaged by the earthquake in 1887 and later abandoned.

Re-awakening

In the 1990s Colletta was the location of a pioneering restoration project by the renowned Italian architect Giancarlo De Carlo whose aim was to restore life to the village through restoration and innovation while respecting and enhancing the value of the historical and architectural heritage. The restoration project, which respected the town’s original aesthetics, traditional building techniques and materials while incorporating sophisticated technological infrastructure, was the first of its kind in Italy. The renovations that took place between 1993 and 1999, included the

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465 Ibid.
restoration of seventy houses and the installation of a pool and a conference centre. The ‘telematization’ project was conceived by Valerio Saggini and planned by Valerio Saggini and Stefania Belloni to enable new residents and visitors to work from a distance, benefitting from a range of telecommunications resources. The idea is that workers are able to keep in touch with the work environment and enjoy the peace and isolation offered by the village. The surrounding fields have also been recuperated and have become famous for the local native cherries and high-quality olive oil from the local taggiasca olives.

Results and Recognition

Today visitors can rent or buy houses (prices ranging from 184,000 to 350,000 euro for a one-bedroom apartment\textsuperscript{467}), and participate in the many activities offered by the ‘Il Consorzio Gestione Ospitalita’ Diffusa di Castelbianco.’\textsuperscript{468} The village regularly hosts cultural events such as art exhibitions and concerts as well as food and wine events to celebrate Italian culinary products. The area is equipped for a variety of outdoor activities such as bushwalking, bike riding, rock climbing and golf. In 2007, Colletta became part of the ‘Borghi Piu Belli D’Italia’ group. The number of permanent residents of the greater Castelbianco community has grown since the intervention in Colletta. From a population of 265 in 1991 to a population of 325 in 2017\textsuperscript{469}.

Insights from the Protagonists

In the early 1990s, Vincenzo Ricotta - a small developer from Alessandria the today the Manager of Colletta di Castelbianco Srl, had the idea that it would be possible to recuperate the ghost town Colletta started to buying its buildings. Ricotta provides some insight into his decision about how to resurrect the abandoned town of Colletta. He says, ‘It was not enough to rebuild, we needed a winning idea [...] we were inspired by the famous Silicon Valley and we dared: we worked to wire-up the village and get fibre optic up here, betting on the idea of telework. It worked, even if, in the end, the foreigners are more in love with the town’s stones and history rather than its ‘virtual’

\textsuperscript{468}The tourism and accommodation structures of the village form a cooperation (2010): Colletta Relais by Borgo Telematico, Hotel-Restaurant Da Gin, Hotel-Restaurant Scola, B&B Rosso Ciliegia, Agriturismo Ca’ du Ricci, Agriturismo Casa dei Nonni
possibilities.' He invented the idea that people which he called ‘white eagles’ would go there. White eagles are people who work by themselves and are looking for isolation, but who also use computers and information electronics to remain in touch with what’s happening. Ricotta supposed that these people can handle long periods of isolation, and they may want to live in quiet places. ‘White Eagles’ were not numerous in Italy at the time this project began. The idea was immediately attractive to the mass media, because, according to De Carlo ‘the mass media are curious about strange people, like white eagles.’ The project’s architect Giancarlo De Carlo spoke about the reuse potential of the abandoned village saying, ‘Even as an abandoned shell, the village contained elements that spoke of a tremendous vitality.’

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472 Ibid., p.4
Re-awakening through Socio-Cultural Initiatives

Other wholly abandoned towns and semi-deserted villages have been brought back to life through the implementation of social and cultural activities and architectural interventions related to these initiatives. Rather than resurrecting deserted villages, social and cultural actions are primarily implemented with the objective of preventing abandonment in communities in drastic socio-demographic decline. A wide range of social and cultural programmes are performed to resurrect ruined buildings and give innovative new functions to the town's abandoned spaces to improve the town’s economic and social services and the daily life of its inhabitants. This kind of reawakening often relies on the involvement and active participation of the local community to improve the town’s long-term economic, social and cultural growth. Some projects undertaken so far have given rise to new museums and history and literary parks such as the museum and conference centre at Paraloup in the Piemontese mountains and the literature park at Aliano in Basilicata. Workshops, summer-schools, conferences and festivals aim to promote and recuperate site-specific culture and traditions.

The first social experiment took place in 1988 in Castelbasso in Campania in which the abandoned town was converted into an open-air art installation. While it was only a temporary event, it had a lasting impact on the community and would pave the way for its proper physical and spiritual re-awakening in 2000. The second social experiment to revitalize an abandoned village took place in the 1990s in Succiso in which the town’s few remaining inhabitants bounded together in a ‘town-cooperative’, pooling the members’ resources (financial and labour) to keep essential services open and running such as the bakery, bar and school bus service. The other socio-cultural initiatives began after the year 2000. Some of these projects also serve a higher social purpose such as providing hospitality for migrants and refugees. The first semi-abandoned village to volunteer to house refugees and initiate migrant integration programs was Riace in 2001. This experiment was so successful that Riace's mayor Domenico Lucano was awarded a third place in the international competition of World's Best Mayor in 2010. In 2008 two other nearby villages - Caulonia and Stignano adopted the model for their communities. The Riace project began as a grassroots response to the European-African migrant crisis, and became a catalyst for the creation of a national institutionalised program for the protection of migrants and refugees, the Italian – ‘SPRAR’
– Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati.
Re-awakening through Socio-Cultural Initiatives - Examples

Aliano (Basilicata)

Struggling village draws on its literary fame to save itself from oblivion

Aliano is a small medieval hilltop village in the province of Potenza, built in the tenth century on top of a much earlier settlement. The well-known Torinese writer, painter and intellectual Carlo Levi lived in Aliano under house arrest between 1935-36 (having been exiled for his anti-fascist beliefs). His much-loved book Christ Stopped at Eboli (1945) is set in this small village and its surrounds. In steep social and economic decline because of post-war migration, Aliano has recently drawn on its literary fame to save the town and its surrounds from oblivion. Beginning in 2008 the historic centre has been renovated to its original aspect and become a ‘literature park’. Frequent cultural initiatives and festivals tied to the literary vocation have brought new life and economy to the previously neglected town. Beginning in 2014, Aliano hosts an important annual festival 'La Luna e i Calanchi' by Franco Arminio (writer and director of the website 'Communità Provvisorie').

Village Origins
Abandonment
10th century
57.5% population decline between 1951 (2288 inhabitants) and 2017 (971 inhabitants) One part of the community - Alianello – is completely abandoned

Cause for Abandonment
State of Abandonment
Emigration, New town built
Partial

Re-awakening Timeline
2007 (receives public funding for restoration), 2008 -present (Literature park)

Project Name
Strategy
Parco Letterario Carlo Levi
Cultural: Literature Park

Actors
Protagonists
Aliano local council, Franco Arminio
Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture

Renovation Design
Key Themes
Culture, Residents, Authentic, Inclusive, Quality of Life, Events, Jobs

Website
https://www.parcolevi.it/

Aliano local council, Franco Arminio

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474 Carlo Levi, Cristo si è fermato a Eboli (Torino: Einaudi, 2010 [1945]).
476 www.lalunaeicalanchi.it/#1
Calitri 'Borgo Castello' (Campania)

Castle destroyed by an earthquake in 1980 hosts 35,000 visitors in only one week in 2017.

Village Origins
13th Century

Abandonment
1980 (23 November) earthquake - final departures 1988-1989

Cause for Abandonment
Earthquake (continuous plus final blow 1980, 1988-1989 significant buildings collapse)

State of Abandonment
Total - inhabitants relocate to the newer part of the city in the valley

Re-awakening Timeline
1988 (Superintendent and council seek funds for the reconstruction of the destroyed city centre) 2008 – 2011 (Conservative restoration of medieval centre/ space for cultural events/ceramic museum, art gallery & research centre) Ongoing (Cultural, Art & Music Festival spaces and events)

Project Name
Calitri Borgo Castello

Strategy
Cultural: Ceramics museum, art gallery & research centre/ Cultural Events spaces

Actors
Public

Protagonists
Calitri local council, Superintendent

Renovation Design
Innovative - 'build within the built' and reversibility principles

Key Themes
Culture, Residents, Authentic, Inclusive, Quality of Life, Events, Jobs

Website
http://www.prolocoitaltia.it/it/comune/storia/calitri-e-borgo-castello.html

A catastrophic earthquake the 23rd of November 1980 destroyed a significant portion of the historical centre of Calitri - known as Borgo Castello - and its inhabitants were forced to move to the newer part of the village on the slopes below. As early as 1988 the council began investing in research towards future renovation and conservation. The complete restoration of the medieval centre including the Norman and Angione fortifications and surrounding areas concluded only recently thanks to funding awarded by the Minister of Cultural Heritage. The restoration design took account of the many layers of history, and the necessary addition of new architecture followed the principle of reversibility. The renovations created locations for a ceramics history museum, a contemporary ceramics art gallery, a Ceramics Research Centre and a variety of spaces that today
host numerous artistic, cultural and music events such as the SponzFest festival that attracted over 35,000 visitors in 2017.\textsuperscript{477}

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**Castelbasso (Abruzzo)**

*Cultural development to maintain historical roots of walled town*

![Image of Castelbasso](image-url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>16\textsuperscript{th} – 17\textsuperscript{th} Centuries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Urban migration, Agrarian crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>'Castelbasso Progetto Cultura'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Cultural: Art Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Castelalto local council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative with strong community consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Art, Culture, Residents, Authentic, Inclusive, Quality of Life, Events, Jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fondazionemenegaz.it/fondazione/castelbasso-2/">http://www.fondazionemenegaz.it/fondazione/castelbasso-2/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Castelbasso is a walled town built between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Following the agrarian crisis in the sixties, all but ten of her five hundred inhabitants departed, leaving an empty and neglected town behind them. The architectural recuperation of the historical village included the creation of protected nature zones, a botanical park and the restoration of twenty abandoned homesteads to become farm-tourism businesses. The designers and local politicians focused on a cultural vocation rather than a touristic one. They feared that a hotel-town model would ruin the spirit of their town and opted for a project based on agriculture, culture and art - that would treat

tourism as a complementary, but not a predominant, source of economy. An artistic event in 1988 ‘Castellarte’, which converted the historic village into an open-air art workshop and gallery, inspired the recent action. In 2000 the ‘Castelbasso Progetto Cultura’ successfully replicated and amplified the original experiment. It has since become a successful annual event attracting international visitors to the small centre. In 2003 the architectural Institute Tetraktis restored another of the remaining abandoned sections of Castelbasso as part of the sixteenth edition of the architectural competition ‘Tercas Architettura’. ⁴⁷⁸

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**Caulonia (Calabria)**

*Town at risk of abandonment opens abandoned houses to refugees.*

| Village Origins | 10th Century |
| Abandonment     | 54% population decline between 1951 (13004 inhabitants) and 2012 (7060 inhabitants) |
| Cause for Abandonment | Emigration |
| State of Abandonment     | Partial |
| Re-awakening Timeline | 2008 (Mayor asks to host refugees following Riace model) 2008 (abandoned homes opened to host refugees) 2010 (the first of five artisan workshops opened) |
| Project Name | Caulonia – Riace model |
| Strategy | Social: Housing for Refugees |
| Actors | Public |
| Protagonists | Caulonia local council |
| Renovation Design | Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture |
| Key Themes | Philanthropic, Residents, Culture, Jobs, Cooperation, Experimental, Inclusive, Authentic |
| Website | [http://www.comune.caulonia.rc.it/](http://www.comune.caulonia.rc.it/) |

The growing success of the innovative model of hospitality for refugees adopted in Riace that hosts new immigrants and refugees in purposefully renovated abandoned dwellings of historic towns gained the attention of nearby Caulonia. Caulonia’s population over the last fifty years had dropped by half. High unemployment rates, problems with organised crime and a continual loss of young people to the northern regions of Italy did not inspire hope for the future. In 2008, the town’s mayor committed to becoming part of the solution to the refugee crisis and opened the town’s

abandoned homes to host refugees. In 2010 Caulonia inaugurated the first of five artisan workshops focused on education and employment for the new arrivals. The arrival of new immigrant families in Caulonia has had a positive impact in the town that was previously in steep economic and social decline.

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**Paraloup (Piemonte)**

A deteriorating anti-fascist hideout becomes a dynamic house of memory through innovative architecture

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>Population decline beginning in 1900s (migration to industry in the plains below) - Municipality of Rittana: 90% population decline between 1901 (1411 inhabitants) in 1991 (163 inhabitants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Urban migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>2006 (Documentary maker Teo De Luigi, launches the idea of recuperation, Fondazione Nuto Revelli and the association 'Mai Tardi' heeds the call), 2006 – 2013 (Museum, Conference Centre and Hospitality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Rifugio Paraloup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Cultural: Museum, Conference Centre, Hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private &amp; public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Associazione Nuto Revelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Innovative - 'build within the built' and reversibility principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Ecological Sustainability, Exclusive, Culture, History, Experimental, Unique, Authentic, Nature, Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://paraloup.it/">http://paraloup.it/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Between 2006 and 2013, the Fondazione Nuto Revelli renovated the ruined stone mountain village famous for being an anti-fascist hideout in WWII known as ‘Paraloup’. The project aimed to recover both the village's physical architecture as well as its memorial, social and productive capacities. The innovative architectural project privileged the use of local materials and employed sustainable energy solutions. The architectural design followed the ‘costruire nel costruito’ (build within the
built) method which meant that the historical structures remained integral (or, in this case partial), and the original architecture (in stone) remained visibly distinct from the new additions (in local chestnut wood). The architects also adopted the principle of ‘reversibility’ so that recent architectural additions can be removed. The design included a museum, a library and conference room, an assembly hall and the Rifugio Paraloup dedicated to hosting tourists (16 beds) and catering with a restaurant for 40 guests. Paraloup is no longer a ghost town. The buildings are habitable once again, and numerous cultural initiatives including art exhibitions, meetings, screenings, readings and conferences organised by the Associazione Nuto Revelli and the Rifugio Paraloup have re-animated the previously deserted village.

**Riace (Calabria)**

*Town at risk of abandonment opens abandoned houses to refugees.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>15th century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>32% population decline between 1951 (2331 inhabitants), and 2001 (1605 inhabitants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Emigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>1999 (Associazione ‘Città Futura’ founded by Domenico Lucano) 2001 (the town became part of the Piano Nazionale di Accoglienza) 2001 - 2008 (Housing for Refugees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Riace Città Futura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Social: Housing for Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Public (grass-roots)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Mayor Domenico Lucano, Associazione Città Futura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Philanthropic, Residents, Culture, Jobs, Cooperation, Experimental, Inclusive, Authentic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.riacecittafutura.org/">www.riacecittafutura.org/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When a boatload of Kurdish refugees reached the shores of Calabria in 1998, school teacher Domenico Lucano saw an opportunity to reawaken his small town affected by decades of emigration. In 1999 Lucano (who would become the town's mayor in 2004), founded the association 'Citta' Futura', whose pledge was to grant immigrants and refugees asylum in Riace. The
association renovated the town’s abandoned houses to provide housing for refugees and opened workshops to create employment for both new immigrants and original inhabitants. The ‘Riace Model’ is a revolutionary experiment for dealing with the refugee crisis in Europe with proven positive results for migrants and original community members alike. Since the beginning of the program, the small town of Riace has hosted more than 6,000 asylum seekers. One of the limits to the Riace model is that it still relies primarily on public funding, although recent initiatives to create employment opportunities for both the hosting community and its guests have given birth to new businesses that could improve the town’s long-term economic sustainability.

**Stignano (Calabria)**

*Town at risk of abandonment opens abandoned houses to refugees.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>13th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>62% population decline between 1951 (2319 inhabitants) and 2011 (1340 inhabitants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Emigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>2008 (Mayor asks to host refugees following Riace model) 2008 (Housing for refugees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Progetto Immigrati Stignano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Social: Housing for refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Stignano local council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Philanthropic, Residents, Culture, Jobs, Cooperation, Experimental, Inclusive, Authentic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.comunestignano.it">www.comunestignano.it</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The growing success of the innovative model of hospitality for refugees adopted in Riace that hosts new immigrants and refugees in purposefully renovated abandoned dwellings of historic towns gained the attention of nearby Stignano. Stignano’s population over the last fifty years had dropped by 62%. High unemployment rates, problems with organised crime and a continual loss of young people to the northern regions of Italy did not inspire hope for the future. In 2008, the town’s mayor committed to becoming part of the solution to the refugee crisis and opened the town’s

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abandoned homes to host refugees. The arrival of new immigrant families in Stignano has had a dramatic and positive impact in the town that was previously in steep economic and social decline.

Succiso (Emilia Romagna)

_A small community saves their dying village from abandonment by forming a 'town-cooperative'._

| Village Origins | 1973 -1975 (original town destroyed in a landslide) |
| Abandonment     | extreme population decline influenced by 1920 (earthquake), and 1955 - 75 (series of damaging landslides). Population moved to 'Varvila’/’Succiso Nuovo’ |
| Cause for Abandonment | Earthquakes and Landslide |
| State of Abandonment | Extreme |
| Project Name | 'Valle dei Cavalieri' Cooperativa di Comunità |
| Strategy | Social: Town Cooperative/Hospitality/Mountain School |
| Actors | Local community & public |
| Protagonists | Cooperative 'Valle dei Cavalieri’, Dario Torri, Oreste Torri |
| Renovation Design | Conservative - minor extensions |
| Key Themes | Culture, Residents, Jobs, History, Events, Experimental, Inclusive, Rurality, Km0 |
| Website | [www.valledeicavalieri.it](http://www.valledeicavalieri.it) |

In 1990, confronted with living in a soon-to-be ghost town, the few remaining inhabitants of Succiso rallied together in a ‘town-cooperative’ to save their dying village.480 Between 1991 and 2003, the cooperative _La Valle dei Cavalieri_ (consisting in only eight members), converted the empty elementary school into a food shop, a bar and a meeting place that in winter becomes the village piazza. They created an agriturismo with twenty beds, a restaurant and a 'Mountain School' to teach young people that mountains are not only ski lifts and slopes, but also forests, refuges, hiking and pastureland. Dario Torri; president of the Coop Valle dei Cavalieri said we realised that 'private business was no longer working here. If we wanted to find a coffee, fresh bread and especially, a place to meet up together, we would have to build it ourselves.' and goes on to say 'We have nothing

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480 [www.valledeicavalieri.it](http://www.valledeicavalieri.it), (accessed 14 August 2017).
to teach others but only some advice: if the bar closes, if the wood-fired oven remains cold, react immediately.\cite{481} Community members cooperate in transporting children to and from the closest school, procuring food for the town, running the restaurant and agriturismo, producing high-quality cheeses and looking after their herd of 243 sheep. Today the cooperative has over thirty active members. The experiment at Succiso has recently attracted attention in various news reports, an award-winning documentary-film; 'Varvilia' by Valerio Gnesini (2014), and is the object of study of Japanese economic researcher Naori Tsuda. Succiso demonstrates that community cooperation can resurrect a dying town for the benefit of its members and the surrounding area.

**Terravecchia (Calabria)**

*A ruined medieval hilltop village converted into a Creative Media Institute*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>10th Century (existing medieval settlement) · Roman origins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>42% population decline between 1981 (1755) and 2011 (1019 inhabitants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Frequent earthquakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>2000 (Associazione Borgo di Terravecchia/ Creative Media Institute and Artistic and Cultural events)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Borgo Terravecchia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Cultural: Community association/ Creative Media Institute/Artistic and Cultural events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Local community &amp; public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Associazione Borgo di Terravecchia, European Union, Program Pop-Fers Campania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Art, Culture, Residents, Authentic, Inclusive, Quality of Life, Events, Jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.borgoterravecchia.it">www.borgoterravecchia.it</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Terravecchia di Giffoni Valle Piana is medieval hilltop village in Calabria with ancient Roman origins. In the relatively short period of time between 1981 and 2011 Terravecchia lost forty-two percent of its original inhabitants due to frequent earthquakes and a lack of economic opportunities for young people. In the year 2000, the cultural association *Associazione Borgo di Terravecchia* was

\cite{481} [http://comune-info.net/2013/03/cooperativadipaese/](http://comune-info.net/2013/03/cooperativadipaese/), (accessed 14 August 2017).
formed in an attempt to stem the tide of emigration. The Association worked in conjunction with the local council to renovate the ruined buildings of their medieval hilltop town, creating space for a creative media institute and accommodation for students and tourists.482 Today the village is a hub of cultural and artistic initiatives that celebrate the fusion between contemporary and traditional cultures. The village hosts the annual week-long artistic events the Festival of European Student Theatre, Olivewood and Il Borgo Della Poesia. The annual international festival held in the municipality of Giffoni, the Giffoni Experience Film Festival, attracts over 200,000 people to the region every year.483

Re-awakening Through Socio-Cultural Initiatives – Detailed Examples

Riace ‘Città Futura’ (Calabria)

Town at risk of abandonment opens abandoned houses to offer a safe haven for refugees

Village History

Riace is a town in the Province of Reggio Calabria. It has had numerous name changes over the years including Reatinum, Reatino, Reace. The origins of the name ‘Riace’ come from the vulgar Greco-Byzantium Ryaki meaning ‘small stream’.484 In the past, Riace was an important centre for the Basilian monks that grew during the fifteenth century with the flux of people fleeing from the coast abandoned because of the frequent invasions in this period.485 The first document that mentions Riace dates back to 1562 regarding the death of the citizen Cristoforo Crisostomo and his probable proclamation as saint.486 An earthquake in 1783, which destroyed a great part of Calabria, caused significant damage to Riace that, in the following years was able, with much sacrifice to reconstruct the town. The small town gained international fame for the discovery of two ancient Greek bronze statues in 1972 known today throughout the world as ‘The Riace Bronzes’.487 After the Second World War Riace experienced a continual decline in population due to emigration. While in 1951 the population was 2331, in 2001 it dropped to only 1605.488 Calabria is composed of over 90% mountains and hill-lands contributing to make it the more heavily affected region of Italy regarding abandonment. Riace was one of the many towns of Calabria destined to disappear due to the continual migration of its inhabitants.

Re-awakening

485 Ibid.
When a boatload of Kurdish refugees reached the shores of Riace in 1998, schoolteacher Domenico Lucano saw an opportunity. In 1999 Lucano founded the association ‘Città Futura’, whose pledge was to grant immigrants and refugees asylum in Riace. The association contacted the owners of the town’s abandoned houses and, in exchange for upkeeping and renovation, was granted permission to rent the houses on behalf of the new migrants. This gave birth to a unique experiment for hosting refugees in struggling communities, which would become known as ‘the Riace Model’. In 2001 the town became part of the National Project of Hospitality for refugees and accepted an increasing number refugees arriving from the overcrowded migrant centres at Lampedusa and Crotone. Four other cultural associations (A sud di Lampedusa, Il Girasole, Real Riace e Riace Accoglie), quickly formed to aid ‘Città Futura’ in planning and management of the welcoming project. The immigrants - mainly refugees fleeing from war and poverty, come from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Somalia, Palestine and Lebanon. The ‘Riace Model’ became institutionalised in 2004 when Lucano was elected mayor. The project provided the incentive for restructuring the abandoned parts of the town aided by European funds. The recuperation of the historical centre of the village involved the architectural restoration of the houses (both for homes for refugees and for ‘ethical’ tourism), the medieval town gates and the cobblestone pathways. The project has also created new work opportunities for residents and immigrants alike. Locals and migrants work together in new artisan workshops and shops that recuperate ancient traditional crafts (that were being lost) such as cloth and broom weaving and other kinds of businesses such as masonry and building shared between immigrants and locals have opened too.489

By 2016 over 6000 refugees and migrants had passed through the small mountain village with a stable population of around 250, who, supported by social services, have been given jobs contributing to the economic development of the village.490 Cultural mediators and volunteers arrived too. They brought new life to the forgotten corners of this part of Calabria where unemployment, the ‘Ndrangheta and migration towards northern Italy had left many homes, workshops and shops empty. Riace became the ‘Il Paese dell’Accoglienza’ (The Welcoming Town)

as written on the sign at the town’s entrance. The school that had closed because of the lack of student has since reopened; today there are 25 students, 15 of which are children of migrants. In 2008, the mayors of the nearby towns Signano and Caulonia, impressed by the success of the ‘Riace model’, asked to receive other refugees to create similar projects. Visitors are encouraged to stay in one of the renovated houses in the historical centre of Riace, where they can participate in seasonal agricultural activities and taste the local products, go for excursions in the surrounding hills and visit the projects of social integration organised by the association Città Futura.

