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# Mountain Condominiums. A Discussing of Settlement and Dwelling on the Outskirts of an Alpine City

Cristina Mattiucci

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

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## Introduction: Dwelling in the mountains

This paper presents the settlement dynamics in Roncegno Terme, a small town located in the Valsugana Valley, in the province of Trento in Italy. These dynamics are transforming the territory, and the paper, based on empirical research, focuses specifically on the processes of residential development. The example of this town can be considered a peculiar case of the peri-urban expansion of the larger metropolitan dimension that the province of Trento has been taking on.

By examining the settlement typology and the relationship between the people and the landscape on which they have chosen to dwell, we investigate the territorial transformation processes in a paradigmatic context for metropolitan-mountain development. In this way, we seek to question whether these processes – starting from the housing model that they have been producing – are a manifestation of the features

of a monofunctional residential transformation. We also consider the possible consequences for the transformation of the mountain, as well as the genesis of spatial homogeneity and possible spatial inequalities.

This reflection is based on a critical reading of the field work that our research group carried out during an Urban Planning<sup>11</sup> experience in Roncegno T. More specifically, the case study will be presented with the phenomenal and empirical data collected during a study about landscape perception (Mattiucci, 2010.1), which was conceived as a structural survey to propose socially shared planning processes and territorial transformations.

By referencing the settlement's pattern and the building types, we intend to circumscribe this reflection within a description of the most recent transformations in Roncegno T. in order to discuss the way of dwelling and the ways of life, and the inhabitants to whom they correspond.

One of the main issues at the heart of this article is the recognition of a correlation between the shape of the newer buildings that have gone up in some areas of the town and the transformation of a peri-urban mountain reality that gradually tends to assume the features of a dormitory town: Gradually, the mountains become identified as a residential supplier within the logic of a metropolitan development that is related to territorial transformations on a global scale.

We therefore seek to make explicit the link between the densification of the building processes and the dissolution of the collective spaces. In so doing, at the present stage of an as yet incomplete densification of the mountain settlements, we work under the assumption that this survey can be useful to reflect on the possibilities of the planning and territorial governance tools to correct the territorial disparities that might be generated when small mountain towns turn into mostly residential suburbs of the metropolitan centres nearby.

## **Case study: a mountain town turns into a peri-urban area**

Roncegno T. is situated 30 km from the city of Trento, in the Valsugana Valley, where the system of tangible and intangible infrastructures has produced the phenomenon of an extensive but "slow" metropolisation (Indovina, 2003; Bonomi, 2012).

The town is different from other similar mountain contexts in which one can observe strong urban pressure on the areas around the major cities in a valley. As other scholars have already highlighted (Dematteis, 1975; Gaido 1999; Perlik and Bätzing, 1999; Perlik, Messerli and Bätzing, 2001; Bätzing, 2005; Dematteis, 2009; Diener et al. 2005), this pressure produces an extended metropolitan dimension, from the lowlands up to the mountain, albeit with a density that is not structurally constant and with different modalities.

This happens because of the presence of infrastructures, which physically structure the city-mountain connection, and of commuting flows (for work and leisure) between different territorial realities. These flows have also developed because of the predominant residential role that the high and low mountains play.

The phenomenon takes many different forms that vary in relation to the different contexts, and it is influenced by global and local driving forces. The latter are mainly

related to local policies to repopulate the mountain towns, supported by infrastructure and new development in information and communication technology and encouraged by new or renewed opportunities in mountain economies.

In Italy, as other researchers have underlined (Corrado, 2010; Corrado et al., 2014), there are many reasons to dwell in the mountains, and these reasons are expressed by very diverse subjectivities and their related ways of living and settlement choices: Some people return to their family home (and often restore it to the new family's needs); others choose empty traditional buildings or build new ones following this model because they want to live in an environment that has a close relationship to nature (Ferrario, 2000); there are also migrants who find affordable housing in the many vacant mountain houses; and young couples as well as retirees look for new buildings with urban comfort and amenities that have a rural look about them.

These processes influence the settlement patterns and allows the emergence of a peculiar phenomenon of sprawl in the Italian mountain territories (Lanzani, 2003; 2012) that takes on different shapes in various contexts, without there being too many scattered settlements, as a result of the mountain geographies' orographic limits.

