

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research purposes and framework

This book, as with the research it describes, has a dual purpose: first, to contribute to the IUCN's debate and reflections on the international classification of Protected Areas (considering the 2008 World Congress in Barcelona) through applied experimentation on the Guidelines recently circulated by the IUCN's WCPA; and, jointly, to improve awareness of the European system of Protected Areas, facilitate harmonization and coordination of the policies of European countries and of the European Union itself in the field of nature conservation. For both purposes, this research proposes further in-depth study of the Italian situation, considered to be significant for many of the problems looming on a European scale.

Research carried out on the European Protected Areas refers to that conducted in 1999-2001 on behalf of the Italian Ministry of the Environment by the European Documentation Center on Nature Park Planning (CED PPN, Polytechnic of Turin)¹ published by the Ministry in 2003 with the title "The national system of Protected Areas in the European Context: classification, planning and management". In contrast to that, this research essentially uses a single information source for all European countries in order to facilitate comparisons between different countries and approach the aim – indicated by IUCN – of "speaking a common language." More specifically:

- *for data on Protected Areas, reference was made to data collected and dis-*

¹ *The above research is an important reference for the present one, as it was based on a systematic survey of the national set of Protected Areas, supported by a rich original documentation. The collected data and the related evaluations have established a wide and consistent background, nearly unique in the European panorama. Therefore the present research can not avoid to refer to some basic suggestions/observations of the previous one (see 5.2), to recall and deepen the open problems and upload information. Nevertheless, the comparison between the two researches, respectively 2001 and 2008, both operated by the same research institute, CED PPN, can not hide a substantial discontinuity. Whilst the first research has been promoted and funded by Ministero dell'Ambiente and has been developed in constant touch with Direzione Generale per la protezione della natura di Ministero dell'Ambiente, the second one has been autonomously promoted and developed by Politecnico di Torino, with the collaboration of Federparchi and AIDAP, and sponsored by Regione Piemonte. Remarks, evaluations and suggestions proposed in the present research must be considered as the outcome of technical and scientific elaborations, which don't involve the Ministero dell'Ambiente. This is much more evident as, whilst the first research focused on the Italian system within the European framework, the second one specifically concerns the European context, reserving to the Italian system just an application (see 5.3).*

- seminated by the European Environmental Agency (EEA), indicating, where necessary, their deviations (sometimes significant) from the data acquired directly by the competent National Authority or by other sources;*
- *for data concerning territorial contexts in which the Protected Areas are located, information was mainly used that was collected and published by ESPON (European Spatial Planning Observatory Network, a network which works as a support for European development policies, created with the purpose of further increasing the knowledge of trends and impacts of territorial policies implemented in the enlarged EU).*

1.2 Reasons

From an international perspective, the relevance of the issue of the classification of Protected Areas cannot be covered if not in relation to the history of the same Protected Areas. These represent a huge collective investment in our living environment, circulated around the world. Given the stakes involved, it is of vital importance that public action and social discourse on these special areas are properly informed and based on a common understanding of the interests involved. To this end, after the first isolated initiatives of the 1960s, in 1978 IUCN launched a first proposal for the definition of categories and objectives for the Protected Areas. In 1994, this was reorganized on the basis of widely recognized Guidelines at the inter-governmental level. Moreover, discussions on the 1994 Guidelines and, in particular, the work of the special Commissions on the theme "Speaking a Common Language," clarified that the system of Protected Areas, at all levels, is in continuous development and must be continuously re-interpreted in light of experiences and environmental conditions that are rapidly changing. Nevertheless, the classification proposed by IUCN was supported by international conventions, starting with the Convention on Biodiversity and various regional agreements. It is increasingly used by many countries to orient their policies and legislation on nature conservation. Indeed, this enables a drastic reduction of confusion and inconsistencies that arise from the diversity of national classifications, which currently record

more than 100 different names for Protected Areas. But the adoption of a shared international classification is not only an irreplaceable contribution to enabling comparisons at all levels; it can also significantly influence conservation policies, increasing credibility and accountability and strengthening the understanding and awareness of the values at stake.