**Results and Recognition**

Eighteen years on, three-times re-elected Mayor Lucano is hailed for saving the town, whose population now includes migrants from over 20 nations, and rejuvenating its economy. (Riace has hosted more than 6,000 asylum seekers in all.) Working closely with the UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency), Mayor Lucano has been able to positively transform Riace despite difficult national immigration policies and opposition by the region’s mafia. The Riace model is based on the involvement and co-responsibility of the original inhabitants of Riace and the new migrants, which has created a two-way integration characterised by reciprocity of shared learning and of new ways of living together. Riace is the example that there is an alternative – and more effective – solution to the migrant concentration camps in which for each ‘guest’ sixty to seventy euro are spent per day. The Riace model provides housing and work for the immigrants for only twenty euro per day.

Three programs are at work in Riace today: SPRAR - Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati (System of protection from asylum seekers and refugees), Minori Non-Accompagnati (Unaccompanied Minors), and Emergenza Nord Africa (North Africa Emergency). In 2010 the mayor Domenico Lucano received the third prize in the international competition of World’s Best Mayor. In 2016 he was named as one of the top fifty most important world leaders (fortieth place) by the magazine Fortune. Despite his hard-earned successes, in October 2017 the Procura of Loci investigated Lucano regarding the management of the refugee project. The charges against

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491 Ibid.
493 Ibid.
him of extortion, fraud and abuse of office, have been strongly contested, and are considered by many to be an unscrupulous attempt to damage the riace model policy’s reputation. The problem is that this avant-garde, award-winning model risks backsliding for the lack of permanent funding. This happened in 2011 when Riace, Caulonia and other towns did not receive promised funds for the refugee projects for over a year. Lucano’s model needs to be better studied and hopefully adopted as a valid and helpful response to Europe’s refugee crisis. Internationally renowned German movie director Wim Wenders, who, inspired by the experience taking place at Riace filmed a documentary there in 2009 ‘Il Volo, exclaimed; ‘the true utopia is not the fall of the Berlin wall but what has been done in Riace.’

**Insights from Domenico Lucano regarding Riace’s regeneration**

Domenico Lucano’s idea to open Riace’s abandoned buildings to host refugees was driven primarily by ethical motives. He stated; ‘I believe that we have a responsibility towards those countries of the ‘South’ that have been, for a long time, preyed upon by the west. For this reason, hosting those that flee from Africa is an obligation.’ He also recognized that hosting migrants could be a sustainable strategy for regenerating the small town’s socio-economic, demographic and cultural integrity in an attempt to prevent certain decline and abandonment. He was clear about the positive effect of the model saying,

The message that comes from our more than ten-year experience here in Riace is that the villages of the Italian hinterland, that have gone through the problem of emigration, can now welcome, instead of continuing to lose its inhabitants. This means actuating mechanisms of local micro-economy that can become alternative ways for thinking differently about the future of the community. Refugees are not a problem, but a resource.

Lucano drew on the town’s traditional values of a farming civilisation characterised by hospitality, an ethical economy and reciprocal support. Lucano emphasises the importance of the

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498 Wim Wenders (dir.), *Il volo* (Italy: Skycinema, 2010), 32 mins.


commitment and the contribution of many groups and individuals within and outside Riace including networks and public institutions. He encourages a kind of sustainable tourism in the village which favours a direct meeting between guests and the hosting community, which he considers as mutual enrichment, and an exchange of knowledge whose effects last through time.\footnote{Antonio Rinaldis, \textit{Riace il paese dell’accoglienza. Un modello alternativo di integrazione} (Reggio Emilia: Imprimatur, 2016), p. 32.} He sees the new mixed-migrant-local workshops, and the projects associated with ethical tourism, as a way of preserving the natural, social, economic and cultural riches of the small historic community.
Paraloup (Piemonte)

A deteriorating anti-fascist hideout becomes a dynamic house of memory through innovative architecture

Village History

Paraloup, or in the local dialect, Paralūp - meaning 'safeguard from wolves' - is the highest village in the Rittana municipality (1360 metres above sea level), in the Stura Valley (Cuneo) in Piemonte. It is renowned for being the base of the first anti-fascist partisan militia called 'Giustizia e Libertà' (Justice and Freedom), commanded by Duccio Galimberti, Dante Livio Bianco and Nuto Revelli. These popular leaders piloted a group of one hundred and forty-nine young partisans in guerrilla warfare between 1943 and 1944 against the occupying German army. From the beginning of the twentieth century, the residents of Paraloup progressively migrated to the plains below and other industrialising cities searching for improved living conditions and greater work opportunities. This process rapidly increased after WWII and by the 1970s the village was entirely abandoned.

Re-awakening

By the year 2006, when documentary maker Teo De Luigi first promoted the idea of recuperating Paraloup, the village was already severely deteriorated. The Fondazione Nuto Revelli immediately embraced the appeal to reanimate the neglected borg. With the aid of the association Mai Tardi and the council of Rittana, the foundation initiated the process to renovate and reactivate the neglected 'borgata'. The project aimed to recover both the village’s physical architecture as well as its memorial, social and productive capacities. One important element of the design was to celebrate the town's 'double heritage' as a testimony to the partisan experience as well as the lives, methods and culture of the peasant society that inhabited the village. Another goal was to create a ‘clean village’ with a low environmental impact that respected and celebrated the existing architecture.

504 Ibid.
505 Daniele Regis (ed), Costruire nel paesaggio rurale alpino. Il recupero di Paralup, luogo simbolo della resistenza; quaderni di Paraloup, no. 0 (Cuneo: Fondazione Nuto Revelli, 2007).
506 Ibid.
and context and was economically self-sufficient. The innovative architectural project designed by architects Daniele Regis, Valeria Cottino, Dario Castellino and Giovanni Barberis following the Carta Internazionale del Restauro, privileged the use of local materials and employed sustainable energy solutions including a geothermal system for heating, solar panels and high-efficiency isolation. They also installed the necessary infrastructure for Broadband internet to provide a constant connection to the previously offline, isolated zone. The architectural design followed the ‘costruire nel costruito’ (build within the built) method which meant that the historical structures remained integral (or, in this case partial), and the original architecture (in stone) remained visibly distinct from the new additions (in local chestnut wood). The architects chose this method to make the intervention recognisable and enhance historical authenticity and avoid an ‘incorrect’ historical reading. The architects also adopted the principle of ‘reversibility’ so that if future developments in architectural restoration methods deem it necessary, elements of the recent architectural additions might be altered or removed. The design included a museum, a library and conference room, an assembly hall and the Rifugio Paraloup dedicated to hosting tourists (16 beds) and catering with a restaurant for 40 guests. This refuge is managed by three young Italians - Sara Gorgerino, Manuel Ricca and Chiara Golletto who moved to Paraloup from their hometowns in the surrounding valley. The village’s original layout and architecture determined the allocation of spaces dedicated to the various activities. The non-for-profit organisation Rifugio Paraloup Impresa Sociale Srl was formed in June 2012 to manage the commercial activities (catering and hospitality services) which opened in 2013-14. In 2012 Paraloup became the headquarters of the new Laboratorio-Archivio per la Memoria Delle Donne that hosts the recollections of local women past and present. Under the technical guidance of Andrea Cavallero - professor of agriculture at the Torino University. The Fondazione Nuto Revelli recently launched one of the first Italian experiments of land cooperation in which owners of abandoned or underused property can loan their land to the cooperation as pasture land for animal grazing.

507 Ibid.
509 Ibid.
Results and Recognition

Paraloup is no longer a ghost town. The buildings are habitable once again, and frequent cultural initiatives including art exhibitions, meetings, screenings, readings and conferences organised by the Associazione Nuto Revelli and the Rifugio Paraloup has re-animated the previously deserted village. Paraloup has become a physical and ideological meeting place for discussion and participation regarding the repopulation and reevaluation of neglected rural and mountainous zones. It has hosted a number of significant events related to this theme including the first ever Festival Nazionale del Ritorno ai Luoghi Abbandonati (National Festival of Return to Abandoned Places) in 2012, the first edition of the Scuola del Ritorno in Montagna (School of Return to the Mountain) in 2015, the conferences Ritornare per Resistere (Return to Resist) and Ri-Abitare le Alpi (Re-inhabit the Alps) in 2016, and the Scuola Giovanni Agricoltori di Montagna di Paraloup (School Young Farmers of the Mountain of Paraloup) in 2017. Project Paraloup is also a leading national example of sustainable development that respects the environment and the memory of the past. In 2012 Project Paraloup was invited to the Venetian Biennale dell’Architettura and MADE Expo at Milan as part of the exhibition ‘Borghi Sostenibili d’Italia’. In 2011 it received the ‘Bandiera Verde’ (Green Flag) award from Legambiente for sustainability. In 2012 Paraloup received a special mention at the ‘Premio Konstruktiv’ for the best sustainable alpine architecture in Europe and, in the same year, was selected as a candidate for the ‘Premio Gubbio’ for enhancing the landscape value. Paraloup demonstrates that an attentive architectural renovation supported by an integrated system of activities including touristic, cultural, agricultural, natural and artisanal initiatives, can lead to a successful re-awakening of a town and its broader context. Project Paraloup is an environmentally and economically sustainable example of reuse that has not damaged the historical value of the settlement but has increased it. It could be replicated with success in other abandoned zones.

Insights from the protagonists regarding Paraloup’s resurrection

Marco Revelli, president of the Fondazione Nuto Revelli, offers some invaluable insights into the phenomenon of abandonment in the mountains around Paraloup and talks about the motive for investing in the recuperation of the mountain settlement. He said, ‘The mountain was abandoned for an excessive number of inhabitants, isolation, lack of services such as electricity, subsistence..."
lifestyles characterised by hardship and rationing. The industrialising plains promised paid work and easier lifestyles.\textsuperscript{512} However, he argues that today these factors are not so powerful as to prevent a possible return today. He says, ‘The values and methods of peasant society - the way they interacted with the environment can supply us with precious indications to help correct our disrespectful and erroneous relationship with it. The site does not only look backwards but, especially, forwards - the search for possible and practical solutions and initiatives for a return to the mountains, for the reclamation of traditional activities’.\textsuperscript{513}

\textsuperscript{512} Daniele Regis, Roberto Olivero, Giancarlo Allen, \textit{Atlante dei borghi rurali alpini. il caso Paraloup; quaderni di Paraloup, no. 1} (Cuneo: Fondazione Nuto Revelli, 2012), p.2.

\textsuperscript{513} Ibid.
Reawakening Through Repopulation

Repopulation is the most long-standing method of re-awakening deserted towns. The first experiences of recuperating abandoned villages such as Calcata, Bussana Vecchia and Airole, began popping up as early as the nineteen sixties. These cases were part of a migration of pioneering artists and environmentalists that saw ruined, mostly abandoned villages in isolated locations as an ideal destination for creating alternative communities and practising lifestyles far from the dominant models of society based on art, exchange and solidarity. 514 In the Western Alps, a similar phenomenon took place in the eighties in which new-settlers, mainly mountain loving foreigners relocated to small villages in the Ossolane and Cunese valleys, and restored the local built heritage.515 A specific theme such as the environment (in the case of ecovillages such as Upacchi and Laturo) or art (in the case of Bussana Vecchia, Calcata and Airole), often connects the participants of practices to repopulate a town and these themes become the main attractive qualities of the newly inhabited village. Some instances of rehabilitation such as Torri Superiore follow a specific, premeditated design in which a group of individuals work together on the whole town as part of a single project. In other circumstances such as in Bajardo and Ostana, repopulation is more unstructured in which individuals and families ‘spontaneously’ renovated and settled in the village’s homes. Although participants held some shared values - such as the desire to practice alternative lifestyles or to live in a rural, small-town setting - resurrection took place in an improvised, patchwork fashion without a unifying philosophy or formal overriding architectural project.

Ecovillages represent one of the most popular methods to re-awaken an abandoned village via repopulation. Eco-tourism is becoming an important factor in the recuperation and reactivation of small isolated and abandoned Italian villages. Ghost towns which are located in wilderness and rural settings (their extreme isolation being one of the primary motives for their abandonment in the twentieth century), provide a convenient base for a new generation of people who want to live in and visit places that permit a closer contact with the natural environment. Other typical

515 Maria Anna Bertolino, Eppur si vive, p. 91.
characteristics of these historical villages – the necessity of being self-sufficient concerning food and energy, a lack of roads, industry and modernity – while considered a considerable disadvantage in the 1900s, today are being promoted as the key attractive features. Some previously deserted villages have been converted into Ecovillages. According to the ‘Global Ecovillage Network’ (‘GEN’), ‘An ecovillage is a human-scale settlement consciously designed through participatory processes to secure long-term sustainability. All four dimensions (the economic, ecological, social and cultural) are seen as mutually reinforcing.’ Ecovillages often participate in new forms of ‘green’ tourism in which visitors can experience life in low environmental impact settlements and participate in the activities of community life such as farming, gardening, local arts and crafts as well as seminars and courses about low-impact living and associated topics. Ecovillages vary regarding philosophical and organisational experiences but are united in a common active interest in the concept of sustainability and community living. ‘Rete Italiana di Villaggi Ecologici’ (R.I.V.E.), is the Italian version of GEN (Global Ecovillage Network) that focuses on eco-village experiences within the Italian territory. It is an association comprised of communities, ecovillages, community projects and single people concerned with publicising and supporting the eco-village experiences. Both GEN and R.I.V.E are important promoters of ecovillage tourism. Seventeen of Italy’s ecovillages spread across nine of Italy’s twenty regions are officially included in the Global Ecovillage Network. Four of these (Torri Superiore, Corricelli, Upacchi, Mogliazze), have been created in existing abandoned or semi-abandoned rural villages.

The earliest example is Mogliazze which began at the end of the nineteen seventies with most of the town’s buildings restructured by 1980. Torri Superiore was first identified as the future site for an ecovillage in 1983, although the purchase and renovations took place over a long period of time, starting at the beginning of the nineties, the structure opened to the public in 2005 and renovations were mostly complete by 2012. Another eco-village Upachi was born and died in the same timeframe – purchased in 1990, renovations were carried out over the next decade while it was an unsuccessful attempt at communal living, the town came back to life nonetheless. Laturo in Abruzzo is the most recent example of a ghost town being given new life through repopulation which began

in 2011 and still in the renovating stage. The low-impact nature of these settlements, the way that they convert what might be considered disadvantageous location into an asset and their enormous potential for eco-tourism, suggests that it could be a winning strategy for bringing isolated abandoned villages back to life. Converting neglected towns into ecovillages can also contribute significantly to more sustainable national tourism strategies.

Some research regarding the phenomenon of ‘new-ruralism’ can help us to better understand the motives and implications of the increasing number of people that are choosing to renovate and relocate to Italian towns that were abandoned by their original residents and shunned for the greater part of the twentieth century. Recently there has been a re-dimensioning of relationships and above all, a cultural reclamation (Italian linguistic minorities), economic (use of local resources/ km zero), and political (in some cases has given way to the creation of regionalist and secessionist political parties). The cultural paradigm used to explain this social phenomenon is called ‘new-ruralism’, mainly studied by urban planners and urban sociologists – and today it is taking on unprecedented forms respect to the past. Salsa describes it as, ‘one of the most characteristic socio-cultural tendencies of post-modernity, a phenomenon tied to the crisis of Western urbanism and a reaction to the ecological and social degradation of the modern city.’

Valerio Merlo argues that ‘At the origins of the rural ‘contro-exodus’ there is principally a new ‘living’ culture that pushes people into the countryside to look for single-family homes equipped with adequate space, possibly with a small plot of land to cultivate a garden and vegetable patch.’ New-ruralism thus takes the form of an unprecedented movement of people from the city areas that are characterised by the rhythms and character of farm-life but which also offer the benefits of urban connectivity. It is typified by a desire for more sustainable lifestyles and natural settings, participants preferring the greater contact with nature and natural processes such as food production to urban lifestyles. However, for Perlik, there is no real tendency towards ruralism but commuting and the multi-local phenomena is rather an urban behaviour in both for its origin and its nature: He says ‘the discourse is often focused on the migrants’ supposed search for the rural.

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518 One of the earliest works on the phenomenon of new inhabitants in the Alps was conducted in the French region Beaufortain by Marie Christine Fourny, ‘Nouveaux Habitants dans un pays de Moyenne Montagne,’ *Études Rurales*, n. 135-136 (1994), pp. 83-95.


This hides the urban character of the phenomenon. The new mobilities are embedded in an urban context, are practised by prosperous urban middle classes and they are dependent upon the phenomena of globalization.\textsuperscript{521} The elements used for defining 'new rurals' the place chosen is more important than a specific kind of attitude or inclination. The professional activities carried out by so-called ‘new rurals’ are not necessarily tied to the agricultural, animal farming or other ‘local’ professions but, to the elements of attraction that coincide with the perception of a better quality of life obtainable in these areas.\textsuperscript{522} Urbain suggests that the great majority of so-called new-rurals choose to live in a rural environment to escape from urban life even if they do not conduct or search for a job necessarily tied to the agricultural world might be better described as ‘convenient urbans’ motivated by primarily individualistic reasons.\textsuperscript{523}

Today the movement of people into rural zones has become extensive enough to include a range of experiences that cannot be defined by a single label. Not all new inhabitants or those that regularly spend time in mountainous or rural areas are new-rurals. Today, in fact, rural areas offer a range of employment possibilities and lifestyles and the presence of new groups in rural and mountainous territory is creating new moments of cultural exchange and value creation. Italy’s historical villages appeal for their aesthetic and evocative charm, for the fascinating architecture and materials, for the natural resources and landscape. Tullio Romita and Sonia Nunez (2009) differentiate between rural users: people who use rural zones for brief periods of time such as tourists, commuters or holiday home owners, and new inhabitants; people that choose to live permanently in a rural area.\textsuperscript{524} It is evident that new migratory trends of people seeking alternate lifestyles in relatively isolated, semi-abandoned rural and alpine areas, is a different phenomenon from that of the movement of ‘multi-local’ or ‘part-time’ inhabitants towards the greener urban periphery, or tourism in rural areas (although these form of counter urbanisation are often clumped under the ‘new ruralism’ label).\textsuperscript{525} There is also an important macro-distinction regarding economic and amenity migrants. The economic migrants are defined as ‘people who move to a place because that

\begin{footnotes}
\item[522] Romita and Nunez, ‘Nuove popolazioni rurali’, p.6.
\item[523] ibid.
\item[524] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
place offers jobs or business opportunities’, the relocation is driven by the search of an occupation that can be found in rural areas. Amenity migrants, on the other hand, is defined as ‘the migration to places that people perceive as having greater environmental quality and differentiated culture.’ Amenity migrants relocate to the mountainous or rural communities for the greater environmental values and for what they believe will be a better quality of life, with enhanced environmental values, greater tranquillity and the possibility for outdoor activities. In this case, it is the landscape and cultural amenities of a place to be the first factor in their choice to migrate.

The latest studies about amenity migration have highlighted the relative conceptual weakness of the term and suggest that it would be better to use the notion of multilocal living or alternating migration. The ‘amenity migration’ label is probably too generic because it doesn’t distinguish between definitive change (for some scholars such as Bender and Kanitscheider 2012 this is signalled by a change in residency), - which would indicate a separation from the social relationships and cultural capital of the previous life - and those for whom the migration is a not definitive cut with the past residency but who enjoy a multilocal residence. The second category enters in the paradigm of economic migration in which we can find job seekers for a life choice, move to rural areas with new business plans and projects, not only tied to the agricultural world but also using new technologies and new web services. Romita and Nunez argue that the decision is motivated by the desire to escape from the rhythms and timetables imposed by the city and to live in a natural uncontaminated environment.

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528 The notion of amenities was first introduced by E. Ullman, ‘Amenities as a factor in Regional Growth, Geographical Review, n. 44. (1954), 119-132.
Re-awakening through Repopulation - Examples

Airole (Liguria)

Neglected medieval hilltop village adopted by a community of Dutch artists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>13th century</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>74% population decline between 1871 (1786 inhabitants) and 1971 (464 inhabitants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Emigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>Late 1960s (Dutch artists purchase and renovate the first houses), 1960s - Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Spontaneous repopulation by international artists)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Project Name: Airole Artist Community
Strategy: Repopulation: Housing for Artist Community
Actors: Private (Foreign)
Protagonists: Painter Hermanus Gordijn and sculptor Ondina Buytendorp (Dutch)
Renovation Design: Spontaneous
Key Themes: International, Authentic, Inclusive, Culture, Nature
Website: http://comune.airole.im.it/

Airole is a thirteenth-century village in Liguria. The arrivals of Dutch painter Hermanus Gordijn and sculptor Ondina Buytendorp in the town at the end of the sixties were the first of what would become a wave of international artists that moved to the village in this period, purchasing and renovating the abandoned dwellings. This flow of new migrants unexpectedly halted an inexorable decline in population between 1871 (1786 inhabitants) and 1971 (464 inhabitants). Today Airole is the most 'international' village of Italy with over 30% of residents coming from overseas - with a particularly high concentration of Dutch, German and French.\(^{531}\)

\(^{531}\) L. Rossi, Airole 500 anni. La storia di un paese nella cronaca di cinque secoli (Savona: Sabatelli), 1998.
Bajardo (Liguria)

_Ancient village beauty embracing new technology and green design principles_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>9th century BC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>83% population decline between 1871 (1636 inhabitants) and 2011 (278 inhabitants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Emigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>1960s-1970s (spontaneous repopulation) 2005 (renovation of Historical Centre) 2015 - Ongoing (innovative/ bio architecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Bajardo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Tourism: Borgo Albergo /Residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private and public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Private and public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Spontaneous (1970s) and Innovative/ Bio architecture (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Ecological Sustainability (energetically self-sufficient), Unique, Authentic, Inclusive, History, Innovation, Nature, Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.comunebajardo.it/">http://www.comunebajardo.it/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bajardo is an ancient Ligurian hamlet in the maritime Alps perched on the top of a mountain at 910 metres above sea level. The town’s traditional inhabitants gradually moved away over the twentieth century due to a disastrous earthquake in 1878 followed by mass migration. In the sixties, Bajardo - almost entirely abandoned by its former residents, experienced a small economic and housing boom as an increasing number of international visitors chose to relocate permanently to the village attracted by its mild microclimate, natural surroundings and free land. In 2005 the historical centre of Bajardo was renovated. New technologies permitted the recuperation of the still vast abandoned areas of the ancient settlement into both a town-hotel and residential homes for new inhabitants. The design employed green technology for energy and renovation and in its choice of building materials. Photovoltaic and Hydrogen means that the town is energetically self-sufficient.
Bussana Vecchia, ‘Comunità Internazionale Degli Artisti’ (Liguria)

A Hamlet in Ruins Occupied by Artists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>10th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1887 (earthquake), 1894 (definitively abandoned - ex-inhabitants forcefully moved to the new village)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Earthquake, relocation of the town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>1961 (Comunità Internazionale Degli Artisti established, first artists, move to Bussana Vecchia) 1961 - 1968 (original artistic project), 1968 - today (modified tourist project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Comunità Internazionale Degli Artisti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Repopulation, Tourism: Spontaneous repopulation by international artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private (grass-roots)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Mario Giani (Clizia), poet Giovanni Front, Sicilian painter Vanni Giuffrè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Spontaneous (mostly conservative with the exclusive use of existing materials)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Cooperation, Art, Inclusive, Unique, Authentic, Culture, Experimental, Ecological Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bussanavecchia.it/">http://www.bussanavecchia.it/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The original inhabitants of the tenth-century hamlet Bussana were forcefully evicted and relocated to a replacement village following a catastrophic earthquake in 1887. At the beginning of the nineteen sixties, after a long period of complete abandonment and ruin, Italian artist ‘Clizia’ decided that the crumbling old village would be the ideal location for an artist community. 532 A group of international artists moved to the village and formed the ‘International Community of Artists’. The artists restored many of the ruined buildings using existing material and respecting the original structure and layout of the town. Although the initial experiment failed because of fighting over property rights and commercialisation of art, Bussana Vecchia still hosts an international community of artists and is a popular alternate tourist destination.533

