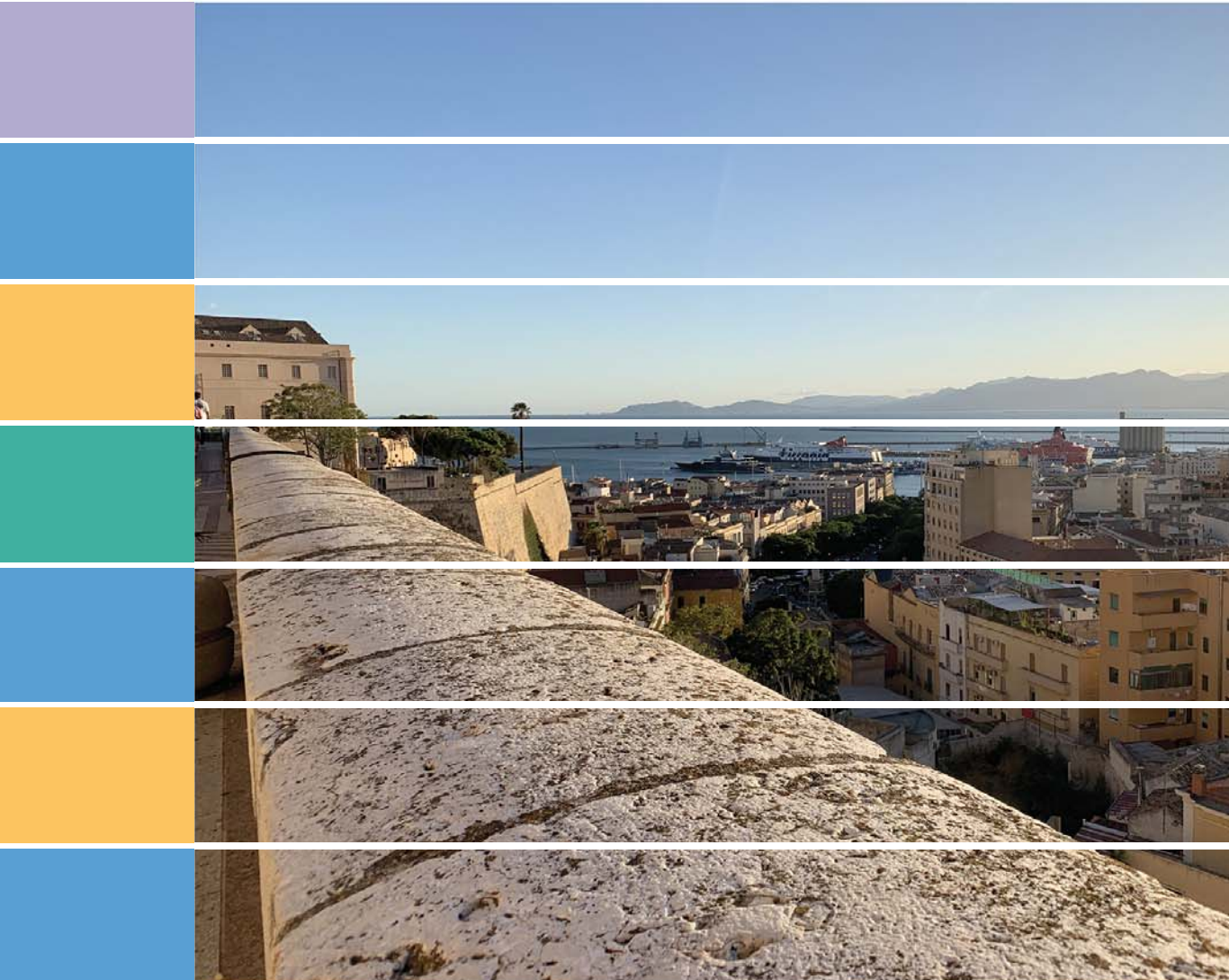


Carmela Gargiulo Corrado Zoppi  
*Editors*

# Planning, Nature and Ecosystem Services



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*Scuola Politecnica e delle Scienze di Base*

Smart City, Urban Planning for a Sustainable Future

**5**





Carmela Gargiulo Corrado Zoppi  
*Editors*

## **Planning, Nature and Ecosystem Services**

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This book is the most recent scientific contribution of the “Smart City, Urban Planning for a Sustainable Future” Book Series, dedicated to the collection of research e-books, published by FedOAPress - Federico II Open Access University Press. The volume contains the scientific contributions presented at the INPUT aCademy 2019 Conference. In detail, this publication, including 92 papers grouped in 11 sessions, for a total of 1056 pages, has been edited by some members of the Editorial Staff of “TeMA Journal”, here listed in alphabetical order:

- Rosaria Battarra;
- Gerardo Carpentieri;
- Federica Gaglione;
- Carmen Guida;
- Rosa Morosini;
- Floriana Zucaro.

