



# The complexity of landscape ideas and the issue of landscape democracy in school and non-formal education: exploring pedagogical practices in Italy

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## ABSTRACT

Landscape-related pedagogical initiatives present a multifaceted panorama of assumptions, approaches and goals, with some contradictions and commonalities. They reflect, on one hand, the theoretical ambiguity and inherent tensions of the concept of landscape itself and, on the other hand, the different institutional approaches to landscape management. This paper discusses the results of a national survey conducted in Italy on landscape-related initiatives in non-professional education. Five landscape ideas on which educational projects are grounded emerged from the analysis: 'anthropic and lived landscape', 'perceived and green landscape', 'landscape as an arena', 'heritage landscape' and 'natural landscape'. This diversity proves the need for theoretical frameworks and methodological tools in educational contexts to address the complexity of landscape through an insightful reading. In particular, we focus on the 'landscape as an arena' idea and explore its limits and potentialities in relation to the debate on landscape power and democracy.

## KEYWORDS

Ideas of landscapes;  
landscape education;  
landscape democracy

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## 1. Introduction

The landscape is a common issue in education, in the higher and professional education of architects, geographers and planners, in school contexts and, traditionally, as one of the key concepts in geography. In recent decades, the landscape has gained relevance not only for the variety of notions emerging through its study in different disciplines but also for its wider pedagogical meanings in relation to sustainability education, citizenship education and heritage education. The connection between knowledge of the landscape and the competence of acting on landscape has been widely considered in the frame of acquiring greater awareness and responsibility towards landscape values, safeguards and sustainable transformation. Awareness raising and educational activities at all levels (primary, secondary, higher, life-long and non-formal education) are being strongly promoted, as the first specific measure of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) commits signatory countries to first act on people and then on landscapes (2000, art. 6, a and b). In the process of implementing the ELC, a specific recommendation has been devoted to 'promoting landscape awareness through education', starting from the statement that 'educational activities in the landscape field are an excellent way of giving meaning to the future' (CM/Rec(2014)8, preamble).

Many pedagogical approaches and activities can be subsumed under the umbrella of landscape education: The complexity of the concept itself, the differences among disciplinary points of view and the different approaches to landscape in various cultural contexts influence often contradictory pedagogical practices. We believe that an understanding of this multiplicity—like the one proposed

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in this paper, which focuses on non-professional education—could offer new insights in landscape research and help in more effectively addressing the education issue.

In the Italian context, which represents our case study, the ‘landscape’ is legally recognised at the highest level—among the general principles of the republican Constitution (1948)—together with cultural heritage. The legislative frame has traditionally addressed the landscape from an aesthetic point of view, oriented towards the preservation of outstanding landscapes for their ‘high public interest’. Natural landscapes of mountains, forests, rivers and seashores are also considered relevant and in need of preservation policies. In this approach, much attention is paid to exceptional landscapes, those described and identified by experts, while ordinary landscapes receive less attention. Landscape—in the implied meaning of ‘beautiful landscape’ and/or natural landscape—is a pervasive keyword when it comes to promoting local knowledge, tourism and environmental protection, often as a one-size-fits-all solution. However, the sheer importance given to heritage values limits a dynamic, future-oriented and proactive view of the landscape as an all-embracing arena. At the same time, geography education is weakly diffused in the Italian school system, where the approach that still considers the landscape in a descriptive, non-critical lens coexists with more innovative and open perspectives. Italy lacks a comprehensive strategy about education on landscapes at all levels (Branduini & Castiglioni, 2019), except for a first general, and generic, attempt by the National Charter of the Landscape (Carta Nazionale del Paesaggio, 2017). However, a varied panorama emerges from an observation of the initiatives promoted by public and private actors (i.e. schools, parks, museums, foundations, NGOs) at local, regional and national levels, which target school children and the general public. Starting from the results of a national survey, conducted in 2018, the present paper analyses this variety of pedagogical practices in the context of landscape education and discusses how they refer to different ‘ideas of landscape’. The paper then reflects on the idea of ‘landscape as an arena’, which seems to emerge in a different way, compared to others, and which is specifically connected to some of the theoretical issues in the current debate.

## 2. Landscape complexity, education and the political dimension

The multiple uses of the landscape within educational contexts reflect the theoretical richness and inherent tensions of the concept (Wylie, 2007), whose structure has been widely and varyingly explored in the scientific literature. It is important, though, to reconsider this complexity and dynamism in order to understand how they are mirrored into pedagogical activities.