533 Ibid.
Calcata (Lazio)

Discontent city-dwellers resurrect an abandoned town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>12th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1967 - 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Eviction and relocation to a new town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>1980s (spontaneous repopulation and renovation by international artists and environmentalists) Ongoing (popular tourist destination)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Calcata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Repopulation &amp; tourism: Trendy tourist destination – Arts, Culture, Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Architect Paolo Portoghesi (one of ten permanent inhabitants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Spontaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Cooperation, Art, Inclusive, Unique, Authentic, Culture, Experimental, Ecological Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.comune.calcata.vt.it/">http://www.comune.calcata.vt.it/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Between 1967-1969 the traditional inhabitants of the ancient town of Calcata were forcefully relocated to another settlement as the old village - considered geologically unstable by the authorities - was to be demolished. While the council eventually overturned the decree, the town remained almost entirely uninhabited for the following fifteen years. At the beginning of the eighties, a wave of ‘discontent city-dwellers’ and ‘young hippies’ - united by a common interest in art, culture and the environment - moved to Calcata seeing it as a refuge from the city chaos. They purchased and renovated the unique village's buildings. Today Calcata is a trendy tourist destination and has about 60 permanent residents.534

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### Ostana (Piemonte)

*Population decline reversed by the arrival of new residents*

**Village Origins**  
12th Century

**Abandonment**  
>90% population decline between 1921 (1187 inhabitants), and the 1980s (10 permanent residents)

**Cause for Abandonment**  
Urban migration

**State of Abandonment**  
Extreme

**Re-awakening Timeline**  
1985 (Strict regulations regarding architecture - only 5 all-year residents at the time), 2005 -ongoing (renovation of town's homes & repopulation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Protagonists</th>
<th>Renovation Design</th>
<th>Key Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ostana</td>
<td>Repopulation: Residential renovation &amp; Spontaneous rehabilitation</td>
<td>Private (grass-roots)</td>
<td>Architect Renato Maurino, Film directors Fredo Valla &amp; Giorgio Diritti</td>
<td>Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture</td>
<td>Culture, Residents, Jobs, History, Unique, Authentic, Events, Quality of Life, Km0, Nature, Rurality, Inclusive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Website**  
[http://www.comune.ostana.cn.it/](http://www.comune.ostana.cn.it/)

Ostana is a small medieval mountain settlement located at 1250masl in the province of Cuneo. A steep decline in population beginning in 1921, resulted in only ten full-time residents in Ostana by the end of the eighties. In 1985 a regional law was passed to protect the town's unique architecture and ensure that future renovations would follow the traditional Alpine methods and materials. In the nineties, a French Shepard Phillipe and his family moved to the village but were ostracised by the town's remaining residents and left. A doco-movie filmed in 2005 by Giorgio Diritti and Fredo Valla; 'Il Vento Fa il Suo Giro', which criticised the Ostanese for driving away the family of newcomers, in a later moment became a catalyst for new attempts at attracting and welcoming ‘outsiders’. A slow, spontaneous repopulation of the town followed with newcomers

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attracted by the opportunity to practice alternative, rural lifestyles and to live in a town with a strong sense of identity influenced by the architectural homogeneity of its traditional alpine architecture – a renovation project led by architect Renato Maurino. In 2016 the population rose to eighty-two permanent inhabitants (despite 23 deaths between 2002 and 2016) and, in the same year, Ostana celebrated its first birth since the 1980s. Since 2008 the small town has hosted the ‘Ostana Prize’ – a competition dedicated to literature in minority languages. In December 2015, Ostana’s mayor, Giacomo Lombardo, was awarded the Premio Vassallo for quality political leadership and Ostana is also one of the ‘Borghi più Belli d’Italia’

Laturo (Abruzzo)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village Origins</th>
<th>13th Century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment</td>
<td>1970s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause for Abandonment</td>
<td>Urban migration (isolation, shepherding based society)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Abandonment</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-awakening Timeline</td>
<td>2011 (Amici di Laturo) 2011 – ongoing (Community)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Borgo di Laturo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Repopulation: Community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Private (grass-roots)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protagonists</td>
<td>Cultural association Amici di Laturo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renovation Design</td>
<td>Innovative - Bioarchitecture, exclusive use of existing architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Themes</td>
<td>Km0, Rurality, Cooperation, Culture, Quality of Life, Experimental, Inclusive, Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="http://www.borgodilaturo.it/">http://www.borgodilaturo.it/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Laturo is a stone village built between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries with Longobard origins near the Valle Castellana in Abruzzo. In the past, over two hundred people lived in Laturo

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539 Bertolino, Eppur si vive, p 143.
divided among fifty families and spread out across the thirty-four stone buildings.\textsuperscript{541} The inhabitants practiced shepherding, farming (potatoes and chestnuts) and produced vegetable carbon from the surrounding wood forests. Life in Laturo was difficult because of its extreme isolation, perched in between two mountain chains - The Monte Gemelli and the Monti della Laga. It is an area prone to flooding, landslide and earthquakes. Still today, access to the village is only by foot. In the 1950s the inhabitants started abandoning the community in favour of less isolated, more developed areas and by the end of the nineteen-seventies, when the last remaining family moved away, the town progressively fell into a state of decay.\textsuperscript{542} Laturo continued to crumble until 2011 when a group of passionate activists formed a cultural association ‘Amici di Laturo’ (Friends of Laturo) to recuperate the long-neglected village and restore it to functional life.\textsuperscript{543} Volunteers and members renovated the ruined buildings following ecological principles of bio-architecture and using local materials. The renovations on the first three buildings and the town’s church were completed by 2015. The project is funded primarily by members of the Association, supported by online crowdfunding. The new residents share an organic vegetable garden, produce artisan artefacts for online sale and organise regular sporting and cultural events.  \textsuperscript{544}

**Mogliazze (Emilia Romagna)**

\textsuperscript{541} Eugenio Iannetti, ‘Laturo recupero e valorizzazione di un borgo abbandonato’ (MA dissertation, Università degli Studi di Teramo, 2012).
\textsuperscript{542} Ibid.
Mogliazze is a small rural village in the hills of Emilia Romagna, part of the municipality of Bobbio, founded by monks in the ninth century a.d. Mogliazze suffered severe population decline because of urban migration and, in the nineteen fifties lost its entire population to more urbanised areas. In the 1970s a group of ecological activists recuperated the abandoned homes of Mogliazze to become an eco-village; the ‘Mogliazze Ecovillaggio Cooperative Biologica’, which opened at the beginning of the 1980s. Today the almost entirely renovated village is home to members of a farming cooperative ‘Soc. Coop Mogliazze’, which produces organic fruit and vegetables, honey and grains which they sell at local farmers markets and online. The cooperative converted some of the old homes into laboratories where members create secondary products including organic fruit preserves, biscuits and herbal health products. The Mogliazze cooperative has also recently opened a book publishing venture, publishing books on the topics of natural medicine, diet and nutrition. Mogliazze has attracted media attention recently because of the rising popularity of one of its founding members - Dr Piero Mozzi - an alternative health guru, who preaches a diet philosophy based on blood group.

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Torri Superiore (Liguria)

From abandoned hamlet to an internationally renowned eco-village

Village Origins
Abandonment
10th Century
1960s (gradual population decline beginning late 18th century, rapid decline post-WWII, abandoned by 1980s)

Cause for Abandonment
Emigration & New town built

State of Abandonment
Total (Sole remaining inhabitant passed away in 2000)

Re-awakening Timeline
1983 (Torri Superiore identified as the future location for the eco-village), 1989 (‘Associazione Culturale Torri Superiore’ founded), 1990 (association begins purchasing the village), 1992 (the first residents move to Torri), 1997-2012 (main restoration begins - Eco-village)
2005 (reception opens), 2012 (all communal areas and 21 (out of 22 planned) residential units)

Project Name
Torri-Superiore Ecovillage

Strategy
Repopulation & Tourism: Eco-village

Actors
Private (grass-roots)

Protagonists
Associazione Torri Superiore, international volunteers, resident community, Lucilla Borio, Presidente dell’Associazione, Architect Gianfranco Fava and Surveyor Mauro Fantino, Piero Caffaratti and Giovanna Balestra

Renovation Design
Innovative - Bioarchitecture, exclusive use of existing architecture

Key Themes
Ecological Sustainability, Global, Exclusive, Culture, Experimental, Residents, Cooperation, Km0, Unique, Rurality, Nature, Quality of Life, Events

Website
http://www.torri-superiore.org/en/

In 1983 Piero Caffaratti and Giovanna Balestra discovered the long-abandoned village of Torri Superiore and decided that it would be the ideal location for an ecovillage. In 1989 they founded the Associazione Culturale Torri Superiore and began to purchase and renovate the village’s abandoned buildings. Between 1997 and 2012 the growing community, together with a host of international volunteers, brought the crumbling town and its surrounds back to functional life following strict ecological principles. Today the ecovillage Torri Superiore hosts a permanent community of 22 residents united by a shared respect for the environment and community values and provides a range of activities and accommodation for like-minded tourists.
Upacchi (Tuscany)

Village Origins  Medieval
Abandonment  1950s
Cause for Abandonment  Urban migration
State of Abandonment  Total
Re-awakening Timeline  1990 (Group of individuals choose Upacchias as the site for new eco-village), 1990 - 1995 [2000] (Eco-village), 1995 (first houses habitable)
Project Name  Ecovillaggio di Upacchi
Strategy  Repopulation: Eco-village
Actors  Private (grass-roots)
Protagonists  New community, Eva Lotz
Renovation Design  Innovative - Bioarchitecture, exclusive use of existing architecture
Key Themes  Ecological Sustainability, Exclusive, Experimental, Residents, Cooperation, Km0, Unique, Rurality, Nature, Quality of Life
Website  http://www.eccoupacchi.eu/attivita.htm

Upacchi is a small medieval town containing sixteen stone houses in the hills of the Val Tiberina, part of the municipality of Anghiar near Arezzo. While inhabited by nearly 200 people in the past, the entire community of rural workers moved away in the 1950s in search of better economic opportunities in the growing cities, leaving the town deserted. In 1990 a group of people attracted by the beauty of the ruined buildings and surrounding natural landscape chose the ghost town Upacchi to become an eco-village. They renovated the town's buildings following the ecological principles of bio-architecture using natural construction materials and favouring the use of sustainable energy sources such as local wood for heating. Although the original project of creating a community based on the ideals of collectivism and cooperation floundered - described by Calogero as a ‘splendid failure’, twelve families still live in the village with the other four remaining homes inhabited on a temporary basis. The new residents come from Italian cities, Germany, Austria and England. Many of the town's residents have ‘green’ professions such as cultivating

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548 Francesca Guidotti, Ecovillaggi e Cohousing: dove sono chi li anima, come farne parte o realizzarne di nuovi (Bologna: Terranuova Edizioni), 2013.
medicinal herbs, or vocations tied to natural healing such as yoga instruction and counselling therapy.

Vagli [Borgo di Vagli] (Tuscany)

The chance to own a fraction of a fourteenth-century Tuscan hamlet

| Village Origins | 14th Century |
| Abandonment | 1980s |
| Cause for Abandonment | Emigration |
| State of Abandonment | Total |
| Re-awakening Timeline | 2000 (Architect Fulvio di Rosa begins to purchase the village's abandoned homes), 2000 – 2005 (Private residence club based on 'fractional ownership') |

| Project Name | Borgo di Vagli |
| Strategy | Real Estate: Private residence club |
| Actors | Private (Italian project, predominantly international clientele) |
| Protagonists | Architect Fulvio di Rosa |
| Renovation Design | Conservative - exclusive use of existing architecture |
| Key Themes | Luxury, Authentic, Unique, Exclusive, History, Nature, Rurality, Km0 |
| Website | www.clubborgodivagli.com |

In the early nineties, Italian architect Fulvio di Rosa purchased the abandoned fourteenth-century Tuscan hamlet Borgo di Vagli. Between 2000 and 2005 he renovated the small village to its original form with the aid of traditional artisans and builders. Today Borgo di Vagli is ‘Private Residence Club’ organised around the concept of fractional ownership. In 2007 the village’s architect and benefactor Fulvio di Rosa won the prestigious CNBC International Property Redevelopment Award. Di Rosa stated that ‘I’m convinced that nowadays, more than ever, the real luxury is [...] a state of mind; nothing to do with hotel ratings, white glove service or constant pampering.’

Frances Mayes, internationally renowned American author of ‘Under a Tuscan Sun’, wrote about her experience at Borgo di Vagli in her book ‘Bringing Tuscany Home’. She wrote, ‘I came to know

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Borgo di Vagli through my friendship with Fulvio di Rosa, who restored the Borgo with great sensitivity. He asks himself at every decision point, ‘how would the original owners have solved this problem?’ By that deceptively simple guiding principle, he stays true to the spirit of place that one feels so strongly in the village.\textsuperscript{551}

\textsuperscript{551} Frances Mayes, \textit{Bringing Tuscany Home; Sensuous Style From the Heart of Italy} (UK: Conran Octopus Publishing, 2005).
Re-awakening Through Repopulation - Detailed Examples

Bussana Vecchia (Liguria)

_A Hamlet in Ruins Occupied by Artists_

**Town History**

Bussana Vecchia is a hamlet in Liguria located about 8kms from Sanremo. The village has Roman origins (the Roman name for Bussana was Armedina or Armedana), although a permanent population in the area is only registered from the seventh century onwards. Following the Longobard invasions the community transferred to the Valle Armea where they remained until the tenth century when, because of the frequent Saracenic invasions, they returned to more easily defendable, elevated positions. In 1050, the controlling Ventimiglia Counts began the construction of the first defensive structures and the castle on the hilltop. In 1259 the village was purchased by the Republic of Genoa that allowed Bussana’s 250 residents to enjoy a substantial degree of independence. From the 15th century the population grew rapidly, and by the 16th century, the town expanded to the south-east. Most of the buildings that we can see today were built in this period. In 1404 the first church, dedicated to Saint Egidio, was built on top of the remains of an earlier chapel. The same building was expanded in 1505 and wholly modified in style (from Romanic to Baroque) in the seventeenth century by the artist Gerolamo Comanedi. Between the 1600s and 1800s - a period characterised by relative peace - Bussana remained relatively unchanged. The town’s economy relied upon subsistence farming specialising in olives and citrus farmed on terraced land.

Increasingly dangerous earthquakes in 1831, 1851 and 1854 were the warning signs of what was to come and compelled the population to reinforce the town’s architecture with archway structures that connected buildings on either side of the narrow streets known as ‘caroggì’. A violent earthquake on 23 February 1887 destroyed a large portion of the village. The earthquake hit at 6:21 in the morning when most of the residents were at mass in the village church. One eyewitness described the event;

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The earthquake destroyed almost all the houses in the highest part of the village near the castle, and the rubble buried hundreds of people. The surviving population installed an ad-hoc camp in the valley near the original village and remained there for about seven years. In the meantime, a commission had ruled that it would be much safer to abandon the old village and reconstruct in the valley below. Many ex-inhabitants were contrary to this decision and believed that development speculation, rather than the real risk, determined the choice to build anew rather than to restore the original village. In 1889 the new town ‘Bussana Nuova’ (New Bussana) was founded in the valley three kilometres below the original village that then became referred to as ‘Bussana Vecchia’ (old Bussana). In 1894 the last stalwart inhabitants of Bussana were evicted by the Council of Sanremo from the provisory camp and forcefully transferred to the new village. Bussana Vecchia was cordoned and was a ghost town for the next sixty years. Until the 1940s Bussana Vecchia was used as a cheap depository for storing construction materials, however, after WWII some immigrant families from southern Italy reinhabited some of the buildings for a short period until they were evicted.

**Re-awakening**

The initial idea to create a community of artists in the old ruined village belonged to artist ceramicist Mario Giani (known as ‘Clizia’), who, after having ‘discovered’ Bussana Vecchia in 1959, sent the following message out across Europe, ‘Looking for artists to help make a miracle. There are mountains of rubble to bring back to life with very few means.’ At this time the town was deserted and lacked essential services such as water, electricity, telephone lines and sewage. In 1961, together with the painter and poet Giovanni Front and Sicilian painter Vanni Giuffrè, Clizia

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established the Comunità Internazionale Degli Artisti in which painters, sculptors, musicians, writers and poets could entirely dedicate themselves to their artistic work. The principal aim of the Community was a cultural exchange and fraternal collaboration between the artists.\textsuperscript{558} A small nucleus of writers, painters, musicians, sculptors and graphic artists responded to the proposal and began to arrive in Bussana from all over Italy, Europe and the world attracted by the uniqueness of the ruined hamlet and the novelty of the artistic experiment. By 1968 more than thirty artists were living in Bussana Vecchia.\textsuperscript{559} Residents and visitors communicated in French, Italian and English. As the population of resident artists began to grow, the restoration efforts led to the recuperation of an increasing number of the village’s ruined buildings. The inhabitants adopted strict principles of conservative renovation such as the exclusive use of original materials recuperated from the ruins and following the town’s original design and structure.\textsuperscript{560}

At first, life in the new community was regulated according to an ad-hoc constitution that enshrined the idea of the communal sharing of all property and the artistic vocation of the community - the constitution prohibited the commercialisation of artworks, the opening of shops or profiting from the renovated property.\textsuperscript{561} However, by the mid-sixties, internal divisions had already erupted as an increasing number of inhabitants objected to clauses in the constitution relating to the notion of shared property. In 1968 the first individual atelier was opened. This event, combined with the departure of some of the original ideators of the project, irreversibly altered the character of the initial experiment of the Comunità Internazionale Degli Artisti. The utopic project was also problematised by external pressures. A constant threat of eviction hung over the project. One eviction attempt in 1968 saw the squatting artists barricade the entrance to the town, and the event involved the police and numerous international journalists. The descendants of the original inhabitants of Bussana Vecchia strongly opposed the spontaneous repopulation of their old village and formed an association ‘Amici di Bussana’, with the intention to retake possession of the town.

\textsuperscript{558} Giuffré, Bussana Vecchia, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{559} Willy Ivaldi & Roberto Marro, Bussana Vecchia (Milan: Testo & Immagine, 1994).
\textsuperscript{561} The first four clauses: 1. Reconstruction must be undertaken using only original materials, 2. The ruins are anybody’s property, new occupants need only to pay a small symbolic fee to outgoing resident for the restructuring previously taken place 3. The place can only be used for artistic purposes - artworks are not to be sold and shops cannot be established. 4. Places that are abandoned for more than three years go back to the community that can assign it to new artists.
that belonged to their ancestors. At the beginning of the seventies, a bitter legal battle began between this group and the occupying artists who had renovated the ruined buildings. This disagreement demonstrated the great extent to which the current residents had strayed from the initial ideas of the original constitution.

In the seventies, there were some significant infrastructural changes to the old town. The connection to the public aqueduct in 1974, the implementation of a sewage system in 1976 and electricity in 1977-78, signalled a dramatic improvement in the living and working conditions of the residents which led to an increased in the flux of artists and artisans. The small niche of tourists at the beginning of the seventies became an increasing flux of tourism, and artistic production began to mutate into artisan craftworks to exploit the new tourist market. At the beginning of the eighties, the resident population rose to around one hundred people. The inhabitants were no longer exclusively artists, and a variety of shops with poorer quality items lowered the overall quality of the artistic offer. Between the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties, the old town was subject to an ever-growing phenomenon of development speculation. The initial decision that new inhabitants would pay a symbolic price to cover the costs of restoration evolved into a full-blown real estate market. Holidaymakers increasingly purchased the houses (albeit no one legally owned the homes), and in the complete absence of specific regulations, the artistic vocation of the village was irreversibly damaged.562 The ongoing legal battle between original inhabitants, the Council of Sanremo and the artist residents of Bussana Vecchia was exemplified again recently on the Bussana Vecchia Official Website’s homepage a invitation was made for visitors to sign the following petition,

In recent weeks, the Italian Department of State Property (Demanio) has sent all the inhabitants settlements of tens of thousands of euros and calling us ‘occupiers’ instead of praising us for reconstructing the village and keeping it alive. We fear that we might lose our houses that we rebuilt from the ruins. The ‘Demanio’ is planning to transfer the full responsibility of Bussana Vecchia, starting from 2018, to the City of Sanremo. Signing our petition will help us negotiate as legal inhabitants with the City of Sanremo and continue as rightful custodians.563

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Results and Recognition

The original aims of the Comunità Internazionale Degli Artisti were not upheld over the years and so, while an innovative social and artistic experiment, it was not sustainable. The bitter legal battle between new and old residents and the council of Sanremo is still under process. Initial communal enthusiasm gave way to individual desires for commercialisation. Bussana is, however, no longer a ghost town. Although the project did not succeed in its original intentions (in fact the initial activists abandoned the project shortly after its beginning), the experience reveals how a temporary event can help to re-awaken a deserted village, breathe new life into neglected places and generating ideas for more sustainable long-term solutions. Moreover, the strict adherence to initial guidelines in the original constitution regarding the restoration meant that restoration efforts, while spontaneous, protected the village’s unique architecture and streetscapes. Today Bussana Vecchia is an attractive, alternative tourist destination. Its distinctive streetscape exhibits a mix of restoration and ruins and the many small art workshops and ateliers in which artists create, display and sell their artworks, attract tourists from all over the world. Several restaurants and bars offer typical Ligurian, as well as vegetarian, cuisine. There are several bed and breakfasts, a botanic garden and a nursery. The town is strictly pedestrian traffic. Bussana is still considered a zone of high seismic risk.
Calcata (Lazio)

Village History

Calcata is one of Italy's best preserved medieval hamlet fortress. It is in an extraordinary position on a rocky outcrop immersed in the National Park of Val Treja. Its origins date from the fifth century AC when it was occupied by the Falisci before they were overthrown and decimated by the Romans in 241 bc. The roads were expanded to favour commerce – especially agricultural produce – with the capital. This coincided with a period of significant growth especially from the first century ad. A part of the original Roman road can still be seen near the village walls today. Continual warfare between the Guelfi and Gibbelini between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, saw Calcata, a strategic location for the defence and control in the Valle del Treja, was drawn into the middle of the fighting. The city expanded again around the eleventh century under the dominion of the Catholic church pushing the village walls up to the precipice. Calcata was an important city, not only for its strategic military position and form but also for its religious value. In 1557 the small village was made famous for its discovery of the Holy Foreskin of Christ, smuggled into Italy years earlier by San Giovanni in Laterano. The recovered relic was housed in the small church in Calcata until 3rd of February 1900 and was associated with many miracles. Access to Calcata remained difficult up until the beginning of the twentieth century, Enrico Abate in 1984 reminded us that the hamlet remained as one of the only of its kind that could be reached only by way of a donkey trail. Architect Paolo Portoghesi remembers that in the fifties, Calcata was still guided primarily by the natural rhythms of subsistence rural life. He remembers the town's women hand-washing linen and carrying water collected from the village fountain home on their heads and the men lined up along the walls at sunset, swapping stories about their days.