The most heartfelt thanks go to these young and more experienced colleagues for the hard work done in these months. A final word of thanks goes to Professor Roberto Delle Donne, Director of the CAB - Center for Libraries "Roberto Pettorino" of the University of Naples Federico II, for his active availability and the constant support also shown in this last publication.

*Rocco Papa*

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# PLACE BRANDING AS A TOOL TO IMPROVE HERITAGE-LED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE SULCIS-IGLESIENTE REGION

ANNA MARIA COLAVITTI, ALESSIA USAI

Department of Civil and Environmental  
Engineering and Architecture  
University of Cagliari, Italy  
e-mail: amcolavt@unica.it, a\_usai@unica.it

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## ABSTRACT

*Place branding is becoming a highly political process used to form and force through policy agendas. Similarly, in cultural districts, design stakeholder coalitions and policy networks are shown to be relevant variables in the design process, especially in Italy. The paper focuses on this aspect exploring the impacts that a substantial reorganization of the local institutional and entrepreneurial network can produce on local place branding and the heritage-led strategies already adopted, especially, in the case of geotourism, where partnership building is still weak and linked to sender-controlled communication. The incidence of the administrative and institutional reform on the local partnerships is assessed through a comparative analysis of the place branding strategies set by the Local Tourism System (LTS), the Sardinia Geopark and Sardinia Region for the Sulcis-Iglesiente region in light of the contemporary reform of the local administrative and planning system and according to the framework elaborated by Colavitti and Usai (2015) to operationalise the partnership building strategy aspects in institutional place branding. Finally, the paper outlines the most critical and challenging questions in order to develop a competitive identity able to both influence and be influenced by the local planning instruments for cultural heritage.*

## KEYWORDS

*Place Branding; Sustainable Tourism; Partnership Building Strategy*

## 1 CULTURAL DISTRICT DESIGN AND PLACE BRANDING TO SUPPORT PARTNERSHIP BUILDING IN HERITAGE-LED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The construction of a cultural heritage chain as a multi-level network made of districts, regions and firms, is a complex path. It requires a stable form of government and a clear definition of the roles assigned to the different nodes as to provide strategic unity and organizational coordination to the network. This aspect is particularly relevant for contexts with a predominance of small family-owned firms such as Italy. Here cultural districts have not developed under the planning for the arts but thanks to the application of Becattini's industrial district idea to cultural heritage management, especially by Walter Santagata and Pier Luigi Sacco. The research of the two authors on Italian regions, including Sardinia, has brought out the peculiarities of the organizational models that govern the chain of cultural heritage, from protection to valorisation, as well as the ability to generate "hybrid" districts linked to technological innovation, agri-food and tourism. They bring together companies rooted in different but complementary territories in terms of the supply chain or skills and provide them a coordinated image and offer to compete on the market (Ferilli et al., 2017; Ponzini et al., 2014; Sacco et al., 2013A, 2013B; Usai, 2016a, 2016b). The attempt is to produce narratives that can anchor and, at the same time, push forward local identity introducing a new "ethic" in territorial competition (Anholt, 2007). In this sense, place branding strategies built on the concept of "competitive identity" by Anholt (2011, 2016) can be a useful mean to build a coherent district image and a cooperative network taking it forward. "Competitive identity" concept refers to a place as a representation, as "physical-place-making" or both. In particular, Anholt (2011, 2016) highlights three key elements that Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) have to considered defining the competitive identity of a place: *Strategy* (i.e. a clear idea about who a place is and who it want to be tomorrow, according to an internal and external perception); *Substance*: the effective implementation of the Strategy through several activities (economic, legal, political, social, cultural and educational); *Symbolic Actions*: some activities characterized by an intrinsic communicative power and repeated for a long time in order to protect DMOs' Strategy from anonymity.

The greatest challenge in *Strategy* development is reconciling needs and expectations of different actors leading them toward goals which must be both inspiring and feasible (Anholt, 2011, 2016). At this purpose, Hankinson (2010) proposes a participation-based approach in which the DMOs are renamed as Place Branding Organisation (PBOs). PBOs work following the hexagon of competitive identity created by Anholt (2011, 2016) and guide local authorities

towards the best strategy to attract visitor and investors and involve local residents - while traditionally, local authorities opt for standard solution, like mass advertising. Colavitti and Usai (2015) define this activity of networking as partnership building strategy.