It is commonly recognised that the complex and holistic nature of the notion of landscape (Antrop & Van Eetvelde, 2017) is often difficult to grasp, giving space to several disciplinary approaches that can be described along axes stretching between competing polarities. One such axis is that between nature and culture, which is at play, for example, between the approaches that mainly consider the physical and ecological characteristics of the landscape, such as landscape ecology, and those that highlight its cultural and heritage values. A second axis occupies the space between the past and future, among disciplines devoted to the analysis and conservation of traces of the past, such as landscape history or landscape archaeology, and those that point towards the future, such as landscape architecture and planning. Finally, a third axis sees the opposition between objectivity and subjectivity; it emerges between approaches that adopt a detached and neutral stance and those that focus on personal, bodily engagement and landscape perception. In particular, the coexistence of objectivity and subjectivity is recognised as a specificity of the landscape notion itself, since landscape is at once ‘the thing and the image of the thing’ (Farinelli, 1992, p. 12). Each landscape involves not only tangible materialities but also the meanings and values that observers ascribe to those materialities; hence, landscapes are both visible and invisible, material and symbolic (Cosgrove, 1998). As Duncan and Duncan (1988) underlined, the meanings and values that shape the invisible dimension of the landscape are socially and ideologically produced. The visible material dimension is similarly produced, because the meanings ascribed to the landscape ‘are always buried beneath layers of ideological sediment’ (p. 117, quoting Barthes, 1986). Landscapes—as

both materialities and representations—are dynamic. They vary across space and time, changing between different contexts, cultures and approaches. 90

Consequently, reading the landscape implies different competences and forms of knowledge and, above all, it engages several ‘ideas of landscape’, depending on the discipline considered, the position adopted within the polarities, the placement of the observer (e.g. insider or outsider) and the direction of their gaze. Palang and Fry (2003) emphasised that ‘there will always be interfaces between different approaches and “readings” of the landscape, each valid in its specific social and historical context’ (p. 2). In 1979, Meinig recognised the importance of simultaneously considering the multiplicity of possible gazes and versions of the same landscape, as the identification of these variations can be a step towards a more effective communication ‘about ideas and impressions and concerns relating to the landscapes we share’ (Meinig, 1979, p. 48). As an interface itself, the landscape is therefore able to act as an ‘ambiguous, but fertile, mediator between the aesthetic and the rational, the representational and the material, the local and the global, the individual and the collective’ (Dematteis, 2010, p. 137). 95 100

In the scientific literature, intradisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, the hybridisation of knowledge and in-disciplinarity in landscape education are widely invoked (Bédouret et al., 2018; Friess & Jazeel, 2017; Vergnolle-Mainar et al., 2012). There are also several analyses and examples of educational projects that are aimed at reflecting this complexity. Some authors underline that landscape education necessarily begins with a process of learning how to read the landscape. Birdsall (2003), for instance, didactically applied Meinig’s (1979) ten versions of the same scene in order to foster flexible thinking. Widgren (2004) reflected on the need for integration relating to ‘form, function, process and context’ as ‘a checklist for a critical, formalized and structured reading of landscapes’ (p. 463). Riesco-Chueca & Gómez-Zotano (2013, p. 705) explored the role of landscape fieldwork in the context of the ELC and highlighted the risk of the futility of holism in cases in which the plural approach lacks a shared language and solid conceptual and methodological guidelines. To address this risk, Castiglioni (2012, p. 234) proposed a framework for landscape reading, which is composed of four complementary paths: a denotative reading, focused on the elements of the landscape; a connotative reading, focused on perceptions and meanings of the landscape; an interpretative reading, focused on natural and human factors and, lastly, a chronological reading of the landscape, focused on changes from the past to the present and towards the future. 105 110 115