On 27 June 1935, an administrative order decreed that a series of villages considered geologically unstable were to be demolished. Calcata was on the list. The inhabitants of Calcata were conceded land lots on the stable plain close to the original village to build new houses in the absence of their old village. While the original decree to demolish Calcata was postponed until the 1950s because of WWII and eventually overturned in 1993, the inhabitants of Calcata along with council buildings, the church and the school were moved to the new settlement (Calcata Nuova) between 1967-1969. By the end of the sixties, the old Calcata had been completely abandoned.
Re-awakening

The re-awakening of Calcata did not come about through a planned top-down organization but was a spontaneous grass-roots movement, its participants tied by a common interest in art, culture and the environment. The village, almost completely uninhabited from the sixties up until the eighties, saw, at the beginning of the eighties, a wave of ‘discontent city-dwellers’ and ‘young hippies’; a heterogeneous group of people – at part from nearby Rome but also from other parts of Italy and Europe – that found in Calcata a refuge from the city chaos. An undisciplined buying and selling and property speculation took place at the expense of the ex-inhabitants. This new population – initially present only on the weekends, in time a part of them moved permanently to Calcata. Alternative professions tied to tourism sprung up in the old village such as vegetarian and traditional restaurants, small shops selling home-made herbal cosmetics and paper-mâché workshops.

Restoration projects were not guided by any overarching organization or management but took place more or less spontaneously as buildings were bought but new inhabitants. The lack of a grand design is evident in the eclectic mix of individual restoration styles and commercial enterprises although almost all restoration efforts were respectful of the heritage and context that lends the village an overall harmonious appearance. The small village was (and still is), the theatre of individual acts of restoration and reinterpretation tied together by cooperation and cohabitation.

Some common values shared by the new residents afford the village a unique spirit including a vegetarian culture, environmental sustainability and protection, art, craftsmanship, alternative consumption and culture. In fact, this village stands out for the range of vegetarian and organic, ‘km0’ produce on offer as well as the high concentration of cultural associations (six), that focus on the promotion of art, culture, environment, music, vegetarian culture and bio-architecture. The interest and participation of numerous renowned artists and architects such as Paolo Portoghesi have certainly emphasized the historical, artistic and academic spirit of Calcata today. The high proportion of resident artists and their associated events and displays led to Calcata being named ‘The Town of Artists.’

The ex-inhabitants of Calcata did not actively participate in the spontaneous development of their old city and, many, in the beginning, were hostile to the process. Recently the council of Calcata has
supported the cultural and artistic events staged in the old village. North-Europeans researchers, attracted by the resettlement phenomenon, made some important studies on the popular local culture and traditions.\textsuperscript{564} Today it is possible to find young artisans using traditional methods and materials in leather and straw craftsmanship that had been forgotten. The agricultural, food and wine traditions, as well as many traditional recipes such as the ‘tozzetti di Calcata’, ‘le ciambelline all’anice’ and the ‘pizza pasquale’, have returned to common use and many abandoned farming plots in the surrounding hills have been reclaimed for growing native crops.

\textit{Results and Recognition}

Calcata has obtained the ‘Orange Flag’ brand from the Touring Club Italiano. This has assured increased visibility of the village and contributed to a noticeable increase in the annual presence of tourists. The Touring Club describes Calcata as a place in which ‘the pink tufa houses of Calcata Vecchia are populated with intellectuals, writers and artisans that bring a new vitality and imbue the place with a bohemian spirit. Today in the alleyways of Calcata it is possible to listen to musicians, watch street artists exhibitions or admire the artisan's workshops.’ Based on the results collected by the Touring Club in 2011, we can see that, thanks to the restoration and valorization projects, the resident population of Calcata (both new and old) has returned to the levels of past centuries when there were almost 1000 inhabitants, today there are 924 after the seventies when the population dropped by half. It is important to point out that of the Calcata resident population it is only 70 of these that live in the old village – the new Italian and international painters, sculptors, photographers, artisans and architects. While some decades ago there was close to no tourism counting only 10 visitors per year, in 2011 the tiny medieval village of Calcata registered over 55,000 tourists (5000 international and 50,000 Italian).\textsuperscript{565} The tourist offer is based on day trips, easily accessible from nearby Rome at 50 km distance. That said, the offer of accommodation has notably intensified – where the original village had no accommodation facilities for guests, today there is accommodation for 50 people spread throughout the town in the form of bed and breakfasts, room rentals and \textit{alberghi diffusi}. This indicates a transition a more permanent style of tourism. Movement within the ancient village is strictly by foot because there is no access for cars.

\textsuperscript{565} \textit{Ibid.}
The most recent projects involve a 150 space car park built near the ancient village, the construction of an amphitheatre and public gardens and the adoption of regulations regarding decoration in the old village.
Torri Superiore (Liguria)

From abandoned hamlet to internationally renowned Eco-Village

Village History

Torri Superiore is a cluster of stone buildings perched on a rocky outcrop overlooking the medieval town Torri. It is situated in the foothills of the Ligurian Alps, in a small valley crossed by the Bevera River about 11km from the city of Ventimiglia, and 16km from the Italian-French border. While the precise date of the foundation of Torri Superiore is unknown, Italian medieval historian Eugenio Cais De Pierlas uncovered a document that refers to Torri Superiore; 'Actum in Castro Ubi Ture dicitur' (This happened in a village named Ture), which confirms that the village’s origins date back to at least the eleventh century AD (1073). The village’s fortress structure, its strategic position overlooking the Bevera valley and its proximity to the sea were significant factors in its original purpose as a military outpost. Italian Archaeologist Nino Lamboglia has pointed to some of the town’s inhabitants’ historical surnames such as Balestra (cross-bow), and Guglielmi derived from the Frankfurt William meaning helmet, as additional confirmation of the town’s military vocation. The region of Liguria during the medieval period was characterised by extreme social and religious unrest as well as numerous Saracen and pirate invasions that attacked from the coast. This war-time context greatly influenced the extremely defensive architecture that was adopted by the Ligurian town planners at that time. Torri Superiore is, in fact, a remarkably compact fortress. Although it covers a relatively small ground space (only fifty metres by thirty metres), the sum of its total floor space (spread over eight conjoining levels), boasts a floor space of almost three thousand square meters. Torri Superiore is notable not only for its peculiar architecture but also for the integrity of its urban layout and buildings and its excellent state of preservation, in fact, the whole medieval village has remained mostly unchanged through time and is still visible in its entirety. The village is comprised of three main buildings separated by two partially covered inner alleys. An intricate labyrinth of stairways and terraces links Torri’s more than one hundred and sixty vaulted

567 Nino Lamboglia, Toponomastico intermellia. Dizionario di toponomastia Ligure (Bordighera: Istituto Studi Liguri, 1946).
ceiling (barrel and cross vaults) rooms.\textsuperscript{569} The town was built in local limestone and sandstone that came from the surrounding valley and riverbed. The buildings at Torri Superiore were added to over the centuries, with the last parts of the compact hamlet probably being built around the end of the 18th century. It was in this period that the village reached its greatest population - over 200 inhabitants. The social structure of the Torri Superiore community was dependent upon a rural economy and interdependent community traditions. Numerous testimonies of communal work and lifestyle such as a large communal kitchen, a communal oven and an intricate close-knit pattern of dwellings testify as to the importance of cooperation between the village’s inhabitants.\textsuperscript{570} Once per year the heads of the families met together in a village assembly. This form of social organisation guaranteed the survival of the community through the protection of heritage, the family and the control of relations with the bishop.\textsuperscript{571} Abandonment began at the end of the 1800s as inhabitants gradually left the hamlet to search for better work opportunities and lifestyles in the developing industrial cities on the plains below. After World War Two, the remaining population of Torri Superiore had declined to such a point as to make life in the village incredibly difficult.\textsuperscript{572} The same process took place in many other Ligurian fortress-towns.\textsuperscript{573} Apart from one lone inhabitant - Fernando Beltrame ‘Nando’ (who passed away in 2000) - Torri Superiore had been abandoned by its original inhabitants since the beginning of the nineteen eighties. Lack of employment was the principal cause of Torri’s abandonment but its particular geographical position on the oscillating boundary between Italy and France was certainly another determining feature. The struggle regarding the ownership of this area was documented by the intense work of Nilla Gismondi, a politician who dedicated her life so that the region remained part of Italy after World War Two. She founded the ‘Comitato per Italianità (Italian Character Committee) in defence of the refugees of the border zones ceded to France.\textsuperscript{574}

\textit{Re-awakening}

\textsuperscript{571} Ibid. p.61-62.
\textsuperscript{572} Ibid. p.62.
\textsuperscript{573} Cristian Roccati & Paolo de Lorenzi, \textit{Villaggi fantasma; passeggiate su antichi sentieri tra Piemonte e Liguria} (La Spezia: Edizioni Giacchè, 2015).
\textsuperscript{574} Marco Fini, \textit{Val Roja mutilata: Nilla Gismondi, una vita per difendere il diritto di essere italiani} (Milano: Edizioni Team 80, 1987).
The project to revitalize Torri Superiore began in 1983 when a couple from Turin, Piero Caffratti and Giovanna Balestra identified Torri as the location for a future eco-village. In 1989 they formed the cultural association Associazione Torri Superiore. In the early 1990s, the Cultural Association began purchasing the village from its owners, with the aim of restoring the village’s buildings it as an Ecovillage and creating homes and food for a new community of residents. Many years of patient research were necessary to find the owners and negotiate the sale of the properties. Over the course of the next few years, a detailed study of the village’s structure took place which gave birth to a complex restoration programme beginning in 1997 designed to preserve and enhance the character of the medieval village through the use of natural, eco-friendly materials, principles of bio-architecture and by working in harmony with the surrounding environment. Small, local businesses were contracted for the reconstruction work flanked by an enthusiastic group of Association members, residents and international volunteers. The renovations were primarily enacted by residents in self-construction supervised by the architect Gianfranco Fava and surveyor Mauro Fantino. Beginning in 1992 Torri Superiore has hosted numerous international volunteer work camps in partnership with the Italian environmental organisation Legambiente, for travellers interested in ecovillages and organic and permaculture methods who exchange work in the community (cooking, cleaning, farming, wall-building, clearing) for accommodation and meals. In 2012 the communal areas were completed, including the cultural centre, and twenty-one residential units out of the twenty-two planned.

The village was restored using local stone, natural lime and natural insulation materials (cork and coconut fibre panels) and the whole renovation design followed strict bio-architecture methods. The town’s doors and windows were made from sustainable wood, and the paint used was eco-friendly. Most of the town’s electricity is produced via photovoltaic solar panels, hot water is also produced with solar panels and low-temperature heating systems (max 18°C), have been installed in many private houses and throughout the village. Each private residential unit is fitted with an outdoor compost toilet. The local organic permaculture gardens, free-range chickens, fruit orchards

576 Ibid., p.56.
577 Ibid., p.57.
created and maintained by the residents of Torri Superiore provide residents and guests with a high proportion of their food.\textsuperscript{578} The community self-produces many kinds of food products including bread, fresh pasta, olive oil, honey, jams, yogurt and ice cream, local herbs for cooking and tea making. In winter, bread and pizza are cooked in wood-burning stoves. All food waste is either composted or used to feed the animals. All other waste materials are either reused, recycled or collected and disposed of separately. The community’s twenty permanent residents own only five cars and employ two donkeys as working animals in the gardens and in and around the village and the community encourages its guests to use public transport (train and bus). In 2010 the community organised the first ‘Living in Transition’ workshop on sustainability and eco-friendly living, to share the experience and skills of self-sustainable and community living. The Torri Superiore ecovillage and guesthouse offers holiday accommodation and hospitality for ten months of the year (the village closes to the public in January and February). The buffet-style restaurant offers a set menu based mainly on local and organic produce and residents and guest eat informally together.

\textit{Results and Recognition}

From only one remaining inhabitant at the beginning of the eighties, today Torri Superiore is home to thirty residents and the Association counts nearly four-thousand-two-hundred visitors every year. Torri Superiore and the ecovillage have become one and the same. The ecovillage encompasses all resident and non-resident members, and guests are invited to follow the same ecological principles while living in the village. Torri Superiore is involved in the \textit{GEN Global Ecovillage Network}, in the Italian Ecovillage network \textit{RIVE} and in the permaculture movement. From 1999 to 2003 the main office of \textit{the European Ecovillage Network} was located at Torri Superiore. Torri is also a founding member of the \textit{Italian Permaculture Academy} and hosted the Academy’s Secretariat for many years. Torri is part of the \textit{Relocalization Network} – a network of community groups, environmental organizations and NGO’s trying to ‘re-localize’ lifestyles (food and energy sources, work and holiday locations). It is also part of \textit{Transition Initiatives} – a group of villages, towns and cities working to make their community sustainable in a post-petroleum world.

Torri Superiore is a member of Turismo di Valore, an ecotourism programme created by Legacoop Liguria. Since 2004 the guesthouse is certified by ICEA – Istituto per la Certificazione Ecologica e Ambientale and is part of the AIAB – Associazione Italiana Agricoltura Biologica network. The guesthouse is also a member of the British network Responsible Travel – the world’s largest portal for sustainable tourism – that evaluates the environmental, social and economic impact of tourism on the local community. The renovation project also led to a dramatic increase of 500% in property value in the town. The experience at Torri Superiore is considered an important point of reference for bio-architecture methods and for communal living and has been celebrated on numerous occasions in the national and international press.579

**Insights from the Protagonists regarding Torri Superiore’s Regeneration**

When Lucilla Borio, president of the Torri Superiore Association spoke about their first experiences of living in the still-to-be-renovated village in 1995 she said, ‘There were only three liveable rooms, and to warm us up in winter we had to move the electric heaters back and forth which caused constant blackouts. We were living life as ‘pioneers' making homemade preserves and reading books in the cold of the evening.’ When asked about the key to the association's success, Borio replied, ‘What keeps us united is the great love we all have for this town, its wilderness and mild climate. Living together is wonderful and, at times, difficult. As a group we strongly avoid a ‘communal aesthetics', we don’t have any special rituals. We just like staying together.’580 The primary goal of the restoration of Torri Superiore stated in the Association’s statute was to ‘Create a community based on harmony and respect for other people, for nature and the environment, superseding all types of dogma and preconstructed ideologies.’581 This emphasised that the principal aim of the Association was not primarily concerned with recuperating cultural, architectural and landscape heritage but on creating a new society.582 It is only towards the end of the declaration that we see any reference to the cultural and artistic value of the historical town,


581 Briatore, Valorizzazione dei centri storici Minori, p. 54.

582 Ibid.
and then, only regarding its contribution to carrying out the goals of the association - we read that Torri Superiore represents a precious example of historical-cultural heritage in the territory and for its urban characteristics is adapt to the Association's cultural and humanistic aims that the association desires to enact.\textsuperscript{583}

\textsuperscript{583} Ibid.
Chapter 8

Changing the Form, Ownership and Identity of Historical Places – Strategies Compared and Emerging issues

Two separate approaches to re-awakening abandoned villages emerge from the re-awakening examples. The first is locally-based initiatives implemented to prevent the incremental demographic and cultural impoverishment of Italy’s historical communities and the second are projects (mostly undertaken by people with no emotional or historical connection to the village), which resurrect abandoned villages to install new communities and businesses. While they both have the common outcome of regenerating ghost towns and are equally successful in renovating the physical architecture of neglected villages, the motivations and results of the two different approaches are significantly different in a number of ways. The present chapter will examine this distinction in more detail and use quantitative analysis and case-study based evidence to evaluate the different approaches to re-awakening abandoned villages drawing attention to some of the dangers involved in altering the form, function and ownership of abandoned villages and proposing hypotheses about which strategies might be better equipped to minimise these risks. The quantitative data presented in this chapter comes from the quantitative analysis of the examples of re-awakened villages identified and documented in this thesis.\textsuperscript{584}

Out of the fifty-one examples documented, twenty-three were locally-driven projects led by local councils, community members or local protagonists and the remaining twenty-eight were carried out by ‘outsiders’, that is; people who had no emotional or relational attachment to the village before deciding to resurrect the village. Nine of the projects implemented by outsiders were led by Western foreigners (American and European). The strategy of tourism was adopted both in community-driven projects (with ten examples), and outsider-led projects (with seventeen examples). We can see that all the projects led by foreign nationals - Europeans and Americans - transformed the ghost towns into exclusive tourist destinations. Tourism was the most prevalent driving force in bringing ghost towns back to life. Repopulation mostly took the form of outsiders

\textsuperscript{584} See. Appendix 2. Re-awakened Ghost Towns
creating new ‘closed’ communities in abandoned villages (eight examples), although the case of Ostana provides an example of community-driven repopulation characterised by heightened levels of interaction and co-dependence between newcomers and original inhabitants. Top-down businesses were implemented in newly renovated ghost towns by both local protagonists (two cases) and externally based investors (three examples). The only projects to implement socio-cultural initiatives as a way of reviving an abandoned village were those led by locals (ten cases). Aside from Daniel Kihlgren’s project in Santo Stefano di Sessanio, and the work of the Austrian art collective ‘Feld72’ in Prata Sannita (which relied heavily on the collaboration of community members), there are no examples of outsiders implementing revival projects in semi-abandoned villages aimed at preventing the abandonment of the town and improving the daily life and opportunities of its existing inhabitants. In 91% of cases, outsiders invested in villages which were no longer inhabited by their original residents. (The three exceptions are Santo Stefano di Sessanio which still had a population of one hundred and eleven people, Montegridolfo with only six remaining inhabitants, and Castiglioncello Del Trinoro with eight remaining inhabitants at the time of Michael Cioffi’s investment.)

From Authentic Community to Exclusive Commodity

The examples reveal new practices of reorganising space in which it is no longer a place that assigns a social identity to the individuals that spend time in them (bank-banker, farm-farmer, school-scholar), but rather individual actors reassign identity, function and meaning to a place.\textsuperscript{585} This practice inverts the traditional relationship between place and the individual. In many cases, the new function given to a ghost town depends primarily upon the whim of investors and not on the needs or specific historical and territorial context of the original village. Out of the twenty-eight cases of re-awakening ghost-towns undertaken by outsiders, twenty-four of them became the exclusive private property of one individual, association or company. In this way villages, which were collectively owned by the community and understood as an ‘open’ living space, are converted


into an exclusive, 'closed' property – home to an elitist or sectarian entity for commercial, tourist or museum use. Until recently, the single ownership of an entire village (aside from some cases of ownership by clerical organisations) is rare. The traditional multi-party ownership of a village is especially evident in the way that properties are divided among ex-inhabitants. In fact, fractional ownership can be a significant obstacle to purchasing an entire abandoned village and even the individual buildings can be divided between (numerous) parties. It can also be extremely complicated to trace the property owners - many living overseas - and to find accord between all parties involved. The privately owned village acquires completely new meanings and abides by different rules compared to the original settlement. The town transforms from being a living organism (home to an authentic community) into a timed mechanism that can be closed at a determined hour or period of the year, renouncing all possibilities for social relationships.

Vito Teti suggests that people are too quick to invent a new use for abandoned villages and reject or undervalue their original residential vocation. The idea that a ghost town might still be able to represent its original function as a residential, normal town is rejected in most cases, perhaps too brusquely. It seems as though it is almost taken for granted that the re-awakening must instil the place with new meanings and functions, distant and different from the original one (daily life) that had shaped and sustained these villages for centuries before. The contemporary ruin gaze has perhaps paid too much attention to the weight of the absence of abandoned places, and exploited this separation, making them exclusive, and deliberately setting them apart from the place where they belonged. The decontextualised nature of ruins, can encourage the tendency to remove it ever-further from its historical and territorial setting, and tempt investors to attribute places with contextually irrelevant values. And it is perhaps it is this very fact that makes ghost towns attractive for external onlookers. The reason for contemporary society’s attraction to ruined towns – is, at least in part, attributable to their decontextualised nature and their estrangement from the surrounding context. Susan Stewart’s reflections about the reproduction of souvenirs provide a keen insight into the ‘othering’ of historical sites to increase our pleasure in them. She suggests that ‘the search is primarily an aesthetic one, an attempt to erase the actual past to create an imagined

588 Ibid.
past which is available for consumption. In order to awaken the dead, the antiquarian must first manage to kill them. She argues that the ‘rupture in historical consciousness’ is a necessary step for an object to be appealing for the antiquarian or anthropologist, ‘creating a sense that one can make one’s own culture other—distant and discontinuous [...] what is collected and observed is othered, maintaining the dominant cultural norms as normal.’ Desilvey and Edensor also suggest that ‘No doubt much of recent writing can be criticised for its somewhat romantic celebration of the alterity of ruins.’

Huyssen argues that the ruin’s ‘fundamental ambiguity’ repels interpretive fixing and Schoënle argues that the ruin ‘derives its power and promise from its refusal to be assimilated in the surrounding symbolic order.’ For some potential investors, the ambiguity of ghost towns sends them the idea that they can impose their exclusive and individual vision on the historical settlement. The risk is that historical villages become self-serving worlds created only to respond to the particular needs and desires of the present owners, independent of the town’s specific historical and geographical context. The real error of many interventions is to have welcomed the separation created by abandonment, and insist on maintaining it as a principle, snatching it up as a positive value, and interpreting the absence of people in a town as a carte blanche to determine its future form and function. In this way, the remnants of a historical, lived community become an exclusive good, renouncing the historical village’s original nature (and one of the reasons that we find them attractive today). Stewart likewise warns that when previously useful or culturally significant objects are reproduced for the sole purpose of their aesthetic value, they are emptied of ‘those qualities [...] which link it to its function in native context. They are valuable only in the symbolic system of the consumer.’ Resort-style conversions which exalt the aesthetic and nostalgic elements of the village’s architecture but neglect to dialogue with its multilayered past and genius loci, risk confirming Augè’s hypothesis which states that supermodernity does not

589 Stewart, On Longing, pp. 142-150.
590 Susan Stewart, On Longing, p. 142.
596 Stewart, On Longing, p. 149.
integrate historical places but treats them as a kind of ‘spectacle’. Demanding exclusivity from these places contradicts their history as custodians of distinct local identities that each collectively contributes to the cultural, artistic and linguistic identity of the whole Italian territory.

Resurrecting empty historical villages involves removing the patina of time and changing the village’s historical function. While nearly all re-awakening projects make a concerted effort in the physical restoration of ghost towns (because it has become a legal requisite and because historical authenticity seen as a key attractive feature), changing the ownership and function of a historical town dramatically alters its genius loci and risks robbing these places of their most valuable perceived quality – authenticity. Despite the best intentions of people who resurrect an abandoned village, the result of the work of one individual or a small group of people will differ from the result of the historic town that is the result of stratified layers of action and visions from different historical eras. According to Augè, this is because ‘[...] history is too rich, too multilayered and too profound to be reduced to the sign of stone that has emerged out of it.’ Augè’s reflections regarding the difference in value between an original artwork or artifact and a replica are also useful to describe the distinction between a ruin and one that has been restored (which, we could argue becomes a ‘copy’ of the original). He exclaims that only an obtuse logic could suggest that the copy has the same value, saying that ‘Ruins make us fleetingly aware of the distance between a sense of the disappeared past and an incomplete contemporary perception. It is the perception of the gap between these two uncertainties, two incomplete matters that is essentially the reason for our pleasure.’ And, ‘It is this [...] gap, between past and present perception that the original possesses today – a gap that is obviously absent in the copy, which, in a certain sense is missing the missing part.’ While most projects that re-awaken abandoned villages for new purposes have made a significant effort to conserve the original qualities of place, some values are inevitably lost through restoration. The original spirit of the village can be compromised, damaged or lost through poor renovation projects or by giving places a new function that is too distinct from its historical and territorial context. Antonella Tarpino warns against the risk of neglecting the memory of

596 Augè, Non Places, p. 78.
597 Augè, Rovine e macerie, p.37.
598 Ibid., p.26
historical sites to serve the ‘ever hungry present’. The mutation of villages and towns in holiday venues based exclusively on temporary permanence has not had the desired outcome everywhere. The excessive proliferation, and sometimes, the erroneous evaluation, has created the worrying phenomenon of creating a product without the potential users and incoherence between new function and the preexisting space. Moreover, short-sighted interventions – such as the disastrous example of Consonno in Lombardy – risk creating the very spaces that re-purposing seeks to remedy – sterile, homogenous and simplistic spaces. In severe cases (again the most recognisable example is Consonno); this can lead to repeat abandonment.