Partnership building is also a pillar of sustainable tourism. Fostering harmonious relationships among local communities, the private sector, not-for-profit organizations, academic institutions, and governments at all levels as well as developing management practices and philosophies that protect natural, built, and cultural environments while reinforcing positive and economic growth, are the main challenges in managing sustainable tourism (Edgell Sr, 2016). Soulard et al. (2018) suggest that the stakeholder support in destination strategic plans increases as bonding and bridging social capital intensifies. Similarly, Lakner et al. (2018), with reference to Hungary, indicate the inclusion of different interest groups and long-term prognoses in local decision making as factors to minimise the environmental burden of tourism. Vice versa, Mc Camley and Gilmore (2018) prove that weak coordination, in terms of strategic marketing planning, has negative implications for heritage tourism in terms of strategic orientation, resource allocation, products and services development and destination promotion.

In the geotourism sector destinations have to conserve the very resources that make them attractive to be successful in the long term; so any marketing and planning for the destination also has to pursue responsibility and sustainability goals. Place branding creates destination loyalty using techniques such as "heritage interpretation" to generate tourist income responsibly and sustainably for local communities (Hart Robinson, 2015). Despite this, the projected image of geosites is often a deliberately constructed form of communication or grounded in authority-led projects (Chan & Zhang, 2018). The geoparks' image is often the result of a "sender-controlled communication" which concerns the *primary communication* (the communicative effects of actions taken by institutions) and *secondary communication* (the official communication issued by institutions). Colavitti and Usai (2015) illustrate these dynamics through the case of the Sulcis-Iglesiente region in Sardinia (IT) where an extensive recovery of industrial archeology sites took place after the crisis of the mines in the Seventies and Eighties.

The historical region of Sulcis-Iglesiente is included, along with the Guspinese territory, in the area n.8 of the Sardinia Geopark (see Fig. 1). The authors chose this territory for the following reasons:

- it holds a considerable quote of the heritage belonging to the Geomining Historical and Environmental Park of Sardinia (hereafter: Sardinia Geopark);
- it was the object of two communication campaigns between 2006 and 2009: the first campaign was organized by the Local Tourism System (LTS), a body created by the

Carbonia-Iglesias Province and supported by the Sardinian Geopark and other private organizations. The second campaign was directly promoted by the Sardinian Geopark Consortium and monitored by the European Geoparks Network (EGN).

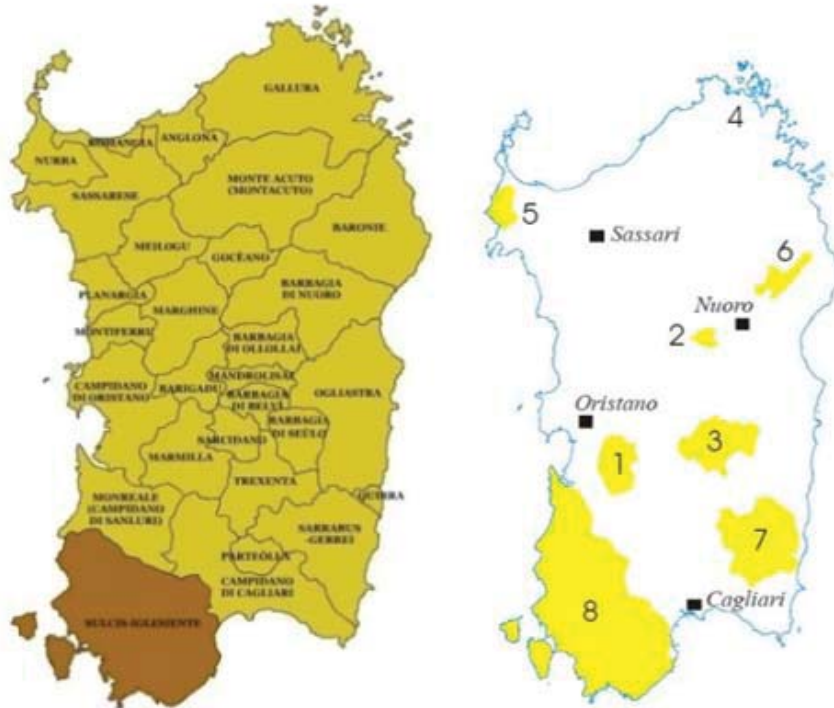


Fig.1 The Sulcis-Iglesiente historic region and the area no.8 of the Sardinian Geopark  
(Source: Elaboration by the authors)

The valorization of local mining sites at cultural-tourism purposes has led to the formation of various institutional networks on the local scale. Firstly, the networks of local institutions, companies and associations belonging to the Sardinia Geopark which, since 2007, is part of the European Geoparks Network (EGN) and, since November 2015, of the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network (GGN). Secondly, the aggregation of institutions, companies and cooperatives which have born thanks to regional policies for cultural tourism: from integrated planning interventions (PIA CA 07 Sud-Ovest. Sistema Turistico, PIA CA 01 Ovest - North-West - Repairing Interventions for the harbor infrastructure: *Interventi di ripristino delle infrastrutture portuali*) to interventions supported by the Regional Law 4/2000 art. 38, up to the Sulcis Inter-communal Strategic Plan (*Sistema Integrato di Gestione Beni Culturali e Ambientali Sulcis – Iglesiente*). Finally, the Sulcis-Iglesiente LTS, an institution created in 2006 by the Carbonia-Iglesias Province, which includes the Geopark and other actors of the tourism sector.