In what we recognised as an extended metropolitan dimension, the mountain towns become a central element of a peri-urban development. This means there is a transformation of the hybrid territory on the edge of a metropolitan context (Bauer & Roux, 1976; Boscacci & Camagni, 1994; Pierr et al. 2011; Mattiucci 2011-2014) where the processes of densification in the settlements located nearby a metropolising city allow urban ways of life (high physical mobility, weak local and social roots, high density of daily activities).

With respect to the case study, we also recognise some of the enlargement processes at work in the city of Trento by looking at the growth of the neighbouring municipalities, an evolution that corresponds to the classical processes of suburbanisation and was a dominant spatial process in the Europe of the 1960s and 1970s. The hills around Trento are surrounded by *sobborghi* (suburbs) that point to the development of some historical settlements. At present, these suburbs are one step in the wider process of sub- and peri-urbanisation that also includes the main valleys in the metropolitan area of the city.

The functional integration of the city's surrounding areas has deep historical and geographical roots. It is at the core of Trento's socio-anthropological identity and of its shape as an extended city, which touches on the relations between the city centre and its *sobborghi* to the hills and the mountains. All of these elements together comprise a poly-centric and scattered settlement, which Bocchi (2006) defines as a *città-archipelago* made up of fragments of settlements, each with its own identity and closely related to the physical and socio-productive characters of the hilly and mountainous landscape in its entirety.

Trento's suburbs today shape a kind of sub- and peri-urban fringe, where different territorial components and ways of life are mixed (Brighenti, 2013). In the wider context, a similar process is underway in the inhabited territory of the valleys around Trento. This development is occurring because of the repositioning and the redistribution of urban functions such as production, dwelling, consumption and leisure, as is the case along the territory crossed by the Valsugana Highway, close to Roncegno T.

If we agree that peri-urbanisation is a process of building one part of a city and that it happens not merely because of physical settlement features but also as a way of life (Walk, 2013) that is based on a commuting culture founded on the development of urban infrastructures, then we can consider some peculiar factors that lead to such new urban ways of life in a mountain context.

People whose lives gravitate around the city of Trento inhabit or use (permanently or temporarily) the area that includes the city, its adjacent suburbs and the various towns in the valleys around it. The city's topography covers a great distance – from the lowlands to the mountains, a change in altitude from 100 to 2,000 masl.

Here it is possible to recognise some settlement transformations that characterise the small mountain towns, as we will point out in the following paragraphs. These transformations constitute a sort of residential expansion that spreads from the major cities thanks to a well-equipped highway system that enables commuting in the context of the broader regional and metropolitan development of the territories between the lowlands and the mountains.

## **Roncegno Terme**

The mountain town of Roncegno T. lies in the Valsugana Valley inside a territory whose height ranges from 400 to about 2,000 msl.

Mainly because of infrastructure development over the past 20–30 years, the town has felt the effects of an urban explosion related to the metropolitan dimension of Trento. These effects have taken the shape of the conformation of places that host and intersect with a complex system of relational densities and centralities (for working, housing, etc.) that is located between Trento and the Borgo Valsugana. Highway SS47 (Trento–Padova) directly connects Roncegno T. to these two main centres.

Fig 1. Roncegno Terme



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These processes, together with an increase in the population that started in the 1980s, has had a profound influence on settlement development, both through a densification of the historical downtown area and because of the new buildings in the higher-lying parts of town.

The town has registered an increase in its population because of the immigration flows of new inhabitants (see tab. 1) who have become the protagonists of a new cycle of urbanisation, similar to those in other mountain towns in the province that had been abandoned in the 1960s because of the attractiveness of the large cities or for work elsewhere.