It is also important to remember that although they are abandoned, ghost towns still remain important sites for local identity and ritual. The change of ownership and original function of a village sometimes completely severs the link between the town with its original inhabitants - the real custodians of the site-specific knowledge, culture and history of the town. Ghost towns such as Africo Vecchio and Alianello are kept alive by religious processions, Tarpino reminds us that, ‘They still live a vigorous metaphysical existence, continuing to remain at the ‘centre’ of the intense itineraries of the memory and spirituality that periodically revisit them through the religious processions.’ Nadia Lovell also stresses the importance of the role of memory in the production of localities and identities. She argues that memory and a sense of belonging may counteract processes of dislocation and displacement creating communities of remembrance whose identity is defined in relation to imagined or no longer existing places. An outstanding example of this is the recent pledge that the Sydney-based community of ‘Poggiorealesi’ made to restore the ancient village of Poggioreale. Their decision demonstrates the significant attachment that people can have to a town even long after its being abandoned (in this case over fifty years), and illustrates the crucial importance of deep and genuine study of ghost towns before implementing renovation projects which may sever the fragile, and sometimes unexpected and barely visible links, between past and present and between the abandoned town and its previous community. Projects to re-awaken villages must acknowledge this and recognise that the experience of abandonment (in

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600 Tarpino, Spaesati, p.21.
601 One example is Gibellina Nuova - a rich open-air gallery of modern art but which does not have enough funds or a large enough flow of tourists to maintain the artworks.
602 Tarpino, Spaesati, p.9.
604 Ibid.
which communities are uprooted, cultural identities are shaken and relationships with place and people are broken), needs to be approached with sensitivity.

In some cases, the negligence of newcomers to acknowledge the deep connection between the original communities with their abandoned village led to friction and on some occasions caused scenes of hostility. This was evident in the social conflict that emerged in Bussana Vecchia between the ex-inhabitants and newcomers who both contested ownership of the old town. The artist community wanted to achieve ownership of the buildings they had occupied and renovated or at least be reimbursed for their efforts in restoration and for creating the base for commercial activities in the previously abandoned village. The ex-inhabitants, on the other hand, claimed dynastic inheritance to the homes with greater rights because of cultural continuity. Certainly, a contributing factor for the antagonism in this particular case was the fact the original inhabitants of Bussana had been forcefully evicted in the past and because the newcomers illegally occupied residences as opposed to purchasing them (this was also because it was impossible to purchase the condoned buildings). In the similar examples of a new community forming in the abandoned town of Calcata, this level of antagonism was avoided by the legal sale of properties to newcomers. The battle over property rights in Bussana Vecchia is still today a largely unresolved issue, exemplified by the most recent eviction notice given to the inhabitants of Bussana by the Sanremo Council.605 On other occasions the fault lies primarily with the original inhabitants who hinder the settlement of new migrants or obstruct community-led revival projects, preventing the possibility of positive experiences of regeneration. An example of this is the case of Ostana whose few remaining inhabitants initially prevented the settlement of a newcomer with his family leading to the town’s continual economic and demographic impoverishment. This was later recognised by the same residents as a shameful and unhelpful act and instigated a dramatic change of attitude which eventually led to the small town’s regeneration through community-driven initiatives to repopulate the town.606

606 Bertolino, Eppur si vive, pp. 141-168.
Tourism: A Double-Edged Sword

A comparison of the different approaches to re-awakening (for tourism, for new communities, for new businesses or for social or cultural purposes) reveals that tourism is the preferred vehicle for bringing abandoned villages back to life in Italy. Investing in tourism was the primary tactic for both re-awakening semi-abandoned and resurrecting abandoned villages in almost 50% of the cases studied. Both locally-led revival projects and those run by ‘outsiders’ used tourism as a strategy for re-awakening ghost towns (with ten and seventeen cases respectively). One of the major differences between the two strategies was that in 100% of community-led tourism ventures, activities related to tourism did not occupy the whole village but left space for its ‘normal’ functioning and residential use. In the seventeen cases of tourism implemented in ghost towns by non-locals, only four left space for residential use (Montegridolfo, Santo Stefano di Sessanio, Castiglioncello and Labru), the other thirteen became exclusive, ‘closed’, settlements. It is worth pointing out that almost all cases regarding the installation of new communities and new businesses in previously abandoned villages also use tourism as one of the most important sources of income for the new project. Some examples include the ecovillage Torri Superiore whose business economy relies on a constant flow of tourists and the San Vitale distillery which depends upon passing tourists for the promotion and sale of its products. The same is true of almost all the socio-cultural initiatives, which, to varying degrees, are dependent on tourism to improve the economic opportunities in isolated areas. Some of the most evident examples are the Aliano Literature Park in Basilicata and the Paraloup convention centre and mountain retreat in Piemonte Alps. Without tourism, these initiatives would struggle. The Albergo-Diffuso model was the most prevalent model of tourism adopted with thirteen examples spread across ten different regions, followed by the conversion of ghost towns into luxury resorts (ten cases). These numbers highlight the vital role that tourism has acquired in the discourses about reusing abandoned architecture in Italy and seeking to prevent the abandonment of small settlements.

There are many advantages to eco, rural and cultural tourism for regional Italy. The first is that it is adaptable to all seasons, permitting businesses to remain active outside of the traditional vacation periods. Secondly, it is based on the celebration of local resources and products, which can

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607 See. Diagram 5: 'Number of Projects Divided by Re-awakening Strategy'.

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contribute to enhancing and conserving site-specific cultures, agricultural products, artisan crafts and the natural environment.\footnote{Angela Guarino and Silvia Doneddu, ‘Turismo rurale e turismo nelle aree rurali: una definizione in movimento,’ \textit{Agrireazioneeuropea}, n. 27 (2011).} Rural and cultural tourism uses the production, representation and the promotion of site-specific products and immaterial cultural heritage as a kind of territorial brand name in which cultural traits become instigators for regional development.\footnote{PP.Viazzo and L. Bonato, ‘Nuove sfide per l’antropologia Alpina’, in L.Bonato and PP.Viazzo (eds.), \textit{Antropologia e beni culturali nelle alpi. studiare, valorizzare, Resituirre} (Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 2013), p.19.} However, this kind of promotion can be a double-edged sword in which cultural heritage, traditions and local products are converted into commodities and lose their role as authentic expressions of the daily life and culture of its inhabitants. The examples studied demonstrate that there are positive and negative consequences for altering historic villages to serve a shifting tourist market. While, on the one hand tourism is the primary motivator for reviving architecture, history and culture of villages that would have most likely otherwise decayed and been forgotten, such a strong emphasis on the need to make abandoned sites practically useful and aesthetically pleasing for a transient population of tourists risks sacrificing the more complex offerings of abandoned places. Even in the most exemplary projects to bring abandoned villages back to life via tourism such as the Albergo Diffuso in Santo Stefano di Sessanio, the history of a place can nonetheless be ‘transformed, exaggerated, and modified by the changing demands of a fluctuating [tourist] market.’\footnote{Stewart, \textit{On Longing}, p.150.}

One of the main dangers of converting ghost towns into tourist towns is it encourages a neo-romantic, celebratory portrayal and promotion of Italy’s historic villages which privileges aesthetic elements and emphasises sentiments of nostalgia. The project which converted the rural Tuscan town Castelfalfi into an exclusive luxury resort was in fact criticised for this reason, the town members stated ‘[...] It is not ‘com’era dov’era’ (how it was, where it was) renovation, but rather ‘how it could have been and where the TUI would have liked that it was.’\footnote{‘Appello per la tutela di Castelfalfi’, 14 December 2007, p. 1-2.} In this vision, the renovated town is only perceived with its historical strengths and not its shadows. These kinds of transformations reproduce what Vito Teti claims to be an ‘unbearable form of rhetoric’ far from the reality of these worlds.\footnote{D’Andrea, Giulio. ‘Paesi senza retorica, la Sfida è l’Inverno; La Lezione di Teti, Antropologo allo ‘SponzFest’: basta elegie serve un progetto di sviluppo’, \textit{Il Mattino Avellino}, 26 August 2017, p. 34.} Such depictions modulate and minimise the significance of the lived
presence of historical spaces and places and take place at the expense of more complex imaginings and analyses.\textsuperscript{613} Almost all cases of resurrecting ghost towns in Italy for tourism involve the careful research of the town’s history, culture and architecture and involve a sophisticated architectural project based on the valorisation and respect of the town’s original urban design, building methods and materials. The better projects, however, go beyond the physical restoration of the village and contribute to the revival of local culture and customs and surrounding territories. Teti argues that it is only by genuinely connecting with abandoned historical villages - not just by celebrating them - which we can hope to achieve sustainable solutions to the widespread phenomenon of abandonment.\textsuperscript{614}

Some tourism ventures are more effective than others at maintaining a sense of authenticity and connection with historical and territorial context. Resort-style conversions such as Castelfalfi, Borgo Finochietto and Borgo di Bastia Creti, while being incredibly successful business ventures which benefit the surrounding area’s economy in some ways such as increasing local employment and having the positive outcome of renovating historical architecture that would have otherwise been lost to ruins, they effectively convert the remnants of an authentic community into an exclusive commodity. These projects are typically carried out by ‘outsiders’: people that have little to no historical attachment to the abandoned village but who become spontaneously attracted to the place and decide to invest in its resurrection. The primary investors of this kind of re-awakening do not necessarily choose to live within or near the newly reawakened village; some examples are Borgo di Vagli, Scopeto, and Borgo di Bastia Creti. Resort-style recuperations typically rely on private investment in which the whole village or a significant part of the village becomes the private property of a single individual, association or business. The final use of the village is narrowly focused and well defined and is exclusively for the owners and their paying guests, severing all ties with its former inhabitants or non-paying visitors. The resort-style conversion of historical villages is a method which risks alienating the town with its historical past, genius loci and its centuries-old relationship with the town’s territory. A better method for re-awakening towns via tourism is the Albergo Diffuso. We can highlight the ‘Albergo Diffuso’ concept as the most

\textsuperscript{613} Edensor and Silvey, \textit{op.cit}, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{614} Barbieri, Elena. ‘Il saggio di Vito Teti; rovine e ritorni, quel che resta dell’Italia in via d’abbandono. sulle tracce dei paesi vuoti; dalle alpi alla Calabria, passando per Amatrice.’ \textit{Il Giornale} (9 June 2017), p.30.
inclusive and sustainable tourism strategy identified in this study. In this kind of tourism, villages become the symbolic home of the collective historical memory of a community and permit a certain degree of socio-cultural continuity between past, present and future generations.\textsuperscript{615} By not exalting a sole proprietor of the village, the Albergo Diffuso method leaves space for residents to carry out ‘normal’ daily activities and allows the town to retain many of its traditional functions as a town – private spaces remain private, but the streets are not privately owned. Kihlgren’s experience in Santo Stefano has been without a doubt the most internationally successful example of this method. Kihlgren’s team found success primarily because of the close collaboration with the town’s original inhabitants through direct employment in hospitality and through extensive research undertaken regarding their traditional practices, lifestyles and resources.

Another problematic issue that can arise with rural tourism, in particular, is that it converts the value of agricultural landscapes from a living and working space to an ‘authentic tourist space’, in which rural landscapes are lived in and interpreted by a transient population of tourists or ‘outsiders’, as they wish.\textsuperscript{616} This is particularly evident in the examples of rural ghost towns in Tuscany being converted into luxury resorts. The customers are attracted by the bucolic charm and country setting, but any genuine interaction with agricultural processes or people involved in farming activities is limited. To be sustainable, tourism in rural areas needs to be multipurpose sustaining the culture, economy and the natural landscape of the hosting community.\textsuperscript{617} Whether rural tourism will prove to be a successful agent for sustainable, ecological development is still to be seen. The same issue arises regarding the phenomenon of ‘new ruralism’ which has led to the colonisation of rural spaces by people that are not connected in any way to traditional rural practices and lifestyles.

\textsuperscript{616}Corti, ‘Quale neoruralismo?’, p.169.
\textsuperscript{617}Angela Guarino and Silvia Doneddu, ‘Turismo rurale e turismo nelle aree rurali: una definizione in movimento,’ \textit{Agriregionieuropa}, n. 27 (2011).
Creating New Communities

The phenomena of new ruralism and counter-urbanism raise some of the same questions as rural tourism. Although attracted by the perceived ideals of community, ruralism and authenticity, it is increasingly evident that not all people seeking new lifestyles in Italy’s long-neglected villages are interested in reproducing these values but rather, consuming them. One exemplary case is Borgo di Vagli, a town inhabited by time-share international residents. This model unabashedly embraces (and exploits to its favour), one of the underlying realities of new ruralism – that it is a temporary and superficial use of rural landscapes by a temporary clientele with no deep roots in the area.618

There is the risk that this vision creates an unequal relationship with the city and with the models and tastes of the city that would tend to overtake through symbolic and material expropriation of rural space. It also risks consequential crushing of the productive-agriculture model by the aesthetic-romantic vision, encouraged by the mass media that celebrates an idyllic image of the rural condition and seeks to recreate a ‘peasant atmosphere without the peasants’.619

The installation of untested, new communities in abandoned historical towns in the form of artist communities and ecovillages and the creation of new communities formed by the spontaneous mixing between remaining original inhabitants and newcomers, are social experiments that have had varying degrees of success. Virilio sees the rural revival, through its calls for the traditional, the ancient and the natural, as a way to escape from the endemic anxiety of the ‘panic-city’ which thus constitutes a space of pastoral consumption and emotional compensation.620 The rural, far from being neutral, becomes the stage of political-cultural quarrels whose use depends on those that imagine it as either an alternate economic space or a natural space to protect via extreme conservation.621 Michele Corti points to instances of ‘expropriative new-ruralism’ and ‘ideological naturalism’ suggesting that these are essentially urban models which exclude any kind of ‘productive’ agricultural activity, thus breaking every link with the rural traditions of the territory.622 These are significant (but downplayed), traits of counter-urbanism which many

618 Ibid.
620 Paul Virilio, Città panico (Milano: Raffaello Cortina, 2004).
621 Corti, ‘Quale neoruralismo?’, p.169.
622 Ibid., p.174.
unsatisfied urban dwellers prefer to ignore. The risk is that if there are only consumers and no producers than the original values which motivated the initial choice to relocate to rural and mountainous locations and small villages will be lost.

The diachronic study of the new ruralism phenomenon undertaken by the anthropologist Jean-Didier Urbain in 2002 provides some framework for evaluating the different forms of colonisation and repopulation of semi-abandoned and completely abandoned Italian villages under examination. Urbain pointed to three distinct phases of new ruralism beginning halfway through the twentieth century: ‘Elite new ruralism’ practiced by industrialists and the upper-middle-class in the fifties and sixties, ‘Protest new ruralism’, practiced after the year 1968 as contestation of the capitalist system and ‘Escapist new ruralism’ practiced as an ‘escape to the countryside’ and a search for a non-urban refuge but without any aspirations of relocating or for connecting socially or searching for work. Urbain argued that the last phase – ‘Escapist new ruralism’ – continued up until the moment of his writing (the study was published in 2002). For Urbain, the themes that traditionally justified the counter-exodus – the search for contact with nature, a sense of identity and territorial belonging, the desire for community ties – were no longer useful to explain the new residential dynamics in those rural spaces. He argued that the contemporary new rural is not characterised by a desire to share the territory but rather by a reigning individualism.

According to Urbain, the contemporary new rural prefers to live in an isolated and decontextualised state (on their own plot of land not caring to participate in community life), in which sociality is carried out in other moments and in other places (in the city and at work). In this description, new-ruralism is practised in the same way as Augé’s non-place in which people live unconnected from the immediate surrounding and community, in ‘a world thus surrendered to solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and the ephemeral’. This idea is probably an accurate description for cases in which abandoned villages are purchased and converted into exclusive resorts, in which hosts and guests are able to live in a certain place, picking and choosing whatever

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624 Ibid.
625 Ibid.
626 Augé, *Non-Places*, p. 78.
they prefer from the historical and territorial context. Even ecovillages, which pride themselves on being homes to the ideals of community and solidarity – are exclusive places and, while they welcome visitors for tourism, are essentially closed communities.627

Italian anthropologist Bertolino has recently suggested the emergence of a fourth phase of new ruralism beginning with the 2008 economic crisis.628 Based on her study of the community-driven repopulation of the small mountain village Ostana, Bertolino argued that the crisis – which contributed to lowering the spending power of Italian families – generated a noticeable discrepancy between job supply and demand leading to growing discontent for city life and a perception of it as alienating and impersonal.629 She argued that these factors influenced the creation of a ‘fourth’ generation of new rurals which have a slightly different profile from the ‘escapists’ because they choose to permanently migrate to rural areas in search for a new lifestyle, and are seeking deliberate interaction and integration with the resident rural population creating entirely new relationships with rural spaces.630 Described as ‘innovators and integrators’, they do not adhere to traditional and conventional visions of the mountain but they seek to participate in local community life and proposes specific ways of establishing themselves in respect to living and working in mountainous and rural areas. They choose ruralism as an alternative lifestyle choice and are keen advocates of the re-use and re-functionalisation of the architectural heritage, often investing in hospitality ventures aimed at cultural tourism.631 Bertolino reminds us of the agency of these social actors who are inserted in wide networks that extend across a global dimension. Given their ‘unrooted’ way of moving in the world, many of them propose strategies that accept a ‘fluid’ concept of identity and reinvent traditions as ways to feel part of a given place.632 New-settlers attempt to found strong community mechanisms and networks based on the sharing of values, knowledge and local know-how, creating unprecedented forms of territoriality and ‘rurality’, not

628 Bertolino, Eppur si vive, p. 88.
629 Ibid.
632 Bertolino, Eppur si vive, p. 89.
inherited but constructed.\textsuperscript{633} In a study regarding the arrival of new inhabitants in the Alpine zones, anthropologist Zanini suggested that the distinction between 'old' and 'new' inhabitants is not nearly as distinct as might be believed. By investigating different modes of living in mountain zones, she argued that the 'old' and 'new' resident dichotomy is rather blurred, characterized by 'halfway', 'overlapping' and 'divergent' categories.\textsuperscript{634} The same affirmations come from the analysis of the results of a fieldwork study carried out in three sample areas of the Piemonte Alps by the association \textit{Dislivelli},\textsuperscript{635}

Corti likewise points to other cases of return to rural areas that continue to maintain a link with traditional agricultural activities.\textsuperscript{636} He also emphasises the agency of these social actors who are becoming the protagonists of returns to disadvantaged and marginalised areas. These activities are characterised by new forms of commerce such as direct sale, local markets and ‘adoption’: an innovative form of active coproduction and capitalisation on the part of the conscious consumer that decides to invest in the biodiversity, landscape and traditions tied to food production.\textsuperscript{637} Agricultural activities interexchange with other economic sectors such as crafts and tourism. These new practices promote social value by rebuilding the rural matrix, caring for the landscape, conserving inter-generational expertise and by creating new relational and solidarity networks between city and rural areas. In these cases, the rural space becomes a multi-functional space populated by individuals that recuperate rural traditions.\textsuperscript{638} This fourth phase of new-ruralism is an accurate description of those new inhabitants which respond to the socio-cultural initiatives proposed by remaining inhabitants of abandoned villages such as we have seen in Ostana, Riace and Prata Sannita. Inclusive forms of regeneration; characterised by strong community cooperation in which ex-inhabitants and interested newcomers work together on the holistic recuperation of material and immaterial cultures and communities, are better equipped to maintain a vibrant and

\textsuperscript{633} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{635} The research project: ‘Vivere a km 0’ involved the low and high Valle di Susa and the Valle Chiusella in the province of Torino and the extra-alpine territory of the Langhe Cuneesi. A follow-up project: ‘Novalp: nuovi abitanti nell’Alpi’ was undertaken in 2012 across the whole Alpine arch. The results are published in Corrado, Dematteis and Di Gioia (eds), \textit{Nuovi montanari; abitare le alpi nel xxi secolo} (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2014).
\textsuperscript{636} Corti, ‘Quale neoruralismo?’, p.174
\textsuperscript{637} Merlo, \textit{Voglia di campagna}, p. 176.
\textsuperscript{638} Bertolino, \textit{Eppur si vive}, p. 89.
living community and conserve the fragile link between ghost towns and their historical, territorial and social context.

**Prevention More Successful than Resurrection**

What emerges is that there is a marked difference between projects that seek to *resurrect* a completely abandoned village and those that act to *revive* a dying village. While the first is focused on renovating and giving a new use to derelict architecture, the second concentrates on preserving an existing (albeit fragile) link between the past, present and future. Revival or prevention projects deal with Italy’s truly authentic borghi - those that have changed so little in appearance, inhabitants and vocation for the last thousand years, which risk disappearing but which still maintain a strong link with their territorial, social and historical context. The focus of the recuperation project shifts from being primarily focused on the physical renovation of the town to becoming a multifaceted regeneration project with the objective to improve the town’s capabilities to provide its original (and new) inhabitants with a dignified living space. Typically pioneered by local actors or people emotionally attached to the village, these kinds of initiatives are characterised by high levels of community cooperation and aim to improve the residents quality of life by increasing the town’s economic viability, and social and cultural opportunities. They pursue a variety of strategies typically using the village’s intrinsic values (naturalistic, cultural, historical, community) to attract external investment and awareness, tourists and potential new inhabitants. The town’s abandoned buildings are recuperated and given new uses aimed to reactivate the failing economy. Frequent cultural and social events are designed to attract awareness and visitors. Revival and prevention projects force genuine reflection and connection with what remains, as Vito Teti advises, ‘the return - non-return must, thus, take place beginning with a deep analysis of what remains, with the understanding that the readily evoked and longed-for ancient ties, the primal relationships and solidarity, real or imagined, have profoundly changed or they no longer exist.’

It is much more difficult to implement a poorly contextualised project or an over-celebratory portrayal of a village that is still inhabited by its original residents. Locally-based initiatives that work to prevent the prevention of the abandonment of a town rather than those that seek to resurrect a long-neglected

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Village are the most successful in maintaining a sense of authenticity and conserving the fragile link between ghost towns and their historical, territorial and social context. The final project is also inclusive rather than exclusive because it involves dialogue and compromise between numerous actors and participants which fosters multiple uses and interpretations. Franco Armenio reminds us that to prevent the death of a town, 'Interventions must be site-specific and very diverse. There are no two towns alike, and so the policies have to be made to measure for each place [...] there cannot be one centre that decides for all. Nor is it possible to let the local communities decide who are often guided, not by the most illuminated but by the most cunning.'

The only two top-down projects run by local protagonists regarded the creation of new businesses – Brunello Cucinelli at Solomeo and the Gozio brothers in San Vitale. The examples suggest that a more concerted effort to reproduce promote and conserve local traditions and culture was made on the part of these locally-based actors, compared to outsiders who used renovated ghost towns for their business (Borgo della Conoscenza, Pisciello and Colletta di Castelbianco). In the cases of Solomeo and San Vitale, significant investments were also made to improve the employment opportunities and lifestyles of the local community. (Increased employment opportunity for highly specialised locals was also an outcome of the resurrection project in Pisciello in Umbria). In the case of the 'outsider'-led businesses of Borgo della Conoscenza and Colletta di Castelbianco, the aesthetic interest of the abandoned villages and the desire of the protagonists' to exploit the new frontiers opened by telework, played a determining role in their resurrection (more than any real desire to combat abandonment or because they were motivated by a sense of indignity at the cultural and socio-economic decline and abandonment of Italy's small communities).