The LTS and the Geo-mining Park have represented the main PBOs of the territory and have contributed to the construction of the Sulcis-Iglesiente district image in the context of local tourism strategies for the heritage (Colavitti & Usai, 2015).

The 2010 Provincial Urban Plan was essential to the creation and strengthening of these PBOs because it established the "Provincial historical-cultural heritage networks" (Provincia di Carbonia Iglesias, 2010). Furthermore, in December 2009, Sardinia Region published a call for tenders for the funding of integrated landscape programs in implementation of the planning guidelines for the RLP. The mechanism of participation adopted in the call for tenders is interesting because it saw the competition between neighboring municipalities – belonging to the same landscape unit and represented by a common leader. Among the twelve programs funded in 2011 there is "Sulcis: landscapes of work", a program presented by the Municipality of Portoscuso in a network with the Municipalities of Carbonia, Gonnese, San Giovanni Suergiu, which provides for the conservation and redevelopment of the industrial archeology of coal mining infrastructure for sustainable tourism<sup>1</sup>. In 2012, with the Plan for Sulcis, the Sardinia Region proposed again the network logic adopted for integrated landscape programs in various calls, pushing the municipalities, public bodies and companies of the Sulcis-Iglesiente region to cluster<sup>2</sup>. In particular, local businesses operating in the cultural heritage supply chain have joined together to create new economic operators with a network structure - also to cope with the reduction in public spending and the decline in tourism recorded between 2012 and 2013 (Colavitti & Usai, 2015; Curto et al., 2014). According to the networking dynamics emerged in the Sulcis-Iglesiente case study, Colavitti and Usai (2015, p.156) provides a new definition of *partnership building strategy* as "the set of links that a PBO established or plan to establish with local and supra-local actors through formal agreements or joint activities in order to ensure *Substance* and, therefore, *Symbolic Actions* to the competitive identity they intend to build and implement for a specific place".

## 2 METHODOLOGY

Literature on cultural heritage district design and place branding both recognize the involvement of public actors as an important variable in defining the place branding strategies for the future of a place, especially when the same public actors are or act as the main PBOs in the region. Despite this, only a few studies address this issue from the opposite point of view questioning: (1) the impacts that institutional changes can have on the heritage-led

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.regione.sardegna.it/documenti/1\\_19\\_20111221130928.pdf](http://www.regione.sardegna.it/documenti/1_19_20111221130928.pdf) (02.02.2019)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.regione.sardegna.it/documenti/1\\_73\\_20120918143145.pdf](http://www.regione.sardegna.it/documenti/1_73_20120918143145.pdf) (02.02.2019)

strategies already undergoing and (2) the effective capacity of public actors in reducing the negative outputs and reorienting such strategies.

Geotourism represents an ideal research field because it is a sector where public actors and sender-controlled communication have a prevalent role. This is the case of Sulcis-Iglesiente region where both the local PBOs are linked to the local governments, as illustrated by Colavitti and Usai (2015). Furthermore, in 2014 the Delrio<sup>3</sup> law changed the Italian institutional architecture. In Sardinia it led to the establishment of the Cagliari Metropolitan Area and a new division of the regional territory into four provinces: Nuoro, Oristano, Sassari and South Sardinia<sup>4</sup>. The new Province of Southern Sardinia<sup>5</sup> replaces the old province of Carbonia-Iglesias, administrated by an external commissioner until new elections (scheduled for spring 2019) (see Fig. 2).