If learning to see is the precondition of learning to act (Turri, 1998), a truly holistic approach and deeper involvement of people in landscape educational processes is evermore urgent in order for the reading to be accompanied by conscious action on the landscape. In this regard, in focusing attention on the contemporary debate on landscape, the issue of democracy appears to be fundamental (Egoz et al., 2018). The literature alludes to two interrelated but distinct lines of thought: one mainly devoted to landscape stewardship and the other to landscape justice. The difference between these two approaches lies in the depth of their political and critical analyses. According to the first line of debate, which adheres to the principles of the ELC, the landscape is considered both as an instrument through which to promote people well-being and an object of stewardship actions that are aimed at building landscapes of quality, mainly through the participation of the population (Davodeau & Toublanc, 2010; Marty et al., 2015; Roe, 2013). Drawing from this approach, a variety of educational practices related to the landscape are aimed at increasing the role of citizens as trustees of the landscape, often considered as a value in itself (Batllori i Obiols & Serra i Sala, 2017; Del Pozo, 2011; García-Martín et al., 2018). The second line of debate is more complex; it stresses the political dimension of the social processes from which the landscape originates (Castiglioni & Ferrario, 2018; Gailing & Leibenath, 2017; Mitchell, 2008; Widgren, 2007), raising questions of justice and criticising the ELC for leaving ‘little room for considerations of forms of oppression that tend to structure “justice” in capitalist landscapes’ (Mels & Mitchell, 2013, p. 219). These forms of oppression and injustice concern both physical space and aesthetics (Mels & Mitchell, 2013, p. 221) and the way in which the discourse about the landscape and landscape values is built and conveyed through education, for example, through textbooks (Kühne, 2018, p. 152). In this vein, drawing from 120 125 130 135

a transformative and critical approach (Freire & Macedo, 2005), landscape education aims to nurture responsible, conscious and skilled citizens (Wattchow & Prins, 2019; Zanato Orlandini, 2007) as well as to develop just landscapes that are justly arrived at (Mels & Mitchell, 2013, p. 219). Such experiences of transformative landscape education are being incorporated into professional education (Ruggeri, 2019) as well as in teacher education (Sgard & Paradis, 2019) and citizen education (Partoune, 2018; Spirn, 2005). There is a need—especially in Italy where aesthetic, natural and cultural heritage attitudes prevail—to further explore school and other non-professional contexts of landscape education in order to unveil the pedagogical opportunities and weaknesses of approaches focused on the political dimension of the landscape.

### 3. Mapping the Italian context: aims and methodology

In light of the analysis of the Italian context and of the considerations drawn from the current scientific debate, the present research aims to enhance and develop critical knowledge on the actors of landscape education in Italy, including their approaches, methodologies and goals. Comparing and reciprocally fertilising theoretical advancements in the field of landscape studies, with actual educational practices, the overall goal is to deepen and encourage research on this topic and to help envision actions and practical recommendations to improve landscape education and teacher education. We conducted the initial stage of the research in partnership with the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities. Some preliminary results were presented during the XXI International Meeting of the Workshops of the Council of Europe for the implementation of the ELC, dedicated to landscape and education, hosted in Italy in October 2018.

The data collection phase was aimed at obtaining information on i) who is involved in landscape education in Italy, ii) in which contexts and iii) which approaches and methodologies are used. The data were gathered through an online survey conducted in Italy from January to April 2018 (which we intentionally opened to anyone who felt a sense of involvement in these activities) using a snowball method. The survey focused on citizen and school education, a wide and diversified world represented primarily by school didactics and the activities carried out by museums, protected areas, associations and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Higher and professional education were, therefore, excluded from this research; however, since many approaches or tools are often in common (Jørgensen et al., 2019; Thompson, 2002), some of the insights presented here can stimulate the discussion within the domain of university and professional education.

The online questionnaire, composed of open- and close-ended questions, was divided into three sections: The first was dedicated to the actors/institutions promoting the activities; the second to their educational projects, namely the activities surrounding education and awareness aimed at all citizens (children, young people, families, tourists, visitors of museums) and the third to training activities, that is, courses for school teachers and/or other practitioners that carry out the aforementioned activities.

In particular, in this paper, we present and discuss some insights about the different ‘ideas of landscape’ on which landscape education projects are based, which are different lenses or gazes through which the landscape is treated and mobilised within projects.

### 4. The results: actors, objectives and ‘ideas of landscape’

We collected 174 responses concerning 312 educational projects, which were aimed directly at students or citizens, in general, and 59 training activities that addressed teachers, educators and other cultural or environmental operators. This data corpus allowed us to create a first map of landscape education activities in Italy as well as to draw some general considerations about existing practices. We will now focus on the most significant results from the first two sections of the questionnaire, after which we will present the findings of a more advanced analysis, which combined data from the second and third sections.

Regarding the characteristics of the actors carrying out these projects, the majority (53%) were public institutions, 28% were NGOs, 11% were private subjects, and 8% self-declared as public-private partnerships. Within the public sector, museums and local administrations were highly represented, followed by the *Soprintendenze Archeologia Belle Arti e Paesaggio* (peripheral offices of the Cultural Heritage Ministry, whose aim is to protect, conserve and enhance the architectural and landscape heritage) and universities. NGOs were mainly represented by cultural and environmental associations. Although the results might be biased because of the snowball effect relating to the dissemination of the survey, we note that protected areas and landscape observatories were not well represented within the sample, perhaps because they were not reached by the survey or because such educational activities were not actually carried out.

These actors, well distributed within most Italian regions, were generally small in terms of number of employees, but they also operated at the regional and national levels. They mainly proposed educational programmes directly to students or citizens, but a fairly sizeable number of them (36%) also offered training activities to teachers and experts.

Through a focus on the educational projects, our sample shows that the majority of them (80%) sought to involve school pupils (from primary to upper secondary school) compared to other groups or sections of the public. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of the answers on the goals of the projects. At first glance, the projects appear to respond simultaneously to many objectives, without clear exclusions. However, two factors can be highlighted: first, the distance between 'learning to recognise the transformation that the landscape has undergone over time' and 'imagining and envisioning future transformations of the landscape'; second, the goals concerning the sphere of rationality (rows 1, 2, 3 and 5) were more frequently represented than those concerning personal emotions, confrontation and creativity (rows 4, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11). According to the previously described national background, the majority of the educational projects were strongly focused on past and present landscapes, while only a few thought about imagining future changes or stimulating creativity. Moreover, the subjective, emotional and personal dimensions of landscape were secondary compared to the more rational and objective approach.

Regarding the tools and methods adopted to achieve these pedagogical goals, Figure 2 shows that on-field excursions were widespread (75% of responses), along with group activities (67%) and the use of pictures (63%). Approximately half of the projects also included lecturing (54%). These methods are often used in combination with each other, as landscape education is a field of experimentation for

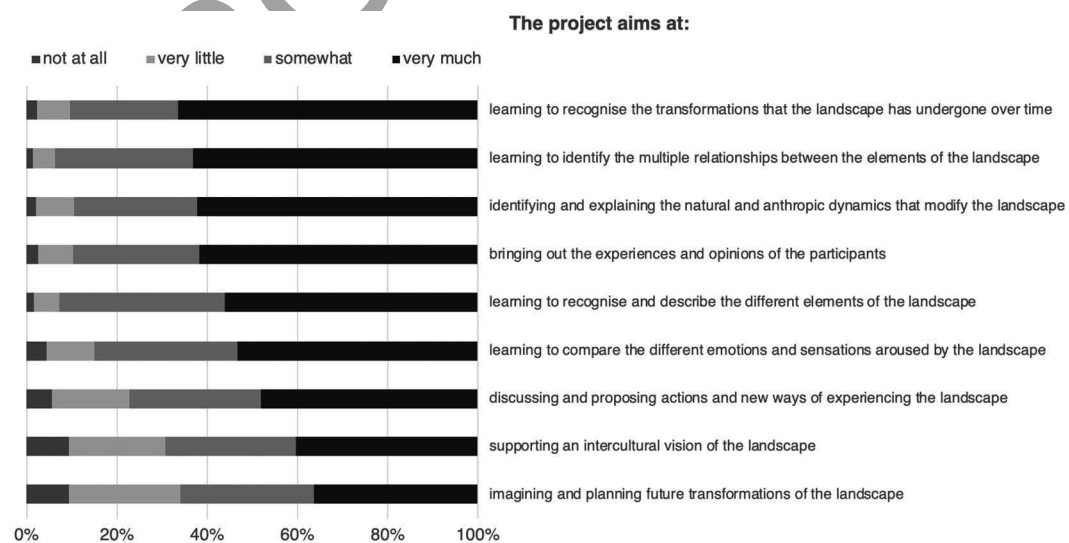


Figure 1. Goals of the educational projects.

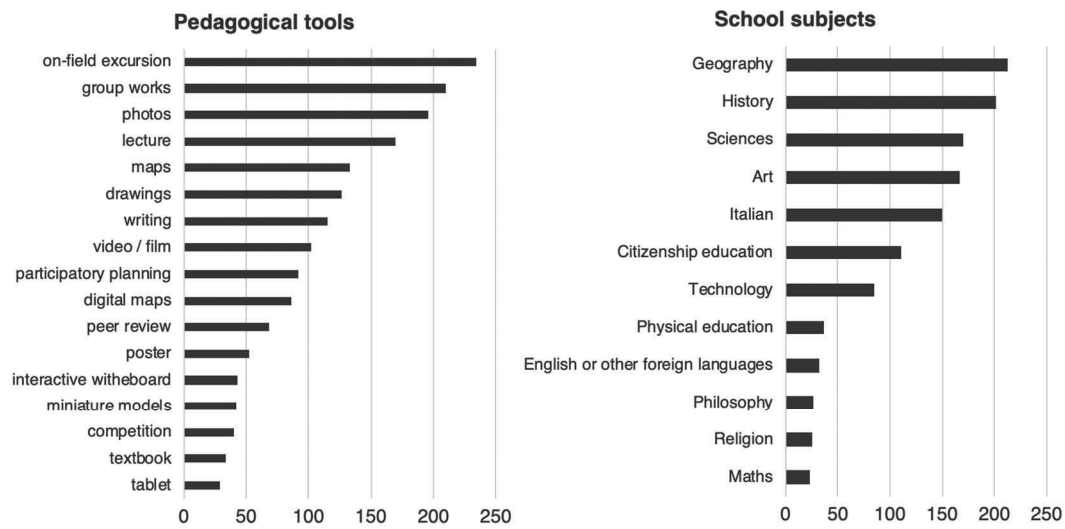


Figure 2. Tools and school subjects of the educational projects.

different methodologies: traditional methodologies (focused more on knowledge transmission) along with workshops and collaborative learning (aimed at the co-construction of knowledge). Moreover, focusing specifically on the landscape-related topics considered during the projects, a first idea emerged in relation to the distribution of the school subjects and disciplines involved: While geography (indicated for 68% of projects) and history (64%) prevailed, art, sciences (both 54%) and Italian language and literature (48%) were considered within the projects, proving that the landscape could be a good bridge concept between the scientific and humanistic disciplines. 220

Another question focused on the specific topics addressed during the projects, proposing a list of themes and asking the respondents to state the extent to which each of them was addressed in their project. From the distribution of the answers (Figure 3), we can once again highlight the predominance of notions such as cultural heritage, identity and community, which are typical of the Italian context. The participants' emotions, sensations, values and opinions were also fairly considered, along with everyday and exceptional landscapes, while other cultural or natural landscapes, artistic representations of landscapes and the gazes of others (visitors, tourists, migrants) occupied the bottom of the list. 225 230

This basic analysis of the percentage frequency distribution can be enriched by a factor analysis (principal component analysis), which allows one to identify the underlying 'ideas of landscape' through the correlations between the topics (Table 1). Five ideas of landscape on which educational projects could be based can be identified: 1) anthropic and lived landscape; 2) perceived and green landscape; 3) landscape as an arena; 4) heritage landscape and 5) natural landscape. Among them, the first idea, which emerged more clearly in the statistical analysis (explaining almost 30% of the total variance), concerns a landscape transformed by man and lived by its inhabitants. It is composed of material and immaterial characteristics and refers to a comprehensive concept of landscape, which is largely consistent with the institutional definition of the ELC. The other components identified, although covering a minor share of the variance, were also quite clear. The second idea refers to a landscape perceived with the senses, associated, in particular, with vegetation and green areas, echoing the approaches that focus on bodies dwelling in the world; here, the landscape is 'anchored in human, embodied perception' (Wylie, 2007, p. 160) as well as in the overall importance of green structures (Jørgensen, 2016). The third refers to the diversity of gazes and points of view over the landscape—as an arena for expressing different perceptions and values—pointing towards the debate on landscape democracy (Egoz et al., 2018) and the questions posed by the ELC 235 240 245

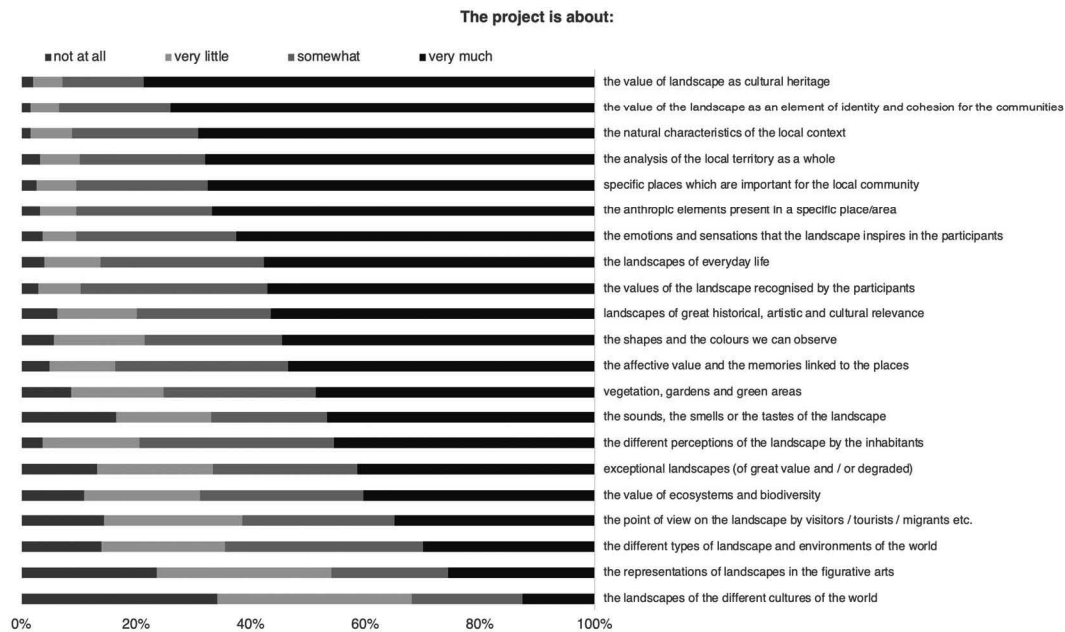


Figure 3. Topics addressed during the projects (ordered according to the percentage of respondents answering 'very much').

implementation process. The latter ideas seem to be positioned along the landscape's inherent tension between culture and nature. The fourth idea links the landscape to cultural heritage and places of outstanding historical, artistic and cultural value. It adopts an approach by which the exceptional values of the landscape must be either protected or recovered, echoing the above-mentioned characteristics of the national background. Finally, the fifth idea corresponds to an environmentalist and ecological approach, by which landscape education focuses primarily on natural features and processes that give rise to a mosaic of different ecosystems.

The projects based on the ideas of anthropic and patrimonial landscapes (first and fourth ideas) were proposed mostly outside the school system (but including upper secondary schools) and were mainly directed towards the development of the ability to recognise the transformations of past landscapes. The projects based mainly on the ideas of landscape in relation to perceptions and nature as well as on the landscape as an arena of debate (second, third and fifth ideas) were executed primarily in formal education contexts. Their main goals were to bring out the opinions and experiences of individuals (especially the second and third ideas) and identify and explain natural and anthropic dynamics (especially in the fifth idea). Furthermore, in primary schools, the ecological and natural approach to landscape prevailed, a notion very closely tied to the concept of the environment, while in secondary schools, the approaches were of a more diversified nature.

The presence of these five ideas demonstrates the multidimensionality and richness of the concept of landscape, which, even in educational contexts, is a versatile, dynamic concept, capable of representing the complexity of the relationship between society and space, both in its tangible and intangible respects. The previously described tensions and polarities, which feed the multidimensionality and complexity of the concept of the landscape, emerged clearly from an overall view. With a deeper analysis of the different educational contexts, though, this complexity fades in favour of a single pole or aspect of each tension. The presence of these invisible barriers between one approach and the other, which limits the full expression of the pedagogical potentialities of the concept of landscape, was also demonstrated by the fact that the third idea, which more closely reflected its composite nature, generally did not appear in conjunction with others.

**Table 1.** Identification of the five ideas of landscapes through principal component analysis (the table only shows scores greater than 0.3 or smaller than -0.3).

The project is about:	COMPONENTS				
	1 anthropic and lived landscape	2 perceived and green landscape	3 landscape as an arena	4 heritage landscape	5 natural landscape
specific places of importance to the local society	.715				
the value of the landscape as an element of identity and cohesion for the communities	.677				
the landscapes of everyday life	.644				
the sentimental value and memories linked to the places	.591				
the value of the landscape as a cultural heritage	.549			.382	
the anthropic elements present in a specific place/area	.540				.366
the values of the landscape recognised by the participants of the project	.477		-.427	-.316	
the analysis of the local territory as a whole	.417				.386
shapes and colours we can observe		.843			
the sounds, smells or tastes of the landscape		.801			
the emotions and sensations that the landscape inspires in the recipients of the project		.634	-.348		
vegetation, gardens and green areas		.461			.383
the point of view on the landscape by visitors/tourists/migrants			-.732		
the different perceptions of the landscape by the inhabitants	.395		-.582		
landscapes of the different cultures of the world			-.570		
landscapes of great historical, artistic and cultural relevance				.744	
exceptional landscapes (of great value and/or in a situation of particular degradation)				.666	
the representations of landscapes in the figurative arts			-.350	.524	
the value of ecosystems and biodiversity					.736
the different types of landscape related to the different terrestrial environments					.688
the natural characteristics of the local context					.602
% total variance	28.83%	10.86%	7.75%	6.59%	5.81%

Extraction method: principal component analysis. Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser normalisation. Rotation converged in 21 iterations.

In fact, it is worth noting that the third idea, which defines the landscape as being composed of different gazes and perceptions and as an arena for the debate, was inversely correlated with the others (i.e. when its constitutive topics obtain the highest value, the others obtain the lowest, and vice-versa), signalling a form of isolation of this idea amongst the educational projects. We will address this interesting piece of evidence in the next section. 280

## 5. Landscape as an arena

The 'landscape as an arena' component caught our attention because of its inverse correlation with the others and because it is strongly related to the debate on landscape power and democracy (Egoz et al., 2018; Jorgensen, 2016; Mitchell, 2003), as it groups projects that consider the diversity of points of view (of insiders and outsiders) and cultural diversities within and among landscapes. Therefore, we focused our analysis on this idea, exploring how, in practice, it turns into educational activities, how the encounter of different gazes, values and cultures unfolds and what it is for. 285

We will describe three of the cases showing the highest scores for this third component of the factor analysis (belonging to the first quartile), which were examined through a qualitative text analysis of the answers and the documents provided by the respondents in the online survey. We chose these three cases because they pertained to three different targets and contexts of 290



landscape education (schoolchildren in a museum; citizens involved in an NGO; the local population, tourists and artists in the framework of the Regional Landscape Plan) in three different parts of Italy (Northeast, Central and Southern Italy). In the following description, we focus mainly on the goals of these three projects and their general approach (using quotations from the respondents' answers and excerpts of their web pages, all of which were translated by the authors). 295

The first case was an activity proposed by *MUSE*, a science museum in the city of Trento (northeastern Italy), a ground-breaking museum on nature, science and sustainability. The museum organises educational activities for primary and secondary school students, some of which are related to landscape. They are aimed at 300

enhancing the acquisition of the notion of landscape as the most valuable heritage for the communities, as a shared space that requires awareness and responsibility and that—in a future perspective—is the inevitable condition for the quality of life of future generations.

Two of these activities have been included in our survey: one dedicated to the Dolomites mountains, located nearby, a UNESCO heritage site and one to 'utopian' landscapes. *The great beauties. Landscapes of the UNESCO Dolomites* is an activity that aims to 'provide the participants with conceptual tools and useful experiences to understand the reasons behind the universally recognised exceptionality of the Dolomites and the deep relations between the appearance of the landscape, its natural history and the human ways of inhabiting'. Beyond the recognition of the constitutive features of this extraordinary landscape and its evolution, this activity is remarkable because it stimulates the students into discussing human responsibilities towards this heritage as well as about possible collective actions for its sustainable management. In particular, the activity aims to 'offer the opportunity to discuss different opinions and propose an exercise of democracy and a comparison of the emerging ideas'. The other activity, *'Once upon a time ... creating and narrating landscapes'*, aims to 305 310 315

offer pupils, from the earliest years of primary school, an interesting and exciting motivation to think and speak about the landscape, addressing the task of imagining and shaping a landscape as a place to live well and, in doing so, make group decisions.

With the help of various natural and anthropic elements (Figure 4), the students build a miniature model of their ideal landscape, and through this, they learn that the 'landscape is the result of our mental projections and of our choices'. 320

The second representative case was located in Pesaro, a medium-sized city in central Italy, where the Association *ETRA. Entra nell'arte.educazione museale* organises educational activities for a variety of publics, in particular, the so-called 'Walkscapes': walking tours that seek to enhance citizens' landscape awareness. The Walkscape's goal is 'not recovering the past, but reading the present—the landscape, the architecture—to understand the transformations that characterise it. The awareness of these transformations promotes critical reading and active citizenship'. In particular, the Walkscape described in the survey is located in an area of the city that 'lacks relevant cultural heritage', an example of an everyday landscape that enables the co-creation of an interdisciplinary reading of its characteristics as well as the transformations. The Walkscapes invite the participants to join an informal, mobile and collaborative reading of the landscape, through different possible narrations that are georeferenced and mapped, contributing to the co-construction of landscape values. The website of the association<sup>1</sup> states that 325 330

we must not be satisfied with listening to stories told by others, but weaving narratives and data into active observation of past and present traces; it is necessary to be curious, participatory, looking at the seemingly meaningless fragments, photographing, drawing, picking up insignificant objects that tell contemporary stories that are intertwined with past ones. The Walkscape interweaves stories made not only of churches and monuments, but of stones, grass, sounds or smells that overlap and cohabit over time. History and contemporaneity, as well as objectivity and subjectivity, intertwine because there is no history without narration and imagination. 335

The third example was located in the Salento peninsula, south of Italy, in the *Paduli* Rural Park, an area of 5500 hectares characterised by centuries-old olive trees. These trees are commonly managed 340



Figure 4. The project 'Once upon a time ... creating and narrating landscapes' (MUSE).

among the local municipalities as one of the actions proposed by the Regional Landscape Plan of Puglia. In terms of the proposed activities, the *Urban Laboratory Abitare i Paduli* seeks to 'activate and experiment best practices, including the creative engagement of young citizens and the community in a participatory process for the valorisation and development of the area'. This project focuses on the problem of illegal dumping of waste as an important factor in landscape degradation. Through a series of excursions in the area, which raise the population's awareness of the values and problems of the Park, as well as collaboration with artists during an artists' residency programme (Figure 5), the project led to the establishment of an itinerary for tourists and visitors. In this case, the presence of the waste issue 'has determined the occasion to start a collaborative experiment through knowledge, walking, narration and artistic practice, with the objective of building a collective reflection'.

From the above descriptions, we first note that the three examples dealt with different landscapes—for their materialities or the way in which they are evaluated or imagined (landscapes of outstanding beauty, utopian landscapes, everyday landscapes and rural and degraded landscapes), which reflect that



Figure 5. Urban laboratory Abitare i Paduli – Terramatta (ph. Alberto Caroppo).

the political dimension involves every landscape. Second, considering the landscape as an arena of different gazes entails a critical and engaged reading of the landscape as a collective heritage (sometimes institutionalised heritage, e.g. the Dolomites, some others not) and facilitates collaboration in the co-construction of landscape values and participation in its transformation. Through the landscape experiential dimension, which is expressed while walking or with the help of artistic interventions, the encounter with the landscape turns into an encounter with oneself, the other and its diversity. The engagement of different points of view in the attribution of value to the landscape, as well as to actions relating to the landscape, are also present in these education projects, demonstrating their relevance as experiences of citizenship education. This engagement can develop on a wide range of questions—from simply ‘how to protect and enhance this outstanding landscape’ to the more complex ‘what can we do with this problematic landscape’—showing the different degrees of agency proposed to the participants.

## 6. Conclusions

Focusing on a considerable sample of school and non-formal education projects in Italy, this research explored the multiple ways in which the landscape can be interpreted, addressed and mobilised in pedagogical contexts. The analysis of the data collected through the online survey unveiled the richness and heterogeneity of the practices of landscape education in Italy, with strengths and weaknesses. There is a general agreement on the ELC definition of landscape, although the national institutional approach influences educational practices, especially regarding the importance of education towards the conservation of historic, cultural and exceptional landscapes compared to landscape management and planning. In addition, we observed some invisible barriers between educational contexts as well as difficulties in simultaneously considering the institutionalised (cultural and natural) value of landscapes along with the diversity of experiences and points of view of insiders and outsiders.

The analysis of the projects that most adhered to the idea of ‘landscape as an arena’ coincided with issues of citizenship, participation, agency and, ultimately, justice, although, generally, landscape justice was not explicitly evoked in the description of the projects. Considerations of diversity in questioning landscapes within pedagogical processes are greater when problems and conflicts are visible, such as in the abovementioned case of illegal dumping, while it is more superficial in cases of landscapes with exceptional and heritage values, where a simplified approach risks the forced appeasement of any form of landscape conflict.

In conclusion, if ‘landscapes are material and representational evidence of what the current state of justice is, and the foundation for what it can become’ (Mels & Mitchell, 2013, p. 221), then justice should be constitutive of landscape education and, ultimately, of landscape democracy. To this end, the diversity of approaches identified through the survey proves the need—in the pedagogy of landscape—for theoretical frameworks and methodological tools to address the complexity of the issue through an insightful reading in order to enhance considerations of the political dimension of landscapes in educational activities, enriching and not excluding other more traditional ideas of landscape.

## Note

1. <http://educazionemuseale.it/etra/?cat=40>.

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## Author contribution statement

B. C. and M. C. contributed to the design and implementation of the research and the discussion of the results; M. C. performed the statistical and qualitative analysis and wrote paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 6 and B. C. wrote paragraphs 1, 2, 6.

**Disclosure statement**

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