The example of Succiso 'Town Cooperative' in Emilia Romagna, in which the remaining community members of the village banded together in a single project to prevent the complete abandonment of their dying village, demonstrated that even when total abandonment seems like the only choice, an innovative idea supported by strong community willpower can provide the incentive and means to regenerate a ghost town. They were also able to maintain (and enhance), the link with site-specific customs such as bread making, shepherding and the traditional interdependence of community

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members. Tourists that visit Succiso have the opportunity to interact with an authentic and living community rather than an exclusive, privately owned town. Another exemplary revival project is the project implemented by the community members of the struggling Calabrian village Riace who opened the town’s abandoned homes to host international refugees. This model is one of the most dynamic examples of reawakening abandoned villages that has not only been successful for regenerating a ghost town’s population and economy but is also a world-class example of humanitarian aid. All over Italy international migrants are slowly beginning to repopulate Italy’s abandoned villages. Men, women and children from all over the world including India, Morocco, Albania, Bangladesh, China, Ghana and other countries are beginning to occupy not only the spaces which were abandoned by their original inhabitants over the course of the twentieth century, but also traditional activities long-neglected and sometimes forgotten by the local population. These spaces become laboratories of culture, exchange, contradictions from which new solutions may form that mix environmental valorisation, traditional and contemporary know-how. This particular solution is not only possible but it could become a popular choice and activate new processes of place construction. The experience at Riace suggests that it is only by being courageous and open to outside interaction that historical communities and their ancient cultures will survive. Vito Teti likewise stresses that:

[…] if a new community is possible and desirable there where an ancient town previously existed, this community needs to be reorganised and invented, recognising the leaks, the abandonment, returns and also new forms of production and social relationships. The traditional forms of conflict, laceration and division of the communities have disappeared or transformed […] in ‘narratives’ to make way for new forms of conflict or, perhaps, cohesion.

The experience of Riace is an example of deep acceptance of the idea that the specificity of place does not stem only from a ‘long internalized history’, or ‘mythical internal roots’, but from the ‘absolute particularity of the mixture of influences found together there.’ It is a model that recognises the dynamism of places; that they are not static or bounded, but are unique intersection...

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642 Mario Ricca, Riace, il futuro è presente. Naturalizzare ‘il globale’ tra immigrazione e sviluppo interculturale (Bari: Edizioni Dedalo, 2010).
643 Teti, Quel che resta, p. 234.
points in a greater global network of social relations, movements and communications. The Riace example demonstrates that by embracing genuine connection with other communities in need (not only with paying tourists), Italy's small historical villages might preserve their authenticity as living places and retain their significance in the globalising, supermodern world. We could argue that socio-cultural initiatives that work to regenerate abandoned villages in conjunction with the most recent forms of 'new ruralism' (characterised by heightened levels of interaction and integration between newcomers and original inhabitants and by a genuine interest in reproducing and creating new forms of community), will be the most successful strategy to regenerate abandoned towns while preserving their sense of authenticity.

The Importance of Adaptability

Another important idea which emerges from the analysis is that adaptability is another vital ingredient for sustainable re-awakening projects. In our examination of the underlying causes of the abandonment of Italian villages in chapters one to three, one of the deductions was that the choice to abandon one place in favour of another is not only dependent upon dramatic events but also (and perhaps primarily), on the changing needs and desires of a given population. The phenomenon of abandonment (and place revival) is tied to the way that people invest particular places with value and the relationship that people choose to have with places. For example, while in the medieval period the population sought protection, stability and isolation, at the turn of the nineteenth-century people sought connection, economic advancement and social revolution and moved en masse to the industrialising and large urban centres. Today the situation has changed again with globalisation with the needs and desires of the current population changing too and people are revisiting the places considered of little use or interest to people in the nineteen fifties and sixties, and investing in their resurrection and revival. An awareness of this historically shifting perception of the value of places is the first step to designing and implementing sustainable development projects. It is evident that a strong sense of place, identity and a sense of belonging are not enough to prevent abandonment (we have seen numerous cases of abandonment in the

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strongly rooted mountain populations in the Alps)- there need to be other reasons for people to remain – and indeed, to return. The most successful re-use projects acknowledge that the desires and needs of future generations will be different from those of the present and create flexible renovation designs which permit future modification if required. Two examples of innovative and ‘flexible’ architecture include the Terravecchia Media Institute and the Paraloup convention centre whose architects adopted the principle of ‘reversibility’ so that if future developments in architectural restoration methods deem it necessary, elements of the recent architectural additions might be altered or removed. Another exemplary case in which significant forethought and investment have gone into developing a long-term solution for regenerating an entire territory is Brunello Cucinelli’s investment in Solomeo. Even though his business relies on specific spaces dedicated to the fabrication of clothing, the renovations were planned to create adaptable buildings so that the rooms which today are used as offices and workshops can easily be transformed into residential homes in the future if necessary. Cucinelli said ‘a company must plan for the next three months, three years, and three centuries.’

Another idea that emerges from the study is that even temporary events or other non-interventionist forms of re-use in ghost towns can have a lasting positive impact. The experiences of cinema in the ruined villages of Craco and Monterano, for example, teach us that ‘re-use’ does not necessarily mean renovation or permanent occupation. Other forms of non-invasive and ephemeral experiences of re-use such as route tourism (in Pentedattilo), exploration for photography (Gibellina and Poggioreale) and extemporaneous festivals (in Castelbasso and Alianello), demonstrate that there is a range of possibilities for interacting with abandoned villages while accepting them in a ruined state. These examples also demonstrate that temporary; non-interventionist forms of re-use can stimulate the economy of nearby communities and attract investment for the conservation of the abandoned village itself (Balestrino is a fitting example). Isabella Inti, the protagonist of the movement Temporiuso, suggests that temporary reuse of neglected spaces should be approached as ‘seed-sowing’ for future long-term revival activities.

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647 Isabella Inti, Giulia Cantaluppi & Matteo Persichino, Temporiuso. Manuale per il riuso temporaneo di spazi in
She argues that the spontaneous temporary colonization of abandoned spaces is not merely an ephemeral exercise but can act as a pioneering tactic to permanently alter a place’s existing semantic codes, uses and practices. As such, more formal planning methods regarding disused urban spaces may benefit from learning from and incorporating, examples of spontaneous and informal transformations of neglected areas of the built environment.

As history teaches us, art and artists are often the forerunners of significant cultural change. History also teaches us that artistic experiments are often short-lived and ephemeral – their primary motive to upset certainties rather than create sustainable projects. While not all the pioneering experiences gave birth to permanent realities (for example, the original idea of creating an international community of artists in Bussana Vecchia transformed over time into a tourism-based enterprise), they definitely sparked regeneration and renewal in zones of decline and had an important role in inspiring others to undertake similar projects. This is exemplified by the testimonies of some of the interviewees at the Torri Superiore Ecovillage who cited the earliest experiences of alternative reuse in Bussana and Calcata as significant inspiration for making their choice to resurrect Torri. The temporary artistic communities have also had a lasting impact on the genius loci of those towns; in fact, today tourism in those areas is dependent upon their actions. Art and tourism, as Carol Berens notes, are two powerful economic development partners that often work together to rescue abandoned industrial buildings and landscapes. Art also played an important role following the Belice Valley Earthquake in the form of memorialising the destroyed town of Gibellina (immersed in a landscape artwork by Alberto Burri between 1981 and 1984) and endowing life and character to the replacement village. Art still plays an important role in the temporary and permanent re-awakening of abandoned villages through community workshops, creative labs, locations for art, music, film and festivals.

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649 Ibid., p. 171.
650 Ibid., p. 171.
651 Inti, Cantaluppi & Persichino, Temporiuso. Manuale per il riuso, pp. 21-23.
652 Ibid.
653 Ibid.
Chapter 9

Why now?

Historical Evolution of the Practice of Re-awakening Ghost Towns

Contemporary interest in Italy's abandoned villages is not an isolated phenomenon but it is related to the growing phenomenon of interest and action in abandoned places throughout the world. This new interest is characterised by new ways of describing, perceiving and interacting with abandoned places in the twenty-first century, no longer as rubbish but as resources. Abandoned sites are also being envisioned as exciting, non-prescriptive places for experimentation and exploration. By tracing the evolution of the practice of bringing abandoned villages back to life in Italy and by comparing the historical reasons for the abandonment of Italy's villages with the contemporary motives for their reuse, we can begin to generate causal hypotheses regarding this historically new way of interacting with Italy's ghost towns. The following diagrams help to illustrate the evolution of interest and action in Italy's ghost towns over time. The first diagram (Diagram 6. 'Re-awakening Italian Ghost-Towns: Historical Timeline') is a timeline that charts the development of the fifty-one, site-specific re-awakening projects. The starting date refers to when renovation works or the particular program officially began and the end date refers to when the main renovations were completed. The second diagram (Diagram 7. 'Timeline of Significant Events, Networks and Associations Regarding Italy's Ghost Towns'), charts the dates of significant events, networks and associations which have been pivotal in the discussion and practice of re-awakening Italy's long-neglected towns.
Diagram 6. ‘Re-awakening Italian Ghost-Towns: Historical Timeline’
Diagram 7. ‘Timeline of Significant Events, Networks and Associations Regarding Italy’s Ghost Towns’

By examining the historical development of re-awakening projects in Italy the first observation to be made is that it is a relatively recent practice. Aside from some pioneering experiments in the late sixties and early seventies – the practice of bringing ghost towns back to life only represented a tiny niche until the beginning of the nineties. The number of projects increased exponentially after the turn of the twenty-first century. The first experiences of recuperating abandoned villages began
popping up as early as the sixties. These cases were part of a migration of pioneering artists and environmentalists that saw ruined, mostly abandoned villages in isolated locations as an ideal destination for creating alternative communities and practising lifestyles far from the dominant models of society based on art, exchange and solidarity. The first rehabilitation experiments were led by international artists in Bussana, Calcata and Airole. A more consistent wave of interest in re-awakening abandoned villages began in the late nineties and only became prominent after the turn of the twenty-first century when the number of projects concerning the resurrection of abandoned villages (as well as the revival of those in decline), grew dramatically. We can also note that aside from some pioneering examples of networks that drew attention to and sought to promote Italy’s neglected villages (The Italian Touring Club and The Italian Ecovillage Network), the majority of cultural associations only began to map and promote Italy’s abandoned built environment and small settlements after the year 2000.

Between 2010 and 2017 there were a number of important campaigns to raise awareness and interest regarding the phenomenon of abandonment in Italy’s villages including WWF Italia ‘Riutilizziamo Italia’ in 2013 and the conference ‘Festival Nazionale del Ritorno ai Luoghi Abbandonati’ held at Paraloup in 2012. These years are also characterised by increased government support for towns at risk of abandonment and a growth in cultural, rural and eco-tourism in Italy’s hinterland exemplified by the ‘Law to save Italy’s Small Towns’ passed in 2016 and 2017 being named ‘The Year of Borghi Italiani’. The increased government support coincides with a change in the focus of the discussion about abandoned places in Italy which shifts from ‘resurrection’ to ‘prevention’ and long-term solutions are sought for the conservation and reversing population decline in Italy’s rural villages and medieval borghi. The period between 2010 and 2017 is also characterised by an explosion of the number of popular and academic publications regarding the topic of Italian ghost towns including the first wide-ranging research projects to measure the

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656 See. Diagram 7: ‘Timeline of Significant Events, Networks and Associations Regarding Italy’s Ghost Towns’ (out of the 29 networks, events and associations that deal with the topic of abandonment in Italy’s small settlements, only two had formed before the year 2000).
impact and extension of abandonment, such as those undertaken by the WWF Italia, Confindustria-Legambiente, Piccola Grande Italia, and Abarchive. By studying the historical evolution of examples of interest and action in Italy’s abandoned villages we can easily perceive an exponential increase following the turn of the twenty-first century. The upward turn in cases of re-awakening is significant because it suggests that the interest in the idea of bringing ghost towns back to life is increasing and perhaps, that the obstacles for reviving and resurrecting abandoned villages are diminishing.

**Overcoming the Historical Reasons for Abandonment?**

First it is important to remember that the practice of bringing abandoned places back to life still only represents a small drop in an ocean of widespread abandonment. Although we can definitely cite a dramatic increase in interest and action in Italy’s ghost towns in the last twenty years, this does not necessarily imply that the neglect and desertion of Italy’s small historical villages will be reversed in a dramatic way any time soon. Vito Teti, who is perhaps one of the most fervent and genuine advocates of small towns in Italy, is the first to warn us that not all villages will be saved, he says;

> The attitude of those that say it’s wonderful to live in small towns is very dangerous. Or those that propose a completely self-referential, romantic, aestheticising recipe. To live in a small town does not mean growing old and waiting to die. (And it’s easy to come from the city with economic tranquillity.) Living in small towns means getting involved; it’s an ethical and political mission. It takes hard work. But the important thing is, to be honest. If we stop with the idyllic and mythical images we could start reasoning. The illusion that all of them [ghost towns] can be repopulated is a sham.

Although many of the historical reasons leading to the abandonment of small towns (such as the economic disparity between small and large urban centres and the risk of natural disaster) still

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661 D’Andrea, ‘Paesi senza retorica’, p. 34.
persist to varying degrees, the increasing number of successful examples of ghost towns being brought back to life (previously considered impossible), suggest that the historical reasons for abandoning small rural and mountainous villages (isolation, lack of employment opportunities, natural disasters and being excluded from modernity), in some cases, are no longer such powerful obstacles to prevent their reawakening. By analysing the strategies and key themes adopted by actors in their resurrection and revival projects in ghost towns, we can locate some pivotal elements that have helped them to overcome the historical reasons which led to the town’s former abandonment. The following factors were identified as having played a significant role in facilitating the experiences of regenerating neglected towns.

1. The first is related to the development of new technologies. New technologies; including the internet, better transport systems and sustainable energy and anti-seismic technologies can create better living conditions in isolated places. In conjunction with the multi-faceted impact of globalisation, new technologies also give rise to new kinds of businesses that are no longer dependent upon local consumers but can market their products and services to an international audience. This is also connected to another revolution in the employment industry which is increasingly less dependent on the physical location of its employees. Telework allows people to settle in places that they would not have previously chosen for a lack of work opportunities.

2. The second reason is related to the widespread new emphasis on the environment and sustainability driven by increasing awareness about the negative impact of excessive development on the environment and human society. First it has popularised the practice of re-using of existing architecture. Increasingly powerful environmental activism has also forced the Italian government to respond to the problem of widespread abandonment which has led to new policies envisioned to prevent the abandonment of small towns and to promote more sustainable forms of development. The promotion of the concept of sustainability has also influenced the development of sustainable forms of tourism which is luring a greater number of tourists and tourism investors into previously neglected areas and which provides new economic opportunities in traditionally marginalised zones.
3. The third is a growing desire for more authentic experiences of place, exemplified by the contemporary ‘Ruinenlust’, new ruralism, and a dramatic change in perception and depiction of Italy’s borghi and other sites of ‘minor’ cultural heritage from ‘shameful’ to ‘valuable’. This apparent longing for authenticity has led to the rediscovery of previously shunned historical villages. New widespread interest in examples of site-specific cultural heritage has permitted Italy’s small villages (which are rich in cultural patrimony but struggling demographically and economically), to create new economic opportunities (tied mainly to tourism), based on their centuries-old traditions and historical architecture. The same attraction to ‘pre-modern’ values perceived to be inherent in these places, has also led to the slow and spontaneous repopulation of some areas by both newcomers and by returning migrants who, encouraged by the new possibilities provided by this new situation, choose to return.
New Technologies

Globalisation radically upsets previous notions of centre and periphery and new technologies, which shorten physical and virtual distances, have dramatically altered the way we think about space.\textsuperscript{662} Today it is more evident than ever that geographical concepts; such as distance, scale and boundaries are not static but flexible.\textsuperscript{663} Transformation in the spatial organisation of social relations and transactions: described regarding four elements (extensity, intensity, velocity, and impact), impies that location is becoming less relevant to competitive survival.\textsuperscript{664} Incredible advances in communications, information, transportation and energy technologies have altered the way that we interact with places and people, demonstrating that physical location is becoming increasingly irrelevant. The possibility to connect instantaneously with people from all over the globe via the internet means that remoteness no longer necessarily equates to isolation. This change in perception and possibilities means that areas which were previously abandoned because of their ‘distant’ locations, might be judged differently today as not being so distant as to prevent their possible reawakening. The irrelevance of place means that people can run businesses from remote locations, and the new world of telework is freeing an increasing number of people from the constraints of a physical workplace. While industries and businesses have been historically dependent upon connection and proximity to highly urbanised and industrial zones, today new forms of work connected to the internet have permitted an increasing number of individuals (but also important companies and businesses), to choose to invest and live in places wherever they desire. The idea to run a business from a physically isolated location - such as a rural Italian village - is today not only possible but connected to added benefits such as being able to enjoy a tranquil pace of life without renouncing business. The Internet has increased possibilities for lifestyles and economies not strictly dependent on local resources. It has revolutionised business - no longer have a local audience but a global audience, this is true for sharing ideas and gaining potential customers. Isolated retailers are able to expand the clientele using innovative ideas to attract extra-locally connected consumers. A study regarding new inhabitants in the Piedmonts’ Alps demonstrated that the arrival of new migrants is primarily dependent upon increased physical and virtual accessibility.

\textsuperscript{662} Augé, L’Antropologo e il mondo globale, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{663} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{664} Ibid.
including improved infrastructure and communication technologies – a fundamental element for young entrepreneurs and telecommuters to carry out their work.665 This thesis includes five examples of businesses that have chosen to resurrect an abandoned village as their headquarters – The Brunello Cucinelli’s cashmere business, the Pisciello Advanced Design and Research Centre, the Borgo Della Conoscenza, Colletta di Castelbianco ‘e-village’ and the San Vitale distillery. What these projects have in common is the emphasis they place on an extra-local located clientele. Their primary source of income is dependent upon global consumers rather than local consumers. New businesses in re-awakened abandoned villages often appeal for their unique mix as places that on the one hand have a firmly rooted sense of historical and site-specific identity and on the other, are in immediate connection with the rest of the globe via the use of the latest technologies. One of the detailed examples – Colletta di Castelbianco – was specifically modified to provide a home for people who work in a virtual workspace but who also desire to live in an ‘authentic’ historical place. These ventures are tailored to a new clientele that seeks both ‘site-specific’, ‘local’ and ‘authentic’, as well as ‘global’ ‘connected’ and ‘technological’. Many tourist ventures also exploit the same features provided by new technologies by offering their clients the chance to ‘retreat’ or ‘escape’ from fast-paced modern lifestyles while still being connected to the rest of the world.

The enormous number of towns ruined by natural disasters reminds us that they are a constant presence in Italy characterised by death and destruction, uncertainties and precariousness and enormous economic and social costs. Advances in construction methods, anti-seismic technologies and other technologies connected to the prevention of natural disasters have also offered opportunities for action and rehabilitation in places that were previously considered inhospitable or irrecoverable because of their precarious geographical positions. Italy ranks first in Europe for the application of energy dissipation and isolation systems to buildings, viaducts and bridges, and fifth in the world for the number of seismically isolated structures.666 Italy is also the world leader in anti-seismic devices for the protection of cultural heritage.667 Despite these impressive figures,

665 Dematteis, Montanari per scelta, p.18. (The study also pointed to the preference for areas that still offer essential services [related to health and education] and low-cost housing.)
667 Ibid., p.4.
over 70% of her building stock is at risk of being destroyed if hit by a severe earthquake.\textsuperscript{668} The continually high risk of damage in Italy is due to its active geological structure, the old age of buildings and, in many cases, the poor quality of construction methods and materials.\textsuperscript{669} Life-saving seismic isolation systems can be applied to new and old constructions and significantly prevent damage from even catastrophic earthquakes. The correct application of anti-seismic technology mitigates the effects of earthquakes – one of the primary causes for abandonment in mountainous areas, suggesting that the recuperation of buildings in high earthquake risk is becoming easier. The efficiency of anti-seismic isolation systems introduced in Santo Stefano di Sessanio proved their worth during the earthquake in 2009 which severely damaged some of the town’s older buildings but which left the newly renovated constructions unaffected.\textsuperscript{670}

Another category of new technologies which have enhanced the quality of life isolated villages is new sustainable energy producing technologies. We have seen a wide range of these systems adopted in the various re-awakening projects including photovoltaic, solar, geothermal and wind-powered systems. These reduce the dependence upon traditional sources of energy permitting higher levels of self-sufficiency without relinquishing the comfort of modern lifestyles. New energy producing technologies that are not dependent upon traditional energy networks external network means that people can live comfortably even in relatively isolated conditions. These factors are especially relevant to the ecovillages studied (especially Laturo and Torri Superiore), which depend on sustainable energy producing technologies for a great proportion of their energy supply. Some newly renovated towns have become energetically self-sufficient and produce one hundred percent of their own energy supply including the Rural Resort Borgo Cardigliano, the Town Centre of Bajardo and the Research Centre 'Borgo della Conoscenza'.

\textsuperscript{668} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{669} Ibid.
Environmentalism and Sustainability

A new wave of interest in abandoned places and the desire to revitalize them has also been triggered by growing concerns for the environment and by fears that we are losing sites of historical, cultural and spiritual importance. Antonella Tarpino suggested that it is the growing number of modern ruins and mounting 'rubble' of the present that convinces us to reevaluate the many historical abandoned places that have gradually been relegated to the margins of the developing centre. She said, 'When the centre no longer produces resources but rather; ruins, it is as if it is working backwards.' The increasingly influential voice of environmental activists has catapulted the issue of the abandoned built environment to centre stage. They have pointed to the increasing quantity and visibility of abandoned places throughout the world as an example of wasteful use of existing constructed resources which leads to an unsustainable consumption of natural land. The abandonment of villages and towns is today perceived as an exceedingly poor use of existing built patrimony. Construction and demolition are responsible for a considerable proportion of the world's pollution, and the impermeability of surfaces by cement constructions are permanently destroying ecological systems. New powerful communications technologies have also played an essential role in increasing our power to view, map and document sites of abandonment that may have previously gone unnoticed, as such there is greater awareness of their existence and a greater sense of urgency to intervene.

It is only recently that the ecological ideas first espoused in the sixties have found widespread support from different levels of the society from individuals and grassroots organisations to businesses and national institutions. One of the outcomes of this increased global ecological awareness has been an alternative economic model based on the principles of reducing environmental damage that focuses on protecting ecological scarcities and employing sustainable development strategies. This new perception has encouraged people to consider abandoned buildings as underutilised resources and not as rubbish. In fact, re-using the abandoned built environment is becoming a vital part of new sustainable development strategies in Italy and

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671 DeSilvey & Edensor, 'Reckoning with Ruins', p. 479.
672 Antonella Tarpino & Vito Teti (eds), 'Il paese che non c'è', Communitas, n.57, 2011, p.18.
673 Yung & Chan, 'Implementation Challenges to the Adaptive Reuse', p. 353.
throughout the world. Carlo Petrini – sociologist and activist, and founder of 'Slow Food Italy', reminds us that the 'green economy' will only be prosperous if Italy begins investing in and repairing her existing assets and preventing future damage inflicted by the numerous natural disasters. He says that repopulating the abandoned and semi-deserted villages of the mountains and the hills and equipping them with essential services, small businesses, and people willing to serve the community, must be critical elements in the strategy towards sustainable development.

The concept of sustainability has also become an indispensable criterion for development strategies and building projects in Italy. Many construction projects in Italy already have to do with existing assets given that Italy's building areas are limited and because the high-quality architecture and materials that characterise Italian buildings make it profitable to adapt them to the needs of modern life. Italy's abandoned and semi-abandoned medieval towns are natural candidates for sustainable development projects. They are typically located in natural landscapes. Ecological principles traditionally guide their original layout and architecture- they are well insulated, densely spaced, and constructed from high quality, durable and locally sourced materials. These principles, adopted in the past because of necessity, have today become essential conventions for contemporary 'green' architecture. Recent projects to re-use abandoned villages have also contributed to the rediscovery and adoption of ancient construction methods.