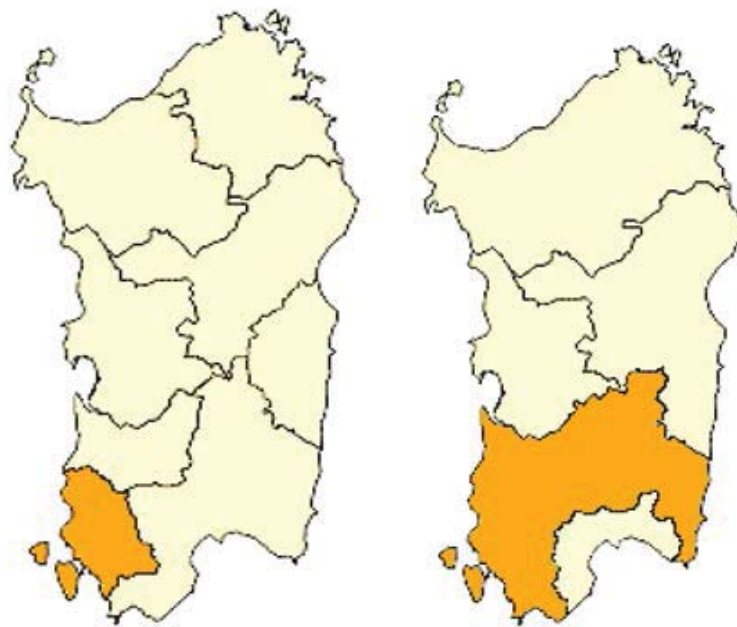


Fig.2 The Carbonia-Iglesias Province and the new South-Sardinia Province  
(Source: Elaboration by the authors)

As a consequence, the LTS have been dismantled and the Sardinia Geopark has become the only PBO in the area while the regional government has set a new strategy for tourism to coordinate the local PBOs. These events, not covered by Colavitti & Usai (2015), make the

<sup>3</sup> L.56/2014.

<sup>4</sup> L.R.15/2013, L.R. 24/2014 art.19, L.R.7/2015, L.R:2/2016

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.provincia.sudsardegna.it> (22.02.2019)

Sulcis-Iglesiente area the ideal case study in order to explore how institutional actors can influence/reorient the heritage-led strategies already undergoing. For this reason, the paper recalls the methodological framework and the case study of Colavitti & Usai (2015) and, in the same line of research, trying to illustrate what happens after to the local PBOs and their heritage-led strategies.

The incidence of the administrative and institutional reform on institutional place branding and on the Sardinian Geopark's image is assessed through a comparative analysis of the place branding strategies set by the local PBO (the Sardinia Geopark) and the Sardinia Region after 2014, also in light of the contemporary reform of the Regional Landscape Plan (RLP).

The comparison is carried out according to the framework elaborated by Colavitti and Usai (2015) to operationalise the partnership building strategy concept in institutional place branding (see Tab. 1). In particular, we analyse the activities listed in the periodic Progress Reports sent by the Sardinia Geopark to the EGN (secondary communication sources) on the base of Tab. 1. After, we discuss the outcomes in light of the provisions of the Strategic Plan for Tourism by Sardinia Region (a primary communication source) and the data on tourism from 2014 to 2018.

PROMOTION	MARKETING	PARTNERSHIP BUILDING
1. Customer-oriented website	1. Offer-based programs	1. Local partnerships through specific projects
2. Media communication	2. Discounts by type of user	2. Joint planning of interventions and policies in renewable energy, research and training
3. Co-marketing initiatives	3. Special formulations based on time or type of visit	
4. Diffusion of the park image within the territory	4. Educational workshops/events	

Tab. 1 Analytical framework adopted in the study.  
(Source: Colavitti & Usai, 2015)

### 3 PARTNERSHIP BUILDING IN HERITAGE-LED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: THE CASE STUDY OF THE SULCIS-IGLESIENTE REGION

In 2014 the Delrio Law and the subsequent commissioner management of the Province of Carbonia-Iglesias, have determined the disappearance of the LTS, one of the two PBOs responsible for the tourist promotion of the Sulcis-Iglesiente area. The 2011-2013<sup>6</sup> activity plan was not followed up and the tourism sector planning was entrusted to the South Sardinia Province Tourist Office<sup>7</sup>, still under construction.

<sup>6</sup> Approved with the Delibera di Giunta Provinciale n. 182 in 01.08.2011.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.provincia.carboniaiglesias.it/aree-intervento/sistema-turistico-locale-sulcis-iglesiente>

Skills in the area of land planning and management have also been transferred to the Province of Southern Sardinia, in particular: The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) procedures for urban planning instruments, the territorial projects related to the old Provincial Urban Plan – still in force and interventions for tourism development of the territory. The modified institutional structure has also affected the governance of the Sardinia Geopark but it continued with the place branding activity, which can be seen through the reports sent every six months to the EGN8 (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3 Place branding activities carried out by Sardinia Geopark in the period 2014-2018

(Source: Elaboration of the authors on EGN Progress Reports)

The re-validation procedures of 2013 and 2017 for the maintenance of the European Geopark and UNESCO Geopark labels were successful passed by the Sardinia Geopark. Some remarks have been made regarding the structure of the park, which is still divided into eight areas, although in 2014 its legal competence was extended to the entire regional territory<sup>9</sup>. The

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.europeangeoparks.org/?page\\_id=1060](http://www.europeangeoparks.org/?page_id=1060) (22.02.2019)

<sup>9</sup> Resolution no. 34/10 of 02.09.2014 of the Autonomous Government of Sardinia extending the jurisdiction of the Sardinia Geopark to the whole island territory.



recommendations in this sense of the European Geopark Network concerned: the production of an updated cartographic and promotional documentation that gives visibility to the Geopark as a regional reality; the description of the links between geology, culture and ecology values and the synergies between these components outside the eight areas of the Sardinia Geopark; the synergy between the Sardinia Geopark and the stakeholders outside the eight park areas; active participation in the international geoparks networks<sup>10</sup>. The approval of the Management Plan for Mining Sites on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2018 enabled the first president of the park to be appointed on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018 after eight years of commissioner management<sup>11</sup>.