Tab. 1: Natural and migratory population movements, 1999–2014

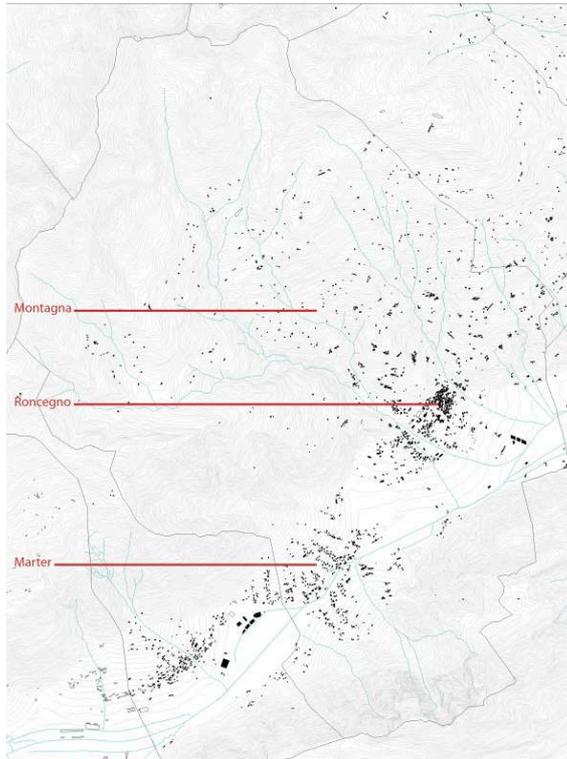
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Population variation	24	-1	24	-16	35	41	41	87	39	73	16	-3	9	27	21	27
Natural movement	0	-11	2	-18	-6	7	-2	9	-7	14	-3	-4	1	-12	8	-12
Migratory movement	24	10	22	2	41	34	43	78	46	59	19	1	8	39	13	39

As shown by the social analysis in *Documento preliminare al PRG di Roncegno*<sup>2</sup> (Diamantini et al. 2008), the starting points of migration flows to Roncegno T. are primarily the other towns of the Alta and Bassa Valsugana and Trento. At the time we worked at the PRG, a significant number of foreigners were registering (22 persons on average per year from 1991 to 2007). For the most part, they descended from the many people who had moved from Roncegno T. to Stivor (Bosnia) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century after the flood of the Brenta River (Callà, *ibid.*). The table shows the updated data until 2014, according to ISTAT sources,<sup>3</sup> which also help to understand the current dynamics. At present, Roncegno T. has 2,889 inhabitants.

Beyond the increase in the number of returning migrants or young people who decide to stay in their hometown (Ferrario & Price, 2014), this population growth has been influenced significantly by the housing market: In the peri-urban area, where there are only basic infrastructures and services, it is possible to buy a comfortable house, perhaps with its own open space, for less than in Trento.

The population is distributed across three main areas (Roncegno, Montagna and Marter), and owing to the different territorial and orographic morphologies, it is possible to recognise a peculiar settlement for each one of them.

Fig 2. Roncegno, Montagna and Marter: three different settlement patterns



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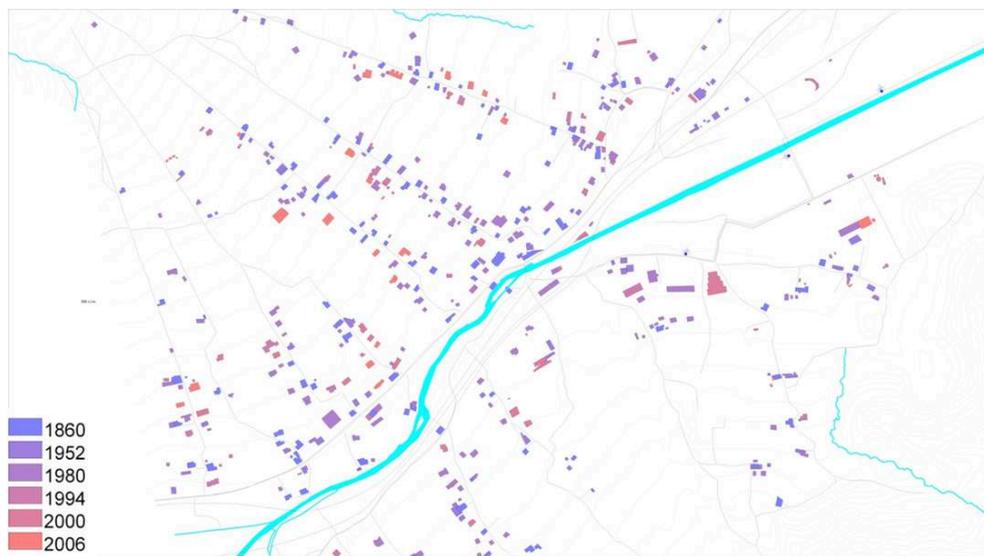
Roncegno corresponds to the downtown area and comprises a relatively compact settlement. Montagna, which started to be inhabited in the 18<sup>th</sup> century following its colonisation by German miners, is a settlement of small groups of mountain farms (*masi*) along the various contour lines of the three mountains facing the valley that were connected to each other and to the lowlands via a system of cross paths that has since been paved. Finally, Marter has developed on two opposing sections of a conoid (*conoide*) of the Larganza Creek by means of the regular settlement of buildings distributed along a radial system on the left bank of the Brenta River and a more irregular pattern of buildings with a lower construction density on the right side of the river.

A significant process in Roncegno T.'s growth started between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, when the town became a renowned destination on the tourist circuit along the mountains and the valleys in Trentino province, mainly because of the local thermal baths. During this time, there was a dual process of settlement along the two riverbanks of Larganza. Larganza crosses the east side of Marter, and this process

has been behind the changes to the original structure of the whole town; at the same time, in Montagna and Marter, a densification of the original settlement patterns started.

The period between 1950 and 1980 is characterised by an acceleration of these processes. Downtown, the interstitial spaces became saturated, coupled with an intensified urbanisation process on the right bank of the Larganza. The settlements within the conoid area gradually lost their rural character, and in the valley, on the right bank of the Brenta, the construction of an industrial area began. At the same time, the *masi* underwent typological alterations that have changed their structure and their shape substantially.

Fig 3. Settlement dynamics in Marter



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Unlike in other small mountain towns, the cultural and historical changes that Roncegno T. has witnessed are not alone in having an impact on the settlement dynamics, like the ones described in Fig. 3 with reference to Marter. The specific local housing policies decreed by the Autonomous Province of Trento, such as those supporting young couples in order to restock small towns or those giving money to restore old houses, also play an important role.

## Research materials and methods

As described above, research on landscape perception was carried out during the work for Urban Planning. With an explicit focus on new settlements areas, a discussion of some of the empirical and phenomenal data collected during the study will help to understand the perceived landscape as an expression of the ways of life in a contemporary, peri-urban mountain town, and how new settlements and new buildings reify this expression.

The research took on the conception of the landscape as the symbolic and material expression of the relationship between societies and territories (among the others: Turri, 1979 and 2008(1974); Cosgrove, 1984) that emerges through landscape features as

well as the representation of these features as the outcome of an act of cultural reflection (Farinelli, 1991).

Viewing the landscape as an expression of the relationship between societies and territories, and within the interpretative perspective that the European Landscape Convention (2000) introduced, the research focused on understanding ordinary landscapes. These are the landscapes where people live every day and have many and different images or attributions of meaning. The research was developed using survey qualitative methodology, along with interviews and *photo walks*,<sup>4</sup> and based on the experienced landscape paradigm (Zube et al., 1980) and the exploration of the collective and personal imaginaries that define the landscape (Backhaus et al., 2008).

In total, 40 respondents were involved, randomly selected from within the administrative boundaries of Roncegno T. in order to cover the entire built-up area with regard to demographic density.

The inquiry was set up as a hermeneutic process based on the participation of the research group's members at several meetings with the residents committee about different topics concerning urban planning: population, infrastructure, city development, housing, services and so on. This enabled us to understand the sense of the words that people used when they spoke about their landscapes and described their places, so that we could manage and process the collected data within an ethnographic perspective.

The data collected in the fieldwork, consisting of word expressions, images, visuals and places, were analysed by following the meaning associations and identifying analogies in order to grasp the manifold themes and issues that landscape perception brought to light: the relationships between the inhabitants and their territory, as well as the deeper reasons to live there; the individuation of relevant or critical places; the symbolic value of certain views and elements; the material and symbolic dimensions of the landscape as the element in common for the different cultures inhabiting it. Among these themes, in the perspective of this paper, fieldwork data will be presented to assist in the discussion of dwelling choices and the transformations that these choices can yield and/or influence.

In order to investigate the cultural dimension of the dynamics of the territorial transformations properly, and especially to connect them with what emerged from the empirical consistency of visual data collected in the field and during the many field walks, the issues investigated through the survey offer a deep analysis of the individual experiences that connect people to the territory they inhabit and thus to the landscape they perceive.

In particular, the landscape description allows us to grasp the mainly residential role of Roncegno T. as part of everyday commuting within the broader territory. Starting from the research materials, it has been possible to understand the ways of life and dwelling cultures, as well as the housing settlements, as factors that not only shape and produce the landscape (according to Lefebvre, 1974; Cosgrove, 1984; Debarbieux, 2007) but also show a territory's multiple directions and perspectives of transformation. The data will be also presented in order to verify the links between residential buildings types, the use of the space they underlie and how they affect the way of living in a territory.

## New settlements and ways of life

As highlighted above, there have been urban transformations and significant changes in the local population in Roncegno T's recent past. In Roncegno, Marter and Montagna, we observed different settlement peculiarities because of the diverse territorial relations that the orographic conditions either favour or hinder and shape the various ways in which to experience the places. Moreover, the fieldwork allowed a deep exploration of the cultural and material dimension of the described settlement dynamics.

In the following section we present the main results obtained from the empirical research.

### Old versus new dwellers' choices

Residing in Roncegno T. is a conscious choice "because of the landscape", as much for the new inhabitants as for those who have lived in the area for many years. For the latter, the landscape plays an important role in this choice precisely because of its features: mountains, rivers, historical centre etc. For their part, new inhabitants choose to live out of the city but not too far away and appreciate that the landscape is not densely built up.

For both groups, the landscape represents a fundamental territorial resource that is attractive because of its environmental and social values and helps to compensate for the absence of the advantages of urban life.

There are, however, nuances among the diverse visions related to the territory. An analysis of the shape of the settlements and the different building typologies that correspond to the various desires and ways of life and materialise the privileged places to live makes this diversity more evident.

### Mountain condominiums

Long-time residents express a desire to live in traditional structures, both in the *masi* (the old houses in Marter) or downtown. These homes give them a sense of belonging, because their shapes represent traditional buildings linked to the heritage of Roncegno T., and for this reason they modify the buildings only slightly for the sake of contemporary needs.

By contrast, the residents who are new arrivals in the area prefer to live in new buildings that we could define as a type of "mountain condominium": new buildings that house more than one family and have private parking and often a private garden. Clusters of them have been erected since the 1980s in the upper part of the conoid in Marter and thus enlarged the settlement area. They have not only changed the morphology of the town but introduced entirely new elements into the local real estate market.

During an examination of the profile of the respondents who are residents in this part of town, it emerged that these buildings have provided new residential opportunities for young families, professional commuters and retirees who moved here from Trento, as the houses are bigger and cheaper than the average city apartment.

As fig. 3 shows, the settlement density in Marter has increased significantly over the years, and there are many different architectures of buildings that, although in the same locality as the traditional buildings in the conoid area, are made of elements that reify different ideas and ways of dwelling.

On the basis of the visual material collected during fieldwork in Marter, we present in the first line of fig. 4 the more recent architectures and in the second line the traditional ones, both built next to a road that runs along the conoid.

The photographs show how the new buildings boast not only specific finishes and colours but also elements that have an impact on neighbourly relations and dovetail the relationships with the landscape.

Fig 4. Marter. New and old buildings (visual material composition: above vs. below)



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The positioning of the buildings has completely altered the common relationship between the main road and the entrance to the house, which had traditionally determined the placement of the buildings on the artificially imposed layout that the system of terraces has created, in order to orientate the main entrances and the views towards the valley floor.

Such new houses are designed carefully with separate entrances for people and cars and fitted with gates that symbolise the value of privacy, but they are clustered in a way so as not to present a sense of isolation, which could be shocking for those coming from the city.

Similarly, a direct and favoured view towards a valley, which people do not perceive as their own landscape, is not interesting nor necessary, at least not in the most traditional and direct ways. However, a fundamental element is the necessity of a private garden. It is an outdoor space that people in other contexts might not expect to own and has to be fenced in and strictly private, even if it means that it could be placed “at the back” relative to the panorama of the valley, to ensure that each property has one (see fig. 5).

Fig. 5. Marter, a house with a garden.



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## Modifications of the public space

The space created between these buildings – the path, a meeting space – gradually loses its quality and characteristics as a public space, especially because of the physically consistent and pervasive presence of barriers and gates.

Consequently, the clusters of new buildings now no longer seem like a structured settlement but like an aggregation of private spaces. Moreover, if we consider the symbolic dimension of the physical elements, this system of gates and barriers stands on a territorial structure that was once based on the rules of the neighbourhood and rural economies that had been behind the shape of the land terraces and the position of the buildings. The plan determining these relationships was designed so that people could live and cultivate, even in the conoid area, in settlements that decreased in concentration towards the higher altitudes that approach the forest.

The first settlements have an “open” relationship with the landscape, unlike the more recent ones, which yield to different dwelling styles with regard to the houses’ orientation, the dimensions of the points of access and the fragmentation of the open public space into small portions of private enclaves. These styles also reify some social boundaries through a set of signs that determine protected and closed spaces as interstices where you keep your privacy (without any reciprocal vision or shared spaces) but close enough to avoid a sense of isolation.

Looking at the position of each house in relation to the panorama over the valley (as discussed earlier with respect to the ones in fig. 4), it is plain to see that these architectures manifest dwelling choices where the value of the property in an alpine

landscape is qualifying *per se*, independently of its specific qualities. This means that, first of all, it is possible to own it here and not necessarily because its specific morphology would offer a greater enjoyment of the landscape. Moreover, the fences and the gates generate new, demarcated sections of individual “open spaces” within the large open space of the mountains and underscore the symbolical functions of properties, barriers, proximities and distances.

Critical reading of the current processes

The practices of dwelling inherent in and generated by these condominiums brings into question some of the virtuous relations that the mountain populations appear to build in other contexts. This is primarily because of the position of Roncegno T. within the geography of Trento’s metropolitan area, which is useful for everyday commuting, unlike what happens for instance in other mountain marginal areas, such as the *area deboli* that Corrado (2010: 90) writes about. Although it might be more isolated from the economic growth areas, it offers a residential alternative. Its environmental and cultural heritage is of enormous value; it is a resource where repopulation has triggered complex dynamics of social, cultural and economic local development and valorisation. This is valid even if (as mentioned) for a certain clientele the specifics of the alpine morphology and the built environment play a secondary role. In line with the findings derived from the interviews, all the respondents living in the new settlement of Marter (10% of the respondents of the whole survey) have moved to Roncegno T. over the past 15 years. Unlike those who have always lived there or who have returned there, and unlike the younger generation living in inherited family houses at even higher altitudes (generally, these people are more aware of the evolution of the territory), the profile of those who live in these new buildings in Marter mainly falls into two specific categories. These categories include those who move in old age after retiring from work and who move to such mountain places to be in a peri-urban metropolitan location accessible for commuting and to enjoy the town’s general and cultural services. To this category, as the field work showed, we can add young couples who also base their dwelling choice on the economic facilities provided by local housing policies.

In Roncegno T., the landscape has a strong impact on the choice of dwelling. This point is not related to its social and collective perception, although the environmental quality is not expressed as explicitly as in other contexts (Moss, 2006; Martin et al. 2012) as a driving force of movement in the direction of pleasant mountain areas. The landscape and infrastructures constitute a better quality of life and reconcile the daily dimensions of living and working along a broader territory, which became clear following the statements regarding the main motivations for living in Roncegno T. that the respondents expressed in our case study. Their motivations confirm the value of symbolic capital in gentrified areas that other scholars have already pointed out (see Perlik, 2011). Obviously the landscape takes on a broad value and an attractiveness that are not directly linked to its specific features nor to its morphology.

However, this attractiveness produces an intensified use and a higher consumption of a restricted territory, as the research data and the visual material discussed above show. As a synthesis of the human, natural and cultural factors that characterise the competitive potential of a territory, the landscape is one of the central elements of the territorial capital of these places (Camagni, 2009). Nonetheless, the landscape qualities

make the mountain places more inhabited over time and hence introduce a process of increased valorisation but also a depletion of the territory and its territorial capital.

Furthermore, we can point out some contradictions between the amenities that drive certain dwelling choices and the process of “contamination” affecting such amenities, which these choices trigger, as they emerged in an analysis of the settlements and the way of dwelling that the buildings described above reify. In contexts like Roncegno T., residents can enjoy the landscape thanks to the filter of a deep infrastructurisation (physical infrastructures such as equipment and services, and technological infrastructures for tangible and intangible connections) added to its wildest dimension. This combination of landscape and significant infrastructure is clearly aimed at clusters of people who are urban in terms of their income, level of education, way of life and culture.

## Conclusion notes

This paper highlighted the analysis of settlements on a microstructural level by describing their processes, shapes and inhabitants. It shows that such an analysis has great potential as an indicator of underlying societal and territorial changes, and of the policies and the collective practices driving them. From the perspective of the disciplines that deal with socio-spatial analysis and territorial transformation, it may provide useful material to reflect on the dwelling needs, imaginaries and practices expressed by the people who inhabit contemporary, metropolitan mountain realities.

Among the key issues the research touched on are the societies that the mountain condominiums host. According to Borlini et al. (2008), dwelling is a crucial expression of subjectivities, and it roots people’s sense of belonging in a place. Hence, it is part and parcel of their own landscape perception. When it emerges relative to a place where people choose to move and settle, such a sense of belonging becomes “elective” (Semi, 2004). The study context revealed that old and new inhabitants have different elective senses of belonging. The differences are physically visible, as old and the new inhabitants choose different housing styles; nonetheless, within these groups there is still a high degree of homogeneity.

If we assume that the experience of dwelling shapes typological, functional and social orders that are visible not only in the private house space but also in the perceived landscape as a social construction (Mattiucci 2010.2), a tendency towards closed communities seems to emerge in these mountain condominiums that comprise relatively homogeneous households in terms of needs, professional and economical status, imaginaries and values.

This is one of the most problematic issues, as these settlements risk being functional for single groups that share ways of life and economic potentials and could generate unusual, sometimes voluntary forms of spatial (self-)segregation. Such a move would have serious consequences for the future of mountain towns with respect to metropolitan provincial development.

We propose the phenomenology of the (ne) settlements processes, along with landscape perception, as a tool to stimulate critical and attentive reflection on these settlements and the risk that they shape communities into ones that become closed. With this paper, from the point of view of an interdisciplinary debate about territorial transformation, we hope to open a reflection on the possibility to transform the spaces

according to the logic of constructing peri-urban housing but also to provide equipment and services, as well as public and meeting spaces, that are capable of generating and hosting the complexity of the people who today choose to dwell in the mountain towns within a wider metropolitan territory.

The functional interdependencies between metropolitan cores and residential peripheries make up specific resources. In a larger perspective, we need to take a deeper look at the specific qualities of mountain towns and how to preserve them in order to prevent their transformation into mere dormitory towns.

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## NOTES

1. Urban Planning is the *Nuova Variante al Piano Regolatore Generale del Comune di Roncegno Terme (PRG). Linee di indirizzo*. Trento DICA - Università degli Studi di Trento (coord. C. Diamantini 2008-2010).
  2. <http://www.comune.roncegnoterme.tn.it/images/DocumentoPreliminare.pdf>
  3. <http://www.tuttitalia.it/trentino-alto-adige/92-roncegno-terme/statistiche/popolazione-andamento-demografico/>
  4. For a deeper understanding of the survey methodology, see Mattiucci, 2010.1.
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## ABSTRACTS

By examining the settlement typology and the relationship between the people and the landscape where they have chosen to dwell, this paper investigates the territorial transformation processes in Roncegno Terme, a small town in the Italian province of Trento, which can be considered a paradigmatic context for metropolitan-mountain development. Starting from the model of housing that the town has been generating, we ask whether these processes manifest the features of a monofunctional residential transformation and examine the effects it may have on the transformation of the inhabited mountain and the genesis of spatial homogeneity and possible spatial inequalities.

This reflection is based on a critical reading of field work carried out during an urban planning experience, and the case study is presented with the phenomenal and empirical data collected during a study about landscape perception, conceived as a structural survey to propose socially shared planning processes and territorial transformations.

One of the main issues that this article tackles is the possible correlation between the shape of the newer buildings that have been erected in some areas of town and the transformation of a peri-urban mountain reality that tends to gradually take on the features of a dormitory town. The paper therefore intends to make explicit the link between the densification of the building processes and the dissolution of the collective spaces. In so doing, at the present stage of an as yet incomplete densification of the mountain settlements, we work under the assumption that this survey can be useful to reflect on the possibilities of the planning and territorial governance tools to correct the territorial disparities that might be generated when small mountain towns turn into mostly residential suburbs of the metropolitan centres nearby.

## INDEX

**Keywords:** mountain condominiums, metropolisation, dwelling, landscape perception, Trentino

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