A spreading ecological conscious has also popularized ‘green’ and rural destinations and lifestyles. Italy’s small rural villages – often in picturesque natural settings – have benefited from increasing interest in green tourism, eco-communities and new ruralism. Subsistence lifestyles, organic farming, the use of ‘km zero’ products and community cooperation - traditionally present in daily village life, have also become highly valued principles in sustainable development. The growing popularity of sustainable tourism promotes non-typical tourist destinations and experiences. Rural tourism has become a viable source of income, with some of the most popular forms of sustainable tourism models being farm tourism and ‘alberghi diffusi’. We can see that some of the small isolated

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674 Ibid.
677 Ibid. p.147-148.
villages such as Rochetta or Torri Superiore (previously abandoned because of their remoteness), have become popular destinations for ‘green tourism’ and as destinations for new eco-communities.

We are also more aware of the negative environmental impact of by the abandonment of small settlements. While humans have shaped the mountains and hills for centuries, constant care, repair terraced plots of land and water channelling there missing presence is causing hydrogeological problems. As early as 1948 Manlio Rossi-Doria argued that ‘the death of human settlements in the mountains could be the beginning of great ruin in other places where people live and work.’

Weakening and landslide leading to damage to roads, paths bringing them to be impracticable, also lead to flooding and landslides in the valleys below because the water is no longer channelled effectively. While well organised reforesting is a great practice with numerous benefits (it diminishes erosion, preventing landslides and avalanches, increases biodiversity and reduces of greenhouse gases), the spontaneous and uncontrolled growth of vegetation in abandoned terraces and farmlands has created negative environmental consequences such as facilitating the spread of parasitic diseases, reducing biodiversity because creating environments for introduced fauna and flora species, and increasing fire danger.

Contemporary awareness of the dramatic negative social and environmental consequences of modern development strategies has encouraged governments and individuals to adopt more sustainable forms of development. The 1987 Brundtland Report first described sustainable development as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’

The re-use of abandoned and underutilised places is an integral part of the strategy to reduce the consumption of natural resources. Recuperating the existing built environment reduces the consumption of natural land for new buildings, restores dignity and function to places of historical value, can help us to acknowledge and understand the stratification of time – incorporates the past (with various historical periods

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represented through the architectures) in the present, the benefit of recuperation can be amplified with eco-efficient restoration techniques. The need for sustainable development practices is a particularly urgent issue in Italy.

The widespread phenomenon of abandonment is intimately related to Italy’s significant problem with overdevelopment and cementification, which continue to inflict irrevocable damage on her environment and cultural landscape - arguably the two most unique and valuable elements that Italy has to offer the world and which should be treated as important sources of economy. 681 An important dossier; ‘Terra Rubata- Viaggio Nell ‘Italia che Scompare,’ (Stolen Land - A Trip in Disappearing Italy), based on a research project coordinated by the Università degli Studi dell’Aquila was presented in 2012 by WWF Italia.682 It highlighted the dramatic and irreversible consumption of natural land in Italy demonstrating that over the past fifty years, undeveloped natural land has been converted to urban space at an average rate of 75 hectares per day.683 Between 1956 and 2001 the quantity of Italian territory converted into artificial land multiplied by around 500% even in those regions with a poor economy such as Molise.684 Some astounding facts such as that urbanization along the Adriatic coast grows by almost ten kilometers every year and that it is already impossible to trace a circle with a diameter of 10km in Italy without encountering an urban settlement,685 demonstrate how quickly Italians are losing such precious but often underestimated resources - natural land, biodiversity and collective spaces. According to this study, over the next twenty years, the surface occupied by urban areas will grow to around 600 thousand hectares, equal to an urbanization of 75 hectares per day (6,400km2).686

The phenomenon of land consumption in Italy is not only dependent upon a growing population. In some regions, it is the contrary. For example, in Molise, the population has remained more or less the same since 1861 but there has still been an enormous loss of natural land.687 The European Environmental Agency documented an increase of almost 8,500 hectares per year of urbanised

682 FAI & WWF Italia, Dossier: terra rubata, viaggio nel Italia che scompare (January 2012), pp. 1-68.
684 Ibid., p. 7
685 Ibid., p.9.
686 Ibid.
687 Ibid., p.7.
territory in Italy and a loss of 3 million hectares (a third of which were farmland), of undeveloped land between 1990 and 2005 despite the Italian population remaining stable.\textsuperscript{688} One of the reasons behind this enormous increase in land uptake is that contemporary society needs more space than in the past. It also has the capacity to move around at infinitely greater speed which has led to an enormous change in the relationship between built surfaces - space covered by buildings, and urban surfaces - connections between public and private spaces such as roads and other transport systems (including walkways, cycleways, car parks, industrial yards).\textsuperscript{689} Historically, one of the development objectives was to minimise transit times between homes and urban services. In the past, this relationship varied between 70 and 90\%, while in modern urban settlements, it is almost always lower than 40-50\% and even lower than 20\% in cases of shopping, industrial, management centres.\textsuperscript{690} Only counting the provincial, national roads and motorways, the Italian road network devoured over 200,000km of space in 2005. If we added the space occupied by town, city, and country roads this statistic would probably more than triple.\textsuperscript{691} Economic reasons drive the exponential phenomenon of land uptake in Italy in fact, even in economically marginalised areas; the construction industry is seen as a vector for reprisal.\textsuperscript{692} This is also because of incentives that have made building and development a remunerative business which has led to housing surplus, degradation and abandonment. In 2004 the ISPESL (Istituto Superiore Prevenzione e Sicurezza sul Lavoro) declared that,

\begin{quote}
The construction industry in Italy in its current state is the only industrial sector that is not in decline... Between 1998 and 2003 investment in construction grew by 17.6\%, the PIL grew by 7.2\%. This demonstrates that part of the national wealth is because of the construction industry. Investment in housing is in constant growth. Out of 61.590 million euro invested in housing, 29.717 million euro was spent on brand new developments.\textsuperscript{693}
\end{quote}

The ANCE Research Centre similarly demonstrated that 2007 was the ninth consecutive year of growth in the development industry in Italy and the year with the greatest volume of production on record since 1970.\textsuperscript{694}

\textsuperscript{688} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{689} Ibid., p.8
\textsuperscript{690} Ibid., p.9
\textsuperscript{691} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{692} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{693} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{694} Ibid.
The Terra Rubata Dossier, which compared demographic statistics with increased land uptake, demonstrated that there was a tendency for urban growth even in areas that had suffered a significant population loss. One reason for this phenomenon is the construction of holiday homes but also because of the long-standing policies of economic assistance to the so-called ‘marginal areas’. Another reason is that in the mid-1990s greater autonomy was given to councils regarding development planning of council territory. Because of the much greater value of building land compared to natural or agricultural land, there is much pressure on councils to award building permission, and councils in turn gain taxes and benefits connected to public and private development. It is a system that has favoured corruption. Another driving factor is also the well-established trend for private operators to invest in property to compensate for other high-risk forms of financial investment. Moreover, illegal development remains a widespread phenomenon in Italy. Since 1948 Italy has counted 4.6 million cases of illegal development (more than 75,000 per year, 207 per day). Despite three controversial nationwide building sanctions in 1985, 1994 and 2003, a systematic control undertaken between 2008 and 2012 that compared Italy’s land registries and recent satellite images revealed the presence of over 1.2 million properties for which there were no cadastral records. This operation called ‘case fantasma’ (ghost houses) revealed that the highest concentration of undeclared buildings (over 100,000) was in the southern regions with Sicily having the highest number of ‘ghost’ properties - 176,772. Campania followed closely with 170,697 undeclared buildings, Calabria with 143,875 and Puglia with 101,373.

In a country like Italy with an undeniably elevated demographic density exacerbated by large migratory fluxes of peoples fleeing neighbouring countries at war, using space wisely is key to future planning. If steps are not taken now to regulate development and minimise the consumption of natural land then Italy risks losing its most valuable and identifying resource, one that cannot be replaced by any kind of political or fiscal policy. The great number of underutilised and abandoned areas represents a poor use of natural and existing resources. If the intention of the

695 Ibid. p.16.
698 Ibid. p. 20.
700 Ibid.
701 Ibid., p. 6
current wave of renovation and re-use is also to reverse the ever-increasing consumption of land in Italy (a tendency already in motion for several decades), then the issue of salvaging and possibly reusing that part of Italian heritage comprised of hamlets and historical city centres is of central importance. Moreover, Italy's small historical villages are located in mostly in mountainous, rural or wilderness locations which, on the one hand contributed to their abandonment because of difficulties associated with isolation but, on the other hand, are picturesque settings. Given that many of the villages in question are in rural or wilderness locations they permit closer contact with the rural and natural environment. Considering that 24% of Italy's small municipalities fall in protected nature reserves including national parks and marine parks they are a national asset with enormous potential as tourist destinations which could, in turn, encourage better fruition of the surrounding territory. These places could pose solid alternatives to new building developments and additional construction. By re-using existing architecture rather than demolishing or, building from scratch they can prevent unnecessary consumption of future natural resources. The Wwf census reminds us that not all abandoned buildings are worthy of safeguarding and the demolition and re-naturalisation of certain sites should be promoted alongside acts of reuse.

Jared Diamond speaks about societal collapse and citing many historical and ethnological cases he points out how human groups tend to implode in the moment of major socio-cultural climax. He suggests that we need to ask ourselves if our society with its inequalities and injustices, is also reaching this climax. Climate change, overpopulation and the concentration of resources in the wealthiest countries, all seem like appropriate trampolines to launch us over the limits of the planet’s social and environmental sustainability. Augè states that ‘full’ and ‘empty’ and ‘excess’ and ‘recess’ are two sides of the same coin and the result of decades of uncontrolled development, he says ‘more subtly, the full and the empty are side by side. Fallow and abandoned farmland; areas apparently privy of a precise use surround the city in which zones of uncertainty infiltrate. Surely in Italy, and not only, these movements of recuperation and return to small-scale agriculture, of local production of primary materials, of sustainable tourism and a green economy, raise new

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703 Ibid. p.137.  
705 Augè, *Rovine e macerie*, p.89.
questions and forms of responsibility beginning with the perception of ruins as alternatives against dominant economic and development models. The widespread promotion of the sustainability ideal has also increased people's awareness of the many benefits of spending time in wilderness and rural environments in closer contact with nature and natural processes (such as food and energy production). This has led to new waves of people seeking more sustainable lifestyles in natural settings contributing to the increasing trends of green tourism, rural tourism and new ruralism.
Increased Interest in Sites Unscathed by (Super) Modernity

The remoteness of medieval villages has played a role in preserving their historical buildings and layout as well as cultural traditions and lifestyles. Italy's rural villages and fortified towns remain spaces in which competitive capitalism and fast-paced lifestyles are muted by traditional daily rhythms and social relations. In many villages it is possible to experience rhythms and lifestyles that still possess an ancient relationship with time, memory and emotions; a slowness and an ability to savour the present moment, changing seasons and community relationships – dimensions that are difficult or impossible to discover in urban environments and lifestyles. Contemporary trends such as locally produced 'Kilometre Zero' products, organic farming, self-sufficiency, homesteading, frugality, silviculture and a strong relationship with natural processes, are elements that have characterised Italy's small villages for centuries. Italy's villages also have a strong sense of place – another element that is missing in many modern and contemporary cities and towns. They are also historically fascinating, many having undergone few changes since the medieval period providing a window into the past. Some reoccurring factors stand out in protagonists' discourses regarding their choices to invest in ghost towns. These are the uniqueness of place, the natural setting, rurality, historical architecture and a perceived opportunity for more authentic lifestyles and a stronger sense of community.\(^706\) Italian ghost towns respond in many ways to contemporary western desires for more authentic experiences of place. Although it has been pointed out on numerous occasions (and by Augè himself) that traditional closed-identity places have never existed in purity, Italy’s historical villages match our conceived ideas of what an ‘authentic’ place might be, defined by Augè as ‘relational, historical and concerned with identity.’\(^707\) Ironically it was probably the process of marginalisation, their isolated location and abandonment that has safeguarded their authenticity. In many cases, it seems that the factors which drove the ex-inhabitants to abandon the village in the past; such as isolation or rurality have today become the key attractive features leading to its reawakening.

There is a widespread concern that in the globalising, super modern world we are losing connection to authentic experiences of place as well as sites of important cultural and historical

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\(^706\) See, ‘Key themes’.
\(^707\) Augé, Non places, p.78.
Marc Augè argued that today’s places are ever more non-places, in which appearances are more important than substance and in which people are disconnected with the surrounding space and time. Landscapes, places and living space must correspond to precise canons; standardized and formulated on the basis of an ephemeral consumerism and on the lack of identity, historical memory and shared spaces. For the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, the peculiarities of contemporary society and culture can be described as ‘liquid’ or ‘fluid’, he says; ‘they do not fix space and do not bind time.’ Augè emphasises the homogeneity of nonplaces describing them as spaces that use repeatability and stereotypes to reassure the global user, they do not aim to create symbolic relationships or a common heritage. For Zygmunt Bauman the objective of nonplaces is to smooth over differences, to dictate the same behaviour models and rules of conduct for everyone, he says they ‘[…] discourage the idea of taking up residence in them, making the colonisation or the domestication of the space practically impossible […] they accept the inevitability of being visited (and at times a prolonged stay) by foreign figures and thus they do all they can to make their presence ‘merely physical’, that is purely irrelevant from a social point of view; cancel, reset, render null the idiosyncratic subjectivities of their passengers.’ Globalisation and supermodernity have certainly altered the way we think about and act within space. Despite this, places – especially historical places – remain important sites for creating meaning and identity. We could argue that their importance has even grown because they are considered a species on the brink of extinction. There is a renewed interest in ‘places’: unique ‘site-specific’ ‘forgotten’ cultures and identities, a growing desire for more authentic experiences of place. Giampaolo Fabris mused ironically about the way that ‘The world, moving towards the global village, is rediscovering the rhythms and pace of village life.’ Moreover, people still today demonstrate high levels of attachment to places that they conceive as having cultural and historical value even if they have no personal or sentimental attachment to the place. Incidents of neglect, abandonment or demolition of historically important sites today spark global concern. Garrett has noted that ‘[…] the spatial

708 Edward Casey, Fate of Place; A Philosophical History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp.i-x.
709 Augé, Non Places, pp. 78-79.
712 Bauman, Modernita’ liquida, p.113.
713 Casey, Fate of Place, p. xii.
715 One example is the Italian public’s reaction of outrage and dismay regarding the numerous episodes of mismanagement of the Pompeii archaeological site, see. Francesco Prisco, ‘Pompei, crolla alla casa della caccia
anxiety that manifests itself when people are excluded from places registers with particular ferocity when those places are deemed to be of popular historic, memorial or archaeological value. A sense that people are being ‘robbed of their heritage is often voiced by urban explorers [...]’. Re-users and explorers of abandoned places are not seeking to annihilate the specificity of place but instead want to enhance it (even though we have seen that this is a near impossible task).

Today the historical relationship between centre and periphery, rural and urban is being redefined. The previously strict distinction between the countryside connected to primary industries and the city connected to secondary and tertiary sectors has lost its strongly dichotomous character with the blurring of the strict boundaries between urban and rural space. New communications technologies have expanded the economic and social opportunities for inhabitants of small rural areas and new interest in rural tourism has provided new income earning possibilities for the inhabitants and increased the attractive potential for new settlers. Today even spatially distant and sparsely populated regions may profit from the purchasing power and infrastructure based on a new (temporary) residential population. The redefinition of space is also evident in a new kind of habitat without any strict separation between work and home environments, typified by multi-locality and migration. The inverse movement of population verified in Europe beginning in the nineteen-eighties has permitted rural areas to come out of the social, economic and cultural marginality that they were in, not only thanks to the residential valorisation but above all because of the growing interest in business activities that could be implemented there. ‘A range of new opportunities that have arisen as alternatives to traditional forms of production (and consumption), have reached a point in which the ‘marginal’ systems can not only recuperate the disadvantage but demonstrate that they are more dynamic and better able to adapt to new scenarios compared to the stiffened industrial systems’.

Parallel to urban expansion, [...] there is a tendency to abandon the megalopolis and look for

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717 Bertolini, Eppur si Vive, pp. 86-7.
719 Corti 2007, p.176
alternative life models that often lead (albeit in a non-definitive way), to the countryside and to small towns in rural settings. Youth, intellectuals, writers, and artists imagine and think that the future of humanity might not be in the cities, but rather in small towns, in the provinces. There are also many that are choosing the countryside as a long-term or even permanent living place.\footnote{220\textsuperscript{720} Enzo Urbano, ‘Il ripopolamento dei borghi è una necessità sociale ed economica,’ Baiblog (24 March 2016), \url{http://www.baiblog.it/spazio-focus/il-ripopolamento-dei-borghi-e-una-necessita-sociale-ed-economica/}, (accessed 14 January 2018).}

A renewed interest in ‘authenticity’ and ‘place’ is partly a reaction against the perceived homogenisation and prescriptivism of places in the twenty-first century.\footnote{Casey, \textit{Fate of Place}, p. x.} It is also because of a growing desire for genuine connection places and with a sense of community and rootedness. Bradley Garrett in his studies about the practice of Urban Exploration declared; ‘I argue that the fascination with industrial ruin exploration is nothing less than trying to get back to what we have lost in late capitalism: a sense of community and a sense of self.’\footnote{Bradley Garrett, ‘Urban Exploration as Heritage Placemaking’, p. 86.} And ‘Urban explorers are searching for authenticity they can touch[...]’\footnote{\textit{ibid.}, p. 87.} A growing number of people, dissatisfied with the pace of super-modernity and the homogenisation associated with globalisation, are actively seeking more ‘authentic’, ‘slower’, ‘culture-specific’, experiences of the places they inhabit and visit. Counter urbanism – an opposite phenomenon of movement away from cities to rural areas, is about people being able to explore alternatives to living in the city, creating changes in living location preferences. This has encouraged people to reassess the historically valuable but neglected places on the periphery, leading to new forms of tourism and migration in previously ignored areas. People are searching for more intentional relationships with the place they live in and visit. They are attracted by a slower pace of life, low-cost living, closer contact with nature and natural processes. It has also increased the popularity of the ruin as spaces for exploration. This resulting new wave of adventurous travellers and a trickle of so-called ‘new-rurals’ has been a driving motive of behind re-awakening abandoned villages because it provides new economic opportunities in historically marginalised areas via tourism and repopulation. We can see that new fluxes of people moving into the rural and mountainous Italian hinterland either as tourists or new residents, has been a significant catalyst for the resurrection of abandoned villages and kick-starting the economy of disadvantaged areas.
The Desire to See Ruined Forms Return to Life

Finally, while a certain degree of romantic infatuation with ruins (Ruinenlust) is certainly present in the current practice of re-awakening abandoned villages, this particular version of the contemporary ‘ruin gaze’ differs from that of the eighteenth century romantics (or from other contemporary forms of infatuation with ruins such as Urban Exploration and Ruin Photography), in some important ways. The Romantics’ infatuation with abandoned architecture was dependent upon maintaining the ruined aesthetic and atmosphere in which human intervention was avoided at all costs – renovation as understood as an element that would have removed their intrinsic value. While this kind of non-interventionist celebration of abandoned places is reflected in a number of contemporary interactions with Italy’s abandoned places (exemplified, again, by practices such as ruin exploration, route tourism, open-air museums and use in cinema), this is not the predominant, kind of ruin gaze driving the new practice of re-awakening abandoned villages in Italy. Rather, it is a particular vision of ruins that is not purely romantic or purely practical but a mixture of both.

A degree of romanticism of ruins is evident in the testimonies of many of the protagonists of revival and re-use projects that cite a ‘love at first sight’ attraction towards ruined villages. An ‘epiphany’ moment seems to be a recurrent theme, in which protagonists describe a sensation of being called to act as if it was the village choosing the person and not the other way around. Daniel Kihlgren ascribes almost spiritual attributes to his experience of chancing upon Santo Stefano di Sessanio, saying: ‘I was struck like Saint Paul on the way to Damascus.’ John Phillips, upon discovering the neglected Tuscan village which he would later convert into Borgo Finochietto, said ‘The whole place was dilapidated, but there was such tranquillity […] I’d never heard quite like that. You could see it had amazing potential.’ Brunello Cucinelli likewise described a similar experience, saying, ‘One evening, on my way home, I happened to see the Solomeo hill […] I felt that what I had been searching for so long was now before me.’ In contrast to the eighteenth-century ruin gaze, the initial ‘romantic’ attraction of our contemporary onlookers gave birth to a desire, not to

immortalise the dilapidated form, but instead to *resurrect* it and to *remove* the signs of ruination. Protagonists are simultaneously attracted to the historicity of place and the interpretive freedom that ruined forms permit, by their simultaneous qualities of stability – through their history, context, and architecture – and of openness, through their flexible, interpretable and open space.  

What the case-studies suggest is that the present interest in Italy’s historical villages is sparked not only by a desire to understand and preserve the memory of these once-inhabited centres, but also by the desire to bring their ruined forms back to life.

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727 Martina Baum & Kees Christiaanse (eds), *City as Loft: Adaptive Reuse as a Resource for Sustainable Urban Development* (Zurich: Verla), 2012.
Conclusion

The first aim of this thesis was to examine the phenomenon of re-awakening Italian ghost towns in historical context to generate hypotheses regarding the questions ‘why now?’ and ‘what has permitted contemporary investors and new inhabitants of previously abandoned towns to overcome the reasons that drove their original inhabitants away?’ The desire to bring abandoned places back to functional life is not a new desire (we have seen several pioneering experiments as early as the nineteen sixties), however, the possibilities provided by recent technological developments and new ways of thinking and moving associated with globalisation, have helped to make it a practical possibility for a greater number and variety of people. We can draw attention to three global changes that have influenced people's perception of ghost towns in Italy and have facilitated projects which seek to restore them. The first is new ‘distance shrinking’ technologies (especially the internet), which are able to improve the living conditions and economic opportunities in areas that were previously neglected because of their physical isolation. The second is a new widespread urgency to create more sustainable forms of development which have popularised and incentivised the practice of re-use. The third is a growing dissatisfaction with elements of globalisation and supermodernity which has incited an increasing number of people to seek new experiences and sensations among the neglected places on the periphery. The remoteness and neglect of Italy's medieval villages have played a determining role in preserving their historical buildings and layout as well as cultural traditions and heritage. Italy's ‘minor’ historical centres remain largely unaffected by supermodernity and still possess elements of pre-modern lifestyles. The growing popularity for ‘authenticity’ has led to new economic opportunities in previously marginalised communities, bringing some of the benefits of urban centres to rural areas. These global changes have meant that, in some cases, the historical reasons for abandoning small rural and mountainous villages (such as isolation, lack of employment opportunities, natural disasters and being excluded from modernity), are no longer such powerful obstacles to prevent their re-awakening.

Another contributing factor that should not be underestimated is the return of the ruin as a popular motif in contemporary academic and popular spheres. Although in the particular case of
resurrecting ghost towns the ruin gaze is not focused on the ruin in itself but on its imagined, future renovated form, the intense promulgation and proliferation of images of abandoned places has catapulted Italy's previously neglected and shunned ghost towns onto an global stage. Today they have become internationally prominent film sets, chief sites of pilgrimage for ruin explorers and some (such as the ones in this thesis), have been purchased, renovated and given new contemporary uses. We need to be careful that their recent exposition under the global spotlight works in their favour and does not ruin what centuries of place-building have created.

The second aim of the thesis was to evaluate the impact and effect of the different strategies in bringing abandoned villages back to life. What resulted was not so much a clear distinction in outcomes between the four strategies identified (tourism, business, repopulation and socio-cultural initiatives), but rather difference was more strongly determined on the basis of whether the project was implemented by locals or non-locals and whether the strategy focused on the revival of a semi-deserted village or the resurrection of a long-neglected town. Two separate approaches to the practice of re-awakening abandoned villages emerged. The first is characterised by locally-based initiatives implemented to prevent the incremental demographic and cultural impoverishment of Italy's historical communities, and the second is made up of projects (mostly undertaken by people with no emotional or historical connection to the village, 'outsiders'), which resurrect abandoned villages to install new communities and businesses. While they both have the common outcome of regenerating ghost towns and are equally successful in renovating the physical architecture, the motivations and results of the two different approaches are significantly different in a number of ways.