Consistent with the National Strategic Plan for Tourism 2017-2022 of the Italian Ministry of Culture, in 2018 the Sardinia Region adopted the Regional Strategic Tourism Plan 2018-2021 (STP), the reference document at the regional level for the destination management and marketing. Compared to the past, the plan's vision was built through a participatory process<sup>12</sup> with thematic work tables in different Sardinian municipalities (April-July 2018), the online platform [www.sardegnapartecipa.it](http://www.sardegnapartecipa.it) and on *desk* analysis carried out by technical and scientific consultants.

The Strategic Axis 1 of STP related to *governance* envisages the creation of a single regional Destination Management Organization, called "DMO Sardinia" on which the territorial DMOs depend. The Axis Strategic 12 related to the *place branding* proposes the establishment of a Sardinia Brand as *Brand Master* and *Umbrella Brand* within which to place the destination, product and territorial brands that can be developed by local DMOs and exploited by tour operators. Although the marketing and distribution of the tourism offer is held by private operators, the STP emphasizes the importance of public support and attributes to DMO Sardinia the task of guiding and supporting *Destination Management Companies* (DMCs) in the marketing and distribution of tourism products created by the DMO Sardinia and the territorial DMOs. The Strategic Axis 7 is dedicated to sustainability (strategic objective 7.1) and inclusion (strategic goal 7.2) for tourism. This axis is linked to the RLP as it regards the protection of the territory and the environment. Responsibility for its implementation is mainly assigned to the region, municipalities, DMO Sardinia and territorial DMOs (see Tab. 2).

<sup>10</sup> The 2013 revalidation letter is available at:

<http://www.parcogeominerario.eu/attachments/article/677/Lettera%20Zouros.pdf> (22.02.2019). For the 2017 revalidation decision, see: UNESCO (2018). SC/EES/EGR/17/11537. Paris: UNESCO Global Geoparks Council, 2nd session. Available at: [https://issuu.com/comissaonacionaldaunesco/docs/letter\\_and\\_report\\_of\\_the\\_unesco\\_glo](https://issuu.com/comissaonacionaldaunesco/docs/letter_and_report_of_the_unesco_glo) (22.02.2019).

<sup>11</sup> Parco Geominerario Storico Ambientale della Sardegna, Amministrazione trasparente, organizzazione, organi di indirizzo politico: <http://www.parcogeominerario.eu/index.php/amministrazione-trasparente-1/organizzazione/848-organi-di-indirizzo-politico-amministrativo?lang=it> (22.02.2019)

<sup>12</sup> L.R. 16/2017 as modified by L.R. n. 23/2018.

STRATEGIC AXIS 7. SUSTAINABILITY AND INCLUSION	RESPONSIBILITY	LOANSS	PRIORITY ACTION
<b>7.1 Eco-friendly Sardinia</b>			
7.1.1 Promoting efficiency in the use of natural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Region, Municipalities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Region	
7.1.2 Sardinia Responsible destination	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Municipality, private companies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Municipalities	
7.1.3 Sustainable management of beaches	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Region, Municipalities, private companies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.1.4 Incorporate sustainability into tourism development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DMO Sardinia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DMO Sardinia	
7.1.5 Spread of sustainability as a differential factor in Sardinia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DMO Sardinia, DMO Territorial, Region	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DMO Sardinia	
<b>7.2 Sardinia Inclusive Tourism</b>			
7.2.1 Handbook on Accessible Tourism	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DMO Sardinia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Associations for people with disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.2.2 "Tourism for everyone"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Region	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Co-financing of the responsible parties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.2.3 Valorization and identification of accessible tourism and accommodation facilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Region (Council and Department of Tourism), DMO Sardinia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.2.4 Professional training on accessible tourism	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DMO Sardinia, Region (Regional Labour Agency)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Region (ROP-ESF)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.2.5 Promotion of Sardinia as an accessible tourism destination	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DMO Sardinia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DMO Sardinia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Tab. 2 The role of DMO Sardinia and the territorial DMOs in sustainable tourism measures  
(Source: Elaboration of the authors on RAS, 2018)

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019, regional elections were held. The new government has not yet formulated its program for the next five-year term. It is therefore not yet possible to know whether the STP will be maintained as a regional planning document on tourism, if it will be implemented in whole or in part, if it will be implemented in the manner established by the previous council or according to different formulas. Meanwhile, data on the tourism offer for 2012-2016 period reveal the recovery of positions lost by the Carbonia-Iglesias Province in 2012-2013, with a slight but steady growth in the number of beds and arrivals. Nevertheless, there was also a reduction in the number of visitors and, therefore, of the average stay of visitors, which went from 4.1 days in 2011 to 3.2 days in 2016 with a decline of 0.9 days (for Sardinia the decline was of 0.4 days) (see Tab. 3).

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Bedplaces</b>						
Sassari	32,837	30,085	30,189	34,168	34,168	33,455
Nuoro	19,539	19,228	18,796	18,769	18,769	19,031
Cagliari	40,687	40,475	36,779	42,050	46,158	44,237
Oristano	12,661	12,975	12,576	12,618	12,500	12,355
Olbia-Tempio	78,255	78,887	61,318	77,045	78,447	78,385
Ogliastra	13,691	13,969	13,898	13,767	14,071	14,062
Medio Campidano	2,720	2,628	2,661	2,780	2,473	2,503
Carbonia-Iglesias	6,612	6,324	5,467	5,656	5,634	5,868
Sardinia	200,390	198,247	176,217	201.197,	206,586	204,028
<b>Average visiting (days)</b>						
Sassari	4.0	4.0	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.1
Nuoro	6.2	6.1	5,4	5.3	5.5	5.3
Cagliari	4.6	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.4	4,4
Oristano	3.2	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1
Olbia-Tempio	6.1	6.1	6.0	5.7	5.6	5.5
Ogliastra	6.2	6.2	5.9	5.6	5.5	5.4
Medio Campidano	3.6	3.6	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.2
Carbonia-Iglesias	4.1	4.1	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.2
Sardinia	5.1	5.1	4.9	4.8	4.7	4.7

Tab.3 Touristic offer in Carbonia-Iglesias Province  
(Source: Elaboration of the authors on Istat data)

## 4 RESULT DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The LTS and the Geo-mining Park were responsible for improving the knowledge and intelligibility of the local landscape through a place branding built on a diversified offer (cultural, environmental and tourist-recreational) in order to satisfy local and foreign users (Colavitti & Usai, 2015). Despite this, in the study some criticisms of the local cultural and tourist system have emerged. First, the prominent role played by public institutions in local

networks and in their establishment, in this case the Sardinia Geopark, the Local Tourism System and, recently, the Sardinia Region with the STP. A feature that derives from a too institutionalized and institutionalized vision of the cultural district that relates the emergence of extra-regional entrepreneurial clusters solely to the internationalization policies adopted by the public administrations (Ponzini, 2015; Usai, 2016b). Second, the local business networks that, despite being sufficiently articulated and diversified and having a propulsive role in the tourist enhancement of the sites, maintain a "one to one" approach in the destination governance. Another critical element is the overlapping, in some cases redundancy of the Destination Management Companies (DMCs) programming and also of the local PBOs until 2013. With the abolition of the Carbonia-Iglesias Province, in fact, the activity of the LTS was interrupted and the Geopark remained the only PBO in the area, waiting for the South-Sardinia Province Tourist Office to become operational. The activities carried out by the Geopark between 2014 and 2018 focus on dissemination (publishing, video production, networking at EGN and GGN events), education and training programs for schools, employees and tour operators and partnership building. The promotion and marketing activities previously carried out by the LTS, such as participation in events and trade fairs (e.g. the BIT in Milan), described in Colavitti & Usai (2015), are almost completely missing. Meanwhile, the increase in arrivals and the reduction in average stay, are indicative of a "hit and run" or weekend tourism, opposite to the sustainability principles pursued by local policies.

The Regional Strategic Tourism Plan 2018-2021 (STP) recognizes these critical issues and proposes as a response the construction of a unitary public governance (the Sardinia DMO) to promote, guide and regulate the horizontal collaboration of local stakeholders (the territorial DMOs) establishing priority interventions and their respective responsibilities. However, the STP has not yet been able to put its *Symbolic Actions* into practice and even less to rely on a stable local partnership, given the reform of the provincial administration. All this does not seem well prefigured for the Sulcis-Iglesiente region with respect to the definition of a competitive identity, as described by Anholt (2007, 2016). In this sense, territorial and urban planning offered an important contribution in the analysis and governance of territorial dynamics, in the involvement of local communities through participatory methods. An element that seems to have been seized and adopted by the regional administration in the construction of the STP vision, unlike the past programming.

The case of Sulcis-Iglesiente regions suggests that a contamination of place branding with participatory techniques of urban planning can improve the stakeholders' involvement and, vice versa, that the narratives developed in place branding can improve the communication of local planning tools (aims, goals, provisions, etc.). Thus, mixing participatory techniques from collaborative urban planning and communication techniques from place branding can be

the key for the public institutions in the geotourism sector to influence/reorient the heritage-led strategies already undergoing. A fundamental aspect for the future Geopark Territorial Coordination Plan, above all in the aspects concerning economic and productive activities that pursue sustainable environmental and cultural tourism for local communities. As pointed out by the EGN, in fact, the extension of the park's legal competence to the entire region must pass through a greater synergy between the Sardinia Geopark and the stakeholders residing outside the eight park areas and through a cartography that can describe these human ties, in addition to the geological, cultural and ecological values of the park.

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## AUTHOR'S PROFILE

Anna Maria Colavitti is Associate Professor in Urban Planning at the Department of Civil, Environmental Engineering and Architecture (DICAAR) – University of Cagliari (IT) and PhD in Urban Planning. She teaches Fundamentals of Urban Planning, Urban and Regional Planning. She is member of the Scientific Board of the PhD Programme in Territorial planning and Urban Development. Her research focuses on recent developments in cultural heritage, environmental and urban planning with

particular attention to local development approaches, integrated area-based programs and territorial governance processes.

**Alessia Usai** is Civil Engineer and PhD in Technology for the Preservation of Architectural and Environmental Heritage. She researches at the Department of Civil, Environmental Engineering and Architecture (DICAAR) – University of Cagliari (IT). Her research focuses on the relationship between cultural heritage and urban planning according to the creative city principles and the landscape approach outlined by the European Landscape Convention to identify best practices for the development of innovative cultural policies and new urban regeneration tools.

Carmela Gargiulo is full professor of Urban Planning Techniques at the University of Naples Federico II. Since 1987 she has been involved in studies on the management of urban and territorial transformations. Since 2004, she has been Member of the Researcher Doctorate in Hydraulic, Transport and Territorial Systems Engineering of the University of Naples "Federico II". She is Member of the Committee of the Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering Department of the University of Naples "Federico II". Her research interests focus on the processes of urban requalification, on relationships between urban transformations and mobility, and on the estate exploitation produced by urban transformations. On these subjects she has co-ordinated research teams within National Project such as Progetto Finalizzato Edilizia - Sottoprogetto "Processi e procedure" (Targeted Project on Building – Subproject "Processes and procedures), from 1992 to 1994; Progetto Strategico Aree Metropolitane e Ambiente, (Strategic Project Metropolitan Areas and Environment) from 1994 to 1995; PRIN project on the "Impacts of mobility policies on urban transformability, environment and property market" from 2011 to 2013. Principal investigator of the Project Smart Energy Master for the energy management of territory financed by PON 04A2\_00120 R&C Axis II, from 2012 to 2015. Scientific Responsible Unit Dicea Project by Fondazione Cariplo "MOBILAGE. Mobility and aging: daily life and welfare supportive networks at the neighborhood level" 2018-2020. Scientific Responsible Unit TeMALab Dicea ERASMUS+ Key Action2: Project "Development of a Master Programme in the Management of Industrial Entrepreneurship for Transition Countries" (MIETC), partners: University of Santiago de Compostela (leading organization), University of Ljubljana, Academy of Science of Turkmenistan, Karaganda Economic University of Kazpotrebsouz (2020-2022). Author of more than 130 publications. Since 2008 Associate Editor of TeMA Journal of Land Use, Mobility and Environment.

Corrado Zoppi, Civil engineer, is Doctor of Philosophy in Economics (Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts, United States, 1997), Doctor of Research in Territorial Planning (University of Reggio Calabria, 1992), and Master of Science in Economic Policy and Planning (Northeastern University, 1990). Since October 1 2015 he is Professor (Full Professor, Scientific Disciplinary Sector ICAR/20 Urban and Regional Technique and Planning)) at the Department of Civil, Environmental Engineering and Architecture. In the past, he taught at the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Cagliari, and at the Faculties of Architecture of the Universities of Rome "La Sapienza" and Sassari-Alghero. He is presently the Official Professor of the Module of Strategic Planning of the Integrated Course of Strategic Environmental Planning and of the Course of Regional and Urban Planning at the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Cagliari, and the Coordinator of the Undergraduate and Magisterial Degree Programs at the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture of the University of Cagliari. He was the Coordinator of the Panel for the Assessment and Evaluation of Public Investments of the Sardinian Regional Administration in the period 2007-2013. He was the Coordinator of the Graduate Committee of Environmental and Territorial Engineering of the University of Cagliari in the period 2012-2015. He is the President of the Faculty Committee of Engineering and Architecture of the University of Cagliari.

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