If this is the background for this research, from a European perspective its motivations rest on the basis of a dual finding. On the one hand, the fact that despite the relative success of policies for Protected Areas (shown in the social consensus which has hitherto supported their continuous growth), the “environmental question” (patchwork of risks, threats and strongly perceived criticality) has continued to deteriorate, pointing out the impotence or ineffectiveness of those same policies in dealing with the issue. On the other hand, the lack of a cognitive framework shared by the various European countries (and often even within individual countries or the regions that are part of them); a lack that partially determines and partially reflects a fundamental lack of inter-connection and coordination of national policies in the field of Protected Areas and more generally of environmental policies and those for nature conservation. The lack of truly European policies in this field (only partially remedied by the European Union with directives like those collected in “Nature 2000”) severely limits the effectiveness of the measures adopted by the different countries, both in the face of threats and problems of supra-national relevance (as typically those linked to global climate change and its dramatic local effects, or those related to the construction of the Pan-European Ecological Network), and in the face of specific cross-border problems (as typically in the case of the Alps’ Convention). The need to rectify these shortcomings, to develop common strategies for conservation and development of natural heritage and to coordinate national policies for Protected Areas is all the more apparent as the scale of problems to face increases, urging the adoption of “system” policies. In the European context, the problems to face in the management of Protected Areas and more generally in the conservation of nature and protection of the environment depend more and more on

choices and decisions made at the Community level, such as those concerning the agricultural and infrastructural policies. The urgency of European policies is also apparent from the political processes in course, such as those relating to the enlargement of the European Union, the emergence of the Euro-Mediterranean perspective and the progressive construction of a new European identity, in relation to which the extraordinary biological and landscape diversity of the European territories plays a crucial role.

1.3 What are Protected Areas?

In the face of these deficiencies and these needs it is impossible to avoid negatively assessing the extreme diversity of the concepts, legislative and institutional frameworks and practical guidelines which concern the Protected Areas in the various European countries. But before exploring this diversity, it is important to understand the subject itself: what are the European Protected Areas exactly? For the sake of clarity, it is good to immediately restrict application of the Protected Areas established by the various countries according to their own laws, separately from those arising from Community or international legislation. There are more than 100 categories of Protected Areas defined by the various European countries at a national level (in many countries those are joined by numerous categories created by the regional or Lander laws); and for many of these it is not clear or there is no correspondence with the categories proposed by IUCN at the international level ("A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed to achieve the long-term conservation of nature, associated ecosystem services and cultural values", Draft IUCN-WCPA 2008). Indeed, the legislative definition for quite a few of them suggests that they are areas that don't meet to the definition of "Protected Area" recently specified by IUCN. The confusion resulting from the variety of definitions should obviously be tempered by the work of re-allocation of the IUCN categories that is currently in progress. So far, however, it only covers 86% (in terms of protected surface) of Protected Areas established by the European countries. At this time, the least we can say is that in Europe the concept of

Protected Area is vaguely reflected in the Protected Areas that the various countries boast: in brief, when speaking of Protected Areas among different countries, we do not know whether we are talking about the same thing. In light of these findings, one can currently observe that a comparison between European countries (in view of the construction of a “common language” as a condition for harmonization or coordination of their respective policies) must begin here: with a comparison of definitions, an agreement on what “Protected Areas” means (in relation, of course, to its general definition).

1.4 The selection of Protected Areas

It is therefore appropriate (in line with the methodological path traced by IUCN) to base the issue of classification, which is at the base of all reasoning, on the consistency and role of the European system of Protected Areas. This is the central theme of the research presented here, which thus used the 6 IUCN categories to analyze all of the Protected Areas located in 39 countries and grouped as follows:

- EU15 European Union Countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Portugal, United Kingdom, Spain, Sweden;*
- EU12 Countries that recently entered the EU: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary;*
- EU7 Non-EU countries: Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Gibraltar, Monaco;*
- EU5 Balkan countries: Albania, Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia.*

The use of data collected by the EEA, while it has the advantage of referring to a single source, also presents some problems, such as:

- the use of data which in some cases contains glaring discrepancies from*

- *data from other sources, such as those of national control authorities;*
- *a percentage (14%, in terms of surface area) of European Protected Areas that are not yet classified;*
- *the necessary subordination of analysis to precise verification of already present classifications, making it necessary to initiate a complex and interactive process, which is currently only experimental.*

Research has led so far to a preliminary selection of the overall data collected by the EEA, with the exclusion of areas with clear anomalies or that fall into national categories that certainly do not meet the IUCN definition of a Protected Area. In particular, research has considered and analyzed two sets of European Protected Areas:

- *a general set (tPA, "total" Protected Areas) containing 75,388 Protected Areas (over 90 million hectares) as the results of the above-mentioned preliminary selection, for which alphanumeric data are available;*
- *a more reduced set (mPA, "mapped" Protected Areas) containing 42,354 Protected Areas (about 63 million hectares, i.e. the 70% of the tPA in surface terms), for which, in addition to alphanumeric data, geometric and georeferenced data are also available.*

While on the first set of Protected Areas (tPA) an analysis was conducted for consistency, growth dynamics and diversification by IUCN categories (see chapter 2.2.), on the second set (mPA), it was possible to conduct, through the use of GIS tools, an analysis of the relations existing between Protected Areas and environmental, regional and socio-economic contexts (see chapters 2.3, 2.4). The comparison with the territory was therefore limited to a part, albeit significant, of the total tPA set. In the notes that follow, we tried to maintain where possible the reference to the total tPA, limiting reference to the total reduced mPA set to that which was strictly necessary. The comparison between the two sets, tPA and mPA, is not lacking in importance: not only because it is not coincidental by chance that the quantity difference is much more substantial in terms of number than in terms of protected surface, but even more because the mPA presents, as understandable, a lower incidence of unclassified PAs (12.1% in terms of surface area, compared to 14% of tPA).

1.5 The essential features of the European framework

The tPA set so chosen leads itself to the following general observations (more analytical and precise observations are set out in the following chapters):

- a) *Firstly, this covers a very wide set spread throughout Europe: over 75,000 areas, for an overall surface area of over 90,000,000 ha, corresponding to almost 18% of the sum of the territories of 39 countries; although they are not uniformly distributed (the territorial incidence in some countries is less than 10% while it exceeds 50% in others), the average percentage remains close to 18% both in the "old Europe" (15 countries) and in the 12 countries of the recent enlargement. The figure should be highlighted as it leads us to estimate that a significant part of the European population (even more if we consider the neighboring areas or buffer zones that surround the Protected Areas in some countries) is directly affected by the PA policies, as more limited studies have often highlighted. This finding is not disproved if one considers the reduced set of mPA, except of course the lowest territorial impact (12.6% rather than 18%, as the European average); but it is interesting to note that, contrary to what one might expect, the proportion of protected surface area of the "old Europe of the 15" is lower if one considers the mPA set (62.8% rather than 67.6% of the tPA set), while the percentages of the other sub-sets in the European countries are higher, although not by much.*
- b) *This considerable endowment is the result (and this is a second aspect of considerable impact) of the continuous and forceful growth of the Protected Areas: during the decade from 1996-2006, the growth in terms of protected surface area was 23%, further accentuating a trend that was already marked during the previous decade. Although varied by country (some such as Belgium or Albania with growth rates above 50%, others such as Austria or Denmark below 10%) the growth has rather uniformly affected the various sub-sets of the European countries, rewarding in particular the 7 countries still waiting to enter the EU. Among the many considerations that this data suggests, it is clear that this growth (while discounting the fact that the parks and Protected Areas often stay "on the*

map" and do not translate into tangible measures) signals a persistent social consensus on the policies of nature conservation. This is in curious contrast with the widespread idea that the parks and Protected Areas are mostly places of conflict and dispute. In this respect as well, the conclusion does not change much if attention is shifted from the total tPA set to the reduced mPA set.

- c) *In turn, the growth and dissemination of the Protected Areas are at the basis of their extreme diversification, only partially readable in the IUCN categories. In general, the European set of PAs currently houses to a lesser extent than in the past the key natural areas (the sanctuaries of nature, to use an aged metaphor) and to a greater extent the "cultural landscapes" and anthropicized areas. These are more and more often close to the epicenters of urban or productive development or absorbed as "islands" of nature which have survived inside urban eco-mosaics. So, the share of category II (National Parks, that still cover 14.1% of the protected surface with a heavy concentration in the sub-set of the EU7 countries) diminishes, while the share of category V (Protected Landscapes, which now cover 52.2% of the protected surface, a share that rises to 59.8% in the countries of "old Europe") grows significantly. To better appreciate this displacement – which is presumably the more characteristic trend in the European landscape – we note that the Protected Areas defined by national legislation as "parks" (National, Regional or Provincial Parks, Nature Parks, etc., that together cover 38% of the total, with about 34 million hectares) fall 61% into category V. As regards diversification in categories, it can also be useful to make a comparison with the reduced mPA set: the share of National Parks is substantially higher (18.2% rather than 14.1%), and in return the share of category V is lower (44.7% against 52.2%).*

1.6 European Protected Areas in the great environmental systems

Using the data for the set of “mapped” PAs, it is possible to bring out some essential features concerning the relationship between the Protected Areas and the great environmental systems.

A first indication, useful in view of those system policies of which there is a growing need, concerns their distribution in the biogeographical regions which make up the European territory. The share of protected surface that falls within the various regions (which obviously depends both on their impact on the overall surface of the territory of the 39 countries in question, and on the concentration of Protected Areas in each of them) is particularly high in the Continental bioregion (34.1%), followed by the Alpine bioregion and (in this order) the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Boreal bioregions.

More significant is the relationship with mountainous territories which, as a whole, include more than a third of the Protected Area, with a territorial impact of Protected Areas that rises from the European average of 18% to 26%. The thickening concentration of PAs in the Alps and Scandinavian Alps is particularly important and even more remarkable since, in those mountainous systems, the PAs are absorbed in relatively continuous bands of territories at high biopermeability (cacuminal areas, forestry domains, etc.). Furthermore, it should be noted that such systems host important areas of extreme natural value as, typically, the massifs Mont Blanc or Monte Rosa, already candidates for the creation of Protected Areas of international importance.

No less interesting is the relationship of Protected Areas with the coastal areas, which host 14% of the protected surface areas. These have a particularly high incidence of Parks and PAs with more strict protection. In contrast to the mountainous areas, the coastal band has, in large measure, severely compromised areas (due to urbanization, nautical traffic, etc.) that highlight the need to effectively insert the PA policies into the Integrated Management of the Coastal Zones, already recommended at the international level.

Even more interesting the relationship between the Protected Areas and the main rivers, along which are located 23% of the protected surface, mainly in

the category V (Protected Landscapes). Despite the inadequacy of the current protection of the rivers floodplains – if compared with the relevance of the biodiversity values and the intensity of the human pressure threatening them – they have to play a crucial role within the national and super-national ecological networks.

1.7 European Protected Areas in local contexts

For the purposes of a more precise identification of the “situations” in which the European Protected Areas are found, we attempted to relate them to their local “contexts”. Clearly lacking a uniform administrative partition of the territory of the 39 countries, and taking into account the need for uniformity or at least comparability of data, we shall refer to the partition adopted by Eurostat (European Statistics Office) in 1988. This data provides a single scheme of geographical distribution based on the population number resident in each area. More precisely, reference was made to the most detailed partition level, namely the Territorial Statistical Unit called NUTS3 (Nomenclature des Unités Territoriales Statistiques), with population tending to vary between 150,000 and 800,000 inhabitants, grouping (not without clear jumps in scale) the Italian Provinces, the Greek Nomoi, the Finnish Maakunnat, the Swedish Lan, the German Kreise, the French Departments, the Spanish Provinces, etc.. For each Territorial Unit, various types of relatively recent data are indeed available, processed by the ESPON Program (European Spatial Planning Observation Network).

In relation to the 1375 Territorial Units so defined, we may first ask how the territorial incidence of the Protected Areas varies (which, as we have seen, is on average 18% in the 39 countries in question). The Territorial Units lacking Protected Areas are few (15%), a sign that the territorial distribution of the Protected Areas is sufficiently widespread. This is reflected in the fact that more than half of the Units have less than 5% of protected surface area and there are relatively few that, on the contrary, have more than 15%. Of course, this does not prevent us from observing considerable variations, both in the re-

relationship with the different categories of PAs (e.g. increasing frequency of the Units to a high incidence of protected surface for category V of the Protected Landscapes) and in the relationship with the different countries.

A second question concerns the uses and coverage of the soil (from Corine Land Cover) that characterize the Territorial Units in which the Protected Areas fall. It is noted that more than half of the cases involve territories dominated by agriculture or forestry, while the share of natural territories is relatively low. It is a predictable sign of how the fate of the Protected Areas in Europe is closely linked to that of the rural areas; of course, however, the scale of Territorial Units may mislead (e.g. the National Park of "Gran Paradiso," surrounded by mostly rural or natural areas falls into a province of high urbanization which encompasses the metropolitan area of Turin). The link with rural areas is still closer if we focus on category V of Protected Landscapes, whose overwhelming majority falls into agro-forestry contexts.

The particular relationship of the European Protected Areas with rural areas can be further characterized on the basis of the "anthropogenic influence" attributed to each Territorial Units in the framework of the ESPON Program. This attribution, which jointly takes into account the degree of anthropical interference in natural dynamics and the degree of urban influence, makes a 6-level distinction. These levels range from high urban influence and high human intervention to low urban influence and low human intervention. One may note a certain bipolarization of Protected Areas towards these two extremes, with a high incidence of PAs in Units where high urban influence joins high human intervention, an incidence that appears much more pronounced for Protected Landscapes. This observation can be better qualified by analyzing the relationship with the density and demographic dynamics of the contexts in which the European Protected Areas fall. As far as density is concerned (and we certainly can not ignore the extreme variability of the data regarding different European countries, from the limited case of the Netherlands, 400 inhab/km², to that of the Scandinavian countries, 13-14 inhab/km²), it is noted, on the one hand, that the 80% of protected surface is localized within Territorial Units with a

demographic density of 0-150 inhab/km² (the 84% of European territory); on the other side, also the share of PAs comprised in Units whose density is 150-1.000 inhab/km² is remarkable. With regards to the demographic dynamics, the great majority of protected surface is included in environments of relative stability; we note, however, a significant share of cases situated in contexts characterized by positive dynamics, and, in this respect as well, the share is higher for Protected Landscapes.

In conclusion, it can be argued that (not without considerable exceptions even at the level of individual countries) the European panorama of Protected Areas, unlike that of the U.S. or other continents, is thoroughly marked by historical presence and human action, with all that this entails in ecological, economic and cultural terms.

1.8 The policies of Protected Areas in Europe

The brief comments above (better articulated in the following chapters), illuminate a European framework strongly characterized as regards the state, development, problems and criticality of the Protected Areas, as well as the role that these are called to play in their respective territorial contexts. More than on other parts of the planet, the growth and dissemination of Protected Areas in the framework of nature conservation policies crossed great growth, urban sprawl and radical economic-productive transformation in territories that were already characterized by density, pervasiveness and the ecological and socio-cultural importance of the anthropization of previous centuries and millenniums. As a result of this crossing, nature conservation policies in Europe must cope on the one hand with the richness of cultural sediments (for example the growing importance placed on Cultural Landscapes in the UNESCO World Heritage lists) and the value of "widespread naturalness" preserved by agricultural and forestry landscapes; on the other hand, policies must consider the very pronounced and spatially diffused phenomena of ecosystem and landscape fragmentation resulting in the loss or changing of natural habitats and connection networks. The answers that have been outlined over the

last 10-15 years would seem to be moving overall in the following directions:

- a) Firstly, in the particular importance attributed in Europe to new paradigms launched by IUCN in the 1990s, with a growing emphasis on the needs of territorial integration of the Protected Areas ("Benefits beyond Boundaries", Durban 2003), of strengthening the forms of cooperation and governance from the ground up, of conjugation between conservation, fairness and sustainability of development ("People and Nature, only one World", Bangkok 2004). It should be noted that this shift in attention ("shift in focus", Steiner 2004) was partially anticipated by at least a decade by certain European experiences, both at the legislative and management levels, such as those of the Italian or French regional parks.*
- b) Secondly, in the importance attributed to the ecological networks in some national and regional legislation and in various levels of planning experiences, especially in the "Natura 2000" Network, launched with European Community Directive (Habitats Directive, 92/43/CEE). This includes a set of SCI (20.789) with reference to the first 25 countries covering overall about 56 million hectares and a set of SPA (4.540) for about 44 million hectares, both widely overlapped by the set of PAs (which in those 25 countries cover about 78 million hectares). The debate and critical reflections on this fundamental political design especially concern the lack of a genuine system of connections, the conceptual and programmatic separation from the system of Protected Areas, and the opportunity to give the European network, and in general the ecological networks, more distinct and complex functions of historical, cultural and functional connection.*
- c) Thirdly, the need for an alliance that must be established between the policies of Protected Area policies and the landscape policies, which may help to powerfully broaden the influence of protection measures in the territory, to promote territorial integration of Protected Areas, to enrich the socio-cultural meaning of conservation policies. Coordination with landscape policies in the direction recommended in Bangkok (CGR.*

RES050, A landscape/seascape approach to Conservation), can enable, among other things, a better definition of the role of Protected Landscapes of category V, to specify the role of "cultural landscapes" inside and outside PAs, to enhance the powerful symbolic and representative role of landscapes inserted in the UNESCO lists. In the European context, the contribute of landscape policies for nature conservation may also be formally and effectively reflected in the European Landscape Convention brought by the European Council to be signed by 45 countries in 2000.

These different lines of response are also expressed in very different ways in the various European countries, not only in relation to the extreme diversification of resources and environmental situations in the European framework, but also to the differences in institutional apparatus, legislative instruments and financial resources and in the same political and cultural traditions. The comparison of the national legislative frameworks of 39 countries therefore emphasizes a relevant lack of homogeneity that together justifies the need for and difficulty of harmonization and coordination of European policies in the field of Protected Areas and more generally, of nature conservation and environmental protection.

1.9 The classification of Protected Areas in the framework of European policies

In light of the above considerations, we can attempt to clarify the role that the classification of the PAs can play in the framework of European policies for the conservation of nature and landscape. It may first be noted that this framework should cover not only the individual national systems, but rather – for the many reasons adopted – the European system, without ignoring trans-continental relations, firstly Euro-Mediterranean. It is above all at this level that the objective to create "a common language for a common policy" is meant to apply. This means that the criteria for building political systems to which the classification of Protected Areas refers (from WCPA 1998: criteria of representativeness, adequacy, consistency and complementarity, congruency between actions and

objectives, a cost-benefit balance) should also or above all be designed and applied to Europe. From this standpoint, we highlight some problems that can assume particular importance in the European context, not only for the overall restructuring of the forms and measures of nature conservation but also, in particular, for the classification of the Protected Areas:

- a) The recent IUCN redefinition of the concept of the Protected Area is certainly not painless for many European countries in which the Protected Areas have been established or are still proposed for the protection of complex systems of values, not limited to those that are strictly natural;*
- b) The adoption of multiple objectives can often be difficult when it has to do with complex territorial systems (such as large rural spaces or mountainous areas like the Alps) with substantial and bitter conflicts on the use of resources;*
- c) The reconnection and defragmentation of torn or damaged ecosystems are the primary needs which cannot be answered only by ecological networks, but commit all of the categories of Protected Areas in different ways, in the form of management planning which is necessarily extended to surrounding areas;*
- d) The adoption of system policies, also and above all for the purpose of ecological reconnection, requires the unified and integrated consideration of systems (national, regional and local) of Protected Areas with the Network "Natura 2000";*
- e) For the purposes of territorial integration and de-insularization of Protected Areas, their management and planning must be integrated with the landscape policies under the European Landscape Convention of 2000;*
- f) Inter-institutional cooperation, making local authorities responsible and promoting governance from the ground up, is a fundamental need that can in some way be answered in upgrading traditional forms of community management, but that crosses, in different ways, all categories of Protected Areas.*

In light of these points, it seems clear that the attribution of an area to a cer-

tain category should be the result of a negotiation process, open to multiple institutions and interested parties, which does not ignore the strong, growing interaction (not free of bitter conflict) which normally occurs between the PAs and their surrounding territories. Institutional recognition should thus define:

- *the framework of objectives to pursue (with specific reference to those provided by IUCN for each category);*
- *the conditions for achieving them and the parameters to assess them;*
- *the measures to be agreed for the context;*
- *the safeguards to put in place, both temporarily and definitively;*
- *the procedures for verification of the degree of achievement of objectives.*

The last point concerns the effectiveness of protective measures and governance policies for the area in question and for its context. It raises the possibility that the attribution of a category is not decided definitively. It should instead trigger a monitoring process to later assess if it is to be confirmed or whether it requires changes, depending on the most appropriate management of the area.

1.10 The application of IUCN classification to the Italian system of Protected Areas

In the european framework outlined here, the application of the classification proposed by iucn is of particular interest to the system of italian Protected Areas. It must face not only the european specifications referred to above (some of which, as the interlacing of natural and cultural values, are particularly important in italy) but also the considerable divergences between iucn classification and those established at a national level (the framework law, 394/1991) and at a regional level.

As regards national classification, which is inevitably "dated" and is prior to the Guidelines of 1994, the first consideration arises from a comparison of the 6 IUCN categories and the 5 Italian categories: in the second ones, a precise answer is missing to the categories of strict protection (Ia and Ib), Natural

Monuments (III) and areas for the management of habitats and species (IV), which partly correspond to national and regional reserves. Missing above all are the Protected Landscapes (whose diffusion into the classifications of other European countries was instead repeatedly underlined), while the recognition of areas for the sustainable management of resources (VI) is almost irrelevant. However, Italian classification has a category (that of Regional Parks) that has had a central role in the rapid development of the national Protected Area system, collecting a very important share, that is not reflected in IUCN classification.

As regards the regional classifications, their most obvious aspect is their great diversity. There are more than 50 categories independently defined by the Regions, in addition to those defined at a national level, apart from the Protected Areas provided for in regional classifications and left to the authority of Provinces and Municipalities. Among these, it is interesting to note that the Protected Landscapes also appear in the most recent laws.

Given the differences referred to herein, it is appropriate to examine how the Protected Areas classified according to the categories of the national framework law distribute themselves within the IUCN categories (without forgetting that more than a third have not yet been reclassified according to the latter). While there is almost total conformity among National Parks of Italian classification and the IUCN's category II of the same name, other classifications are much more widespread. In particular, we note that the Regional Parks are almost equally distributed between category IV (Areas for the management of specific resources) and category V (Protected Landscapes), which seems to signify a clear differentiation from National