The first is that projects focused on preventing abandonment make a more concerted effort in maintaining the fragile link between past and present – expressed by a continuing relationship with the ex-inhabitants and by adopting strategies which preserve the town's accessibility to locals and newcomers. Outsiders are much more likely to invest in completely abandoned places and, while celebrating and enhancing the aesthetic and nostalgic values of historical villages, place less importance on maintaining the link with the town's historical past. The decontextualised nature of ruined ghost towns (caused by their state of long-term abandonment), can encourage
contemporary spectators to interpret their alterity as permission to create exclusive worlds after their own imagination. Re-awakening projects which embrace this vision remove towns from their historical and territorial context and irreversibly sever the link between the town and its original inhabitants – the true custodians of site-specific knowledge and culture. Converting historical communities into exclusive commodities also undermines their potential to inspire genuine reflection and connection and risks robbing them of the values that we find attractive; authenticity, historicity, inimitability, complexity and a sense of community. Short-sighted interventions risk creating the very spaces that re-purposing seeks to remedy (sterile, standard, and superficial places), and in severe cases, this can lead to repeat abandonment. The cases suggest that projects which seek to revive semi-abandoned villages are better equipped to preserve the authenticity of a living place and connection with the past than projects seek to resurrect completely abandoned villages, because they maintain an authentic connection through the original inhabitants. Locally-led projects also express a more honest assessment of the strengths and shadows of historic villages and do not celebrate ghost towns for their alterity but for their value as authentic places - understood as dynamic and flexible rather than bounded or static. The conservation of ancient traditions and an authentic sense of place must not be confused with musealisation. Traditions and culture must be continually reproduced and re-invented for historical villages to maintain their relevance in the contemporary globalising world, and to retain their value as sites of genuine community and authentic (living) culture.

Some other significant points emerged which would also be worth examining in more targeted research. (Exploration in each area is preliminary; with acknowledgement that further study would be welcomed.) The first is that tourism – which is the primary force driving the revival of small communities, can transform, exaggerate and modify the history and spirit of a place based on the demands of a fluctuating tourist market. Even in the most exemplary projects to resuscitate abandoned villages through tourism, cultural heritage, local traditions and site-specific products (previously the expressions of authentic, daily life), are transformed into commodities which encourages the ‘consumption’ of values and cultural heritage rather than the reproduction of these ideals. The impact of tourism in small communities and on cultural heritage is a well-investigated theme in tourism studies but the specific case of entire villages being converted for tourism offers
some novel evidence to the existing discussion. The second idea is that while promoting nostalgic and celebratory versions of historical towns is widely practiced in popular spheres, it risks promulgating simplistic versions of Italy's complex and valuable cultural heritage and hinders the real potential of historical towns as being able to provide people with authentically alternative experiences of place in a world increasingly characterised by homogeneous, prescriptive and individualistic spaces. Another point that emerged from research regarding the underlying motives for abandonment was that the phenomenon of place abandonment (as well as the connected phenomena of resettlement, return and revival), are dependent upon the shifting needs and desires of particular populations and on the relationships that people choose to have with places. Strategies that acknowledge this fact and which seek accordingly to implement the concept of adaptability in their re-awakening projects will have a greater chance at long-term sustainability.

While re-purposing abandoned architecture has become a mainstream architectural practice and an important part of sustainable development policies, the historical ruins of abandoned villages (which are the remnants of once-vibrant communities), have a weightier inheritance than some other ruins of the recent past (such as obsolete industrial warehouses and derelict commercial centres), and thus demand a heightened sense of responsibility from their modifiers. We are also reminded that these places - even while they are abandoned – are not merely physical entities, but inextricably entwined to people's sense of personal and collective identity. Government, groups and individuals that seek to resurrect abandoned places and revive communities in ruins need to work harder at finding appropriate new functions for obsolete villages, privileging open and genuine dialogue between the past and present, and between old and new inhabitants.

The reactivation initiatives that are taking place in previously abandoned sites point the way towards new possible relationships for Italians with their geographical territory and historical past. The use and promotion of site-specific traditions, products and lifestyles have proven to be successful elements in attracting external interest and investment - and consolidating community identities. Moreover, safeguarding historical villages is not only a plan for demographic or environmental revival but also an opportunity to re-imagine concepts of work and tourism. Investment in reawakening projects must first improve the quality of life, not only for a transient
tourist population but for those people willing to invest in the infrastructural, social, economic and cultural long-term development of the community. Delegating all the work to public institutions (already lacking in resources and often inadequate for innovative initiatives), would be a step backward. It is crucial to encourage efficient forms of private-public collaboration as well as the invaluable contributions (historical and cultural perspectives, ideas, practical and organisational skills) of citizen groups and individuals - a collaborative and innovative force that we have already seen in the numerous examples. Additional research to further investigate positive examples of this collaborative approach would appear to be invaluable in the light of its positive impact on the long-term success of re-awakening projects. Such research could also speak into development best-practice for re-awakening abandoned cities globally.

This thesis seeks to be a springboard for introducing a significant but relatively unexplored topic to the English speaking academic community. Its historical perspective also provides new insight and new sets of questions in a field of research dominated exclusively by architecture and anthropological scholars. Its most important contributions are its new detailed census of Italian ghost towns and for gathering together all the current disparate examples of re-awakened ghost towns in Italy to permit comparative analysis. The stimulating topic of bringing abandoned villages back to life has much potential for future multi-disciplinary and multi-method research including a cross-national comparison of examples. It could be located in several realms of contemporary fervent academic discussion including (but not limited to), the contemporary perception and treatment of ruins, re-purposing historical architecture, heritage tourism, new-ruralism and the role and relevance of place in the globalising, supermodern world.

While the number of villages at risk of abandonment in Italy is still on the rise, more decisive attention from the Italian government recently, the increasing number of associations and networks that seek to prevent the abandonment of small historic towns and the remarkable rise in the number of re-awakening projects after the turn of the current century, gives us reason to believe that the practice of reviving ghost towns will increase. The numerous instances of successfully regenerated abandoned villages demonstrate that the future of Italy’s ghost towns and towns at risk of abandonment is not necessarily one of decline and obsolescence but that they may
assume increasingly important roles in sustainable development projects and heritage conservation. This does not mean that villages will all come back to life or that they will return to occupy the same functions and significance that they had in the past. They will change. And they *must* change to retain their authenticity and vibrancy in the contemporary globalising world.
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Appendices

Appendix 1

Spread sheet 'Italian Ghost Towns - A New Census'

Appendix 2

Spread sheet 'Re-awakening Italian Abandoned Villages'
<table>
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<td>Maso</td>
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<td>obselete economy</td>
<td>1968</td>
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## Appendix 2

### Village Origins and Abandonment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Village Origins (Century)</th>
<th>Abandonment</th>
<th>Cause for Abandonment</th>
<th>State of Abandonment</th>
<th>Re-awakening: Beginning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prata Sannita (Castello)</td>
<td>Campania</td>
<td>X - XIV</td>
<td>old centre abandoned in favour of emigration, new town built</td>
<td>partial</td>
<td>2005 - The collective Fed72 arrive in Prata Sannita with the project 'Villaggi del Sud'</td>
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<td>Amole</td>
<td>Liguria</td>
<td>XII</td>
<td>74% population decline between 11th and 12th centuries</td>
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<td>late 1960s Dutch artists purchase and renovate the first houses</td>
<td>2007 - Council receives public funding for restoration</td>
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<td>Aliano</td>
<td>Basilicata</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>57.3% population decline between migration, new town built</td>
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<td>Bajardo</td>
<td>Liguria</td>
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<td>83% population decline between 11th emigration</td>
<td>partial</td>
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<td>Bastia Creti</td>
<td>Umbria</td>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>1960s urban migration</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>1990s village purchased by Giovedda family</td>
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<td>XIII</td>
<td>1960s urban migration</td>
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<td>1990s</td>
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<td>Tuscany</td>
<td>XVII</td>
<td>1960s urban migration</td>
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<td>Borgo Finochio</td>
<td>Tuscany</td>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>1990s (last remaining inhabitant of town)</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>purchased in 2001 by American John Phillips</td>
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<td>Borgo Santo Pietro</td>
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<td>XIV</td>
<td>1960s urban migration</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>2001 purchased by Jeanette and Claus Thottrup</td>
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<td>Bussana Vecchia</td>
<td>Liguria</td>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>1961 - Comunita Internazionale degli Artisti established, first artists move to Buena Vista</td>
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<td>Calabritto (Borgo di Quaglietta)</td>
<td>Campania</td>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>1980 (30 November)</td>
<td>earthquake</td>
<td>2007 - Funding from the Province of Campania as part of the project 'Recupero E'</td>
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<td>Calcata</td>
<td>Lazio</td>
<td>XII</td>
<td>1960-1969</td>
<td>eviction and relocation to new town</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>1960s</td>
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<td>Caltrii (Borgo Castello)</td>
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<td>XIII</td>
<td>1980 (23 November)</td>
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<td>Cardigliano</td>
<td>Puglia</td>
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<td>250-90 b.c.</td>
<td>first mention 1970s</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>1990 (28th September), project for reoccupation of the village approved and fune</td>
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<td>Castellasso</td>
<td>Abruzzo</td>
<td>XVI - XVII</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>urban migration, agrarian crisis</td>
<td>extreme</td>
<td>1988 - first art performance by Castellibottiglia city centre becomes art exhibition</td>
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<td>Castelfiagu</td>
<td>Umbria</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>emigration - earthquake</td>
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<td>1997 - post-earthquake reconstruction</td>
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<td>Castelvetere sul Calore</td>
<td>Tuscany</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>1960s - 70s</td>
<td>urban migration (newer section of town)</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>1996 - receives public funding for restoration</td>
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<td>Castiglione del Trinoro (Monti)</td>
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<td>2005, Michael Coffi begins purchasing and restoring the village's buildings</td>
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<td>Cavour</td>
<td>Calabria</td>
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<td>54% population decline between 11th 1emigration</td>
<td>partial</td>
<td>2008 - Mayor asks to host refugees following Riace model</td>
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<td>Credenza</td>
<td>Liguria</td>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>emigration</td>
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<td>1968 - law to permit renovation</td>
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<td>Colletta di Castelbello</td>
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<td>1960s</td>
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<td>1987 (end) Colletta di Castelbello srl. (Vincenzo Ricotta)</td>
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<td>Comeglians</td>
<td>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</td>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>73% population decline between 11th urban migration post 1950, earthquake</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>1982 - &quot;Progetto Pila Comune&quot;, 1999 Cooperativa Albergo Diffuso Comegliano</td>
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<td>I Sassi di Matera, (Rione Civitella)</td>
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<td>neolithic</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>eviction poor sanitary conditions</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>1986 - law to permit renovation</td>
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<td>Labro</td>
<td>Lazio</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>65% population decline between 11th to 12th</td>
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<td>1968 - Belgian Architect Mossevolde decides to invest in Labro</td>
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<td>Lancellone Castelmarmo</td>
<td>Marche</td>
<td>XIX</td>
<td>1950s</td>
<td>urban migration</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>2000 - purchased by entrepreneurs Vitithona e Giovanni Zuffetto</td>
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<td>Labro</td>
<td>Abruzzo</td>
<td>XII</td>
<td>1970s</td>
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<td>2011 - Amici di Lartu</td>
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<td>Mozzaglia</td>
<td>Emilia Romagna</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>urban migration</td>
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<td>1970s</td>
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<td>Montegridolfo</td>
<td>Emilia Romagna</td>
<td>XIX</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>emigration</td>
<td>extreme</td>
<td>1988 - purchase by stylist Alberta Ferretti and co-investors</td>
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<td>Ostana</td>
<td>Piemonte</td>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>95% population decline between migration</td>
<td>urban migration</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>1985 - strict regulations regarding architecture (only 5 all-year residents at the time)</td>
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<td>Poraloup</td>
<td>Piemonte</td>
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<td>population decline beginning in 19c urban migration</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>2006 - Documentary maker Teo De Luigi, launches the idea of recuperation, Fondazione Nuto Revelli and the association 'Mai Tardi' heeds the call</td>
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<td>Pischetto</td>
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<td>XV - XVII</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>urban migration</td>
<td>total</td>
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<td>Umbria</td>
<td>IX</td>
<td>1960s</td>
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<td>1992 - purchased by the company Miro srl</td>
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<td>Calabria</td>
<td>XV</td>
<td>32% population decline between 11th</td>
<td>emigration</td>
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<td>1999 - Associazione 'Città Futura' founded by Domenico Lucano</td>
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<td>Rocchetta (Acquananta Terme)</td>
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<td>XIX</td>
<td>1950s (final inhabitants left in 1977 emigration (isolation, difficult living conditions)</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>2003 Simone Mariani 'discovery' Rochetta and decides to purchase the village</td>
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<td>San Felice</td>
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<td>1960s</td>
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<td>1979 - purchased by Gruppo Allianz</td>
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<td>2001 - Gusto brothers (Giulio, Antonio, Luigi) express interest</td>
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<td>population decline beginning in 19c urban migration (isolation)</td>
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<td>re-inhabited during summer months</td>
<td>2012 purchased by Il Parco dell'Antola</td>
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<td>Umbria</td>
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<td>1985 purchase of XIV century village of Solome by Cucinelli</td>
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<td>&gt;90% population decline between emigration (isolation, difficult living)</td>
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<td>1994 - Khiglen 'discovery' Santo Stefano in 1999 - Società Sestantina Srl founded</td>
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<td>2008 - Mayor asks to host refugees following Riace model</td>
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<td>Succo</td>
<td>Emilia Romagna</td>
<td>1973 - 1975</td>
<td>original town destroyed by emigration (isolation)</td>
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<td>2003 - Cooperazione Valle Die Cavalieri formed</td>
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<td>Calabria</td>
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<td>2000 - Associazione Borgo di Terreuntuca</td>
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<td>Tuscany</td>
<td>XVIII</td>
<td>1950s</td>
<td>emigration</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>1970 - purchase by Swiss tourist company Hapimag</td>
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<td>Liguria</td>
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<td>1960s (gradual population decline &amp; new town built)</td>
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<td>(Sole remaining inhabitant passed away in 2000)</td>
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<td>Tuscany</td>
<td>medieval</td>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>urban migration</td>
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<td>1990 - group of individuals choose Upacchi as the site for new eco-village</td>
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<td>Tuscany</td>
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<td>1980s</td>
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<td>total</td>
<td>2000 - architect Fulvio di Rosa begins to purchase the village's abandoned homes</td>
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<td>Project Name</td>
<td>re-awakening: renovation/description project</td>
<td>re-awakening: inaugural Sector</td>
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<td>Million Donkey Hotel (Adione Matese)</td>
<td>2005 albergo diffuso</td>
<td>2005 tourism</td>
<td>local community &amp; public local protagonists community driven project</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- 1960s spontaneous repopulation by international artists</td>
<td>ongoing repopulation</td>
<td>private (foreign) outsiders</td>
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<td>Parco Letterario Carlo Levi</td>
<td>2008 - present literature park</td>
<td>2008 socio-cultural</td>
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<td>- 2005 borgo albergo &amp; residential</td>
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<td>private &amp; public local protagonists community driven project</td>
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<td>Borgo di Basilia Creti</td>
<td>1990s luxury resort</td>
<td>ongoing tourism</td>
<td>private (foreign project, prec outsiders)</td>
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<td>Borgo Finochietto</td>
<td>2001 - 2008 hotel village</td>
<td>2008 (Spring) tourism</td>
<td>private (foreign project, prec outsiders)</td>
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<td>Relais Borgo Santo Pietro</td>
<td>2001 - 2010 luxury resort (five stars)</td>
<td>2008 (first suites opened to tourism)</td>
<td>private (foreign project, prec outsiders)</td>
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<td>Comunità Internazionale degli Artisti</td>
<td>1961 - 1968 (original artist's spontaneous repopulation by international artists)</td>
<td>ongoing repopulation</td>
<td>private (grass-roots) outsiders</td>
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<td>2007 - 16 albergo diffuso</td>
<td>2016 tourism</td>
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<td>public outsiders</td>
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<td>Caltri Borgo Castello</td>
<td>2008 - 2011 conservative restoration, space for cultural events and arts</td>
<td>2011 socio-cultural</td>
<td>public local protagonists community driven project</td>
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<td>Hotel Borgo Cardiglino</td>
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<td>1999 (currently abandoned tourism)</td>
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<td>2004 - 2009 albergo diffuso</td>
<td>2009 tourism</td>
<td>private &amp; public local protagonists community driven project</td>
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<td>Toscana Resort Castelfalfi</td>
<td>2017 - 2014/17 luxury resort</td>
<td>2014 tourism</td>
<td>private (foreign project, prec outsiders)</td>
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<td>Monteverdi Tuscany</td>
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<td>- 2008, 2010 (the first of five housing for refugees)</td>
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<td>2006 - 2007 (put on hold for albergo diffuso)</td>
<td>2017 tourism</td>
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<td>1993 - 1999 e-village</td>
<td>1999 business</td>
<td>local (Italian project, prec-outsiders)</td>
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<td>1978 - 2000 albergo diffuso</td>
<td>2001 (10 march) tourism</td>
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<td>private (Italian)</td>
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<td>Albergo Diffuso Crispotti</td>
<td>1968 - 1977 albergo diffuso</td>
<td>1962 (the albergo diffuso tourism)</td>
<td>private (foreign project, prec outsiders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Borgo Lancozio</td>
<td>2000 - 2008 luxury resort - spa and albergo diffuso</td>
<td>2008 tourism</td>
<td>private (Italian)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soc. Coop Mogliazzu Ecowillaggio Cooperativa Biologica</td>
<td>1970s eco-village</td>
<td>1890 repopulation</td>
<td>private (grass-roots) outsiders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relais Palazzo Viviani</td>
<td>1988 - 94 luxury hotel and town recuperification</td>
<td>1994 tourism</td>
<td>private (Italian)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rifugio Paralupi</td>
<td>2006 - 2013 museum, conference centre and hospitality</td>
<td>2013 socio-cultural</td>
<td>private &amp; public local protagonists community driven project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Il Piscicida Advanced Research Technologies</td>
<td>2006 - 2007 cultural center of advanced design and research</td>
<td>2006 (9th November) business</td>
<td>private (Italian)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Castello di Postignano</td>
<td>2007 - 2015 luxury resort and real estate</td>
<td>2012 (June) tourism</td>
<td>private (Italian project, prec-outsiders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riance Città Futura</td>
<td>2001 - 2008 housing for refugees</td>
<td>2001 (the town became para-socio-cultural)</td>
<td>local (grass-roots) local protagonists community driven project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Borgo Rocchetta</td>
<td>2012 - 2017 albergo diffuso</td>
<td>2017 (first building complete tourism)</td>
<td>public local protagonists community driven project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Borgo San Felice Relais e Châteaux</td>
<td>1998 - 2000 albergo diffuso</td>
<td>1991 tourism</td>
<td>private (foreign project, prec outsiders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Borgo Antico San Vito: Distilleria in Franciacorta</td>
<td>2003 - 2010 artisan distillery, international research centre for distilleri</td>
<td>2013 business</td>
<td>private (Italian)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Borgo San Lorenzo</td>
<td>1981 - 1994 albergo diffuso</td>
<td>1994 tourism</td>
<td>private &amp; public local protagonists community driven project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Borgo Scopeto Relais</td>
<td>1998 - 2006 luxury resort</td>
<td>2006 tourism</td>
<td>local protagonists community driven project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Borgo di Seranegre e Castello Fieschi (Parco Naturale Re)</td>
<td>2012 cultural events, hospitality</td>
<td>2013 (farm holiday and trass-socio-cultural)</td>
<td>local protagonists community driven project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stiel Borgo Antico Giffoni Sel Casali</td>
<td>2000 paese albergo</td>
<td>2000 tourism</td>
<td>local protagonists community driven project</td>
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<td>Borgo Giulio</td>
<td>1995 - 2000 (and recent m/hotel village)</td>
<td>2000 tourism</td>
<td>private (Italian)</td>
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<td>Solomeo 'Brunello Cucinelli'</td>
<td>1985 - 2008 - ongoing headquarters, production centre and school for Brunello's Forum of the Arps. (business)</td>
<td>2005 (Forum of the Arts opens)</td>
<td>private (Italian) local protagonist - top-down project</td>
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<td>Progetto Immigrati Signano</td>
<td>2008 housing for refugees</td>
<td>2008 socio-cultural</td>
<td>public local protagonists community driven project</td>
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<td>Vallee de Cavallier' Cooperativa di Comunità</td>
<td>1991 (bar and mini market) town cooperative</td>
<td>1994 (restaurant opens)</td>
<td>local community &amp; public local protagonists community driven project</td>
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<td>Borgo Tannonecchia</td>
<td>2000 cultural events &amp; creative media institute and artistic</td>
<td>2006 (artistic media institute)</td>
<td>local community &amp; public local protagonists community driven project</td>
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<td>Torri-Superiore Ecowillage</td>
<td>1990 association begins eco-village</td>
<td>2005 - reception opens, 20 repopulation</td>
<td>private (grass-roots) outsiders</td>
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<td>Borgo di Vagli</td>
<td>2000 - 2005 private residence club based on 'fractional ownership'</td>
<td>2005 repopulation</td>
<td>private (Italian project, prec-outsiders)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 2
protagonists

FEI D72 (Austrian collective of architects), local volunteers
Painter Hermanus Gordijn and sculptor Ondina Buytendorp (Dutch)
Aliano local council, Franco Amminio
n/a
Roberto Wirth (owner) and Peter Wirth (manager) (fifth generation luxury hoteliers)
Giofredda family
architect Paolo Portoghese, Campanofrecchio Educational Srl, owner and administrator Susanna Bina, Vittorio Campione
John Phillips (American lawyer)
Danish entrepreneurs Jeanette and Claus Thottrup
Mario Gianini (Ollia), poet Giovanni Front, Sicilian painter Vanni Gifi
Calabritto Local council and Pro-Loco
architect Paolo Portoghese (one of ten permanent inhabitants)
Caflati local council, Superintendent
Spechcia local council
Castelalto local council
Arnone local council, Cooperative Ergon and the Casteldilago Pro-loc
entrepreneur Virgilio Battanta, post 2007 sold to German company TUI AG
Comunita Montana Terminio Cervialto;
American lawyer and academic Michael Cioffi and Italian architect and interior designer Itaria Marin
Caflonia local council
Antonio Fabbrini della "Teknika", Architect Francesco Moscatelli, local community
architect Giancarlo De Carlo
Leonardo Zanier
Entrepreneur Daniel Kihlgren
Belgian architect Ivan Van Mossevelde, Countess Ottavia Nobili-Vitelleschi
entrepreneurs Vittoria e Giovanni Zuffellato
Cultural association Amici di Latro
Soc. Coop Mogliaze
Italian Stylist Alberta Ferretti
architect Renato Maurino,
Associazione Nuto Ravetti
entrepreneur Giancarlo Luigi
architects Gennaro Matacona and Matteo Scaramella, La Società Mirto srl
Mayor Domenico Lucano, Associazione Città Futura
entrepreneur Simone Mariani, Company Sabelti, faculty of architecture University of Florence (project design)
German insurance company - Gruppo Allianz
Giulio, Antonio, Luigi Gozio
Leonardo Zanier
Italian entrepreneur and wine expert Elisabetta Gnudi Angelini
Parco Naturale Regionale dell'Antola, Valbrevenna local council
mayor Rosario D’Acunto and community members
architect Stefano Montemagni, owner Eraldo Gaffino
Entrepreneur Brunello Cucinelli
Entrepreneur Daniel Kihlgren
Stignano local council
Cooperative "Valle dei Cavalieri", Danio Torri, Creste Torri,
Associazione Borgo di Terravecchia, European Union, Program Pop-Fers Campania
Swiss company Hapimag
Associazione Torri Superiore, international volunteers, resident community, Lucilla Borio, presidente dell’associazione, architect Gianfranco Fava and surveyor Mauro Fantino, Piero Cafranetti and Giovanna Balestra
New community, Eva Lotz
architect Fulvio di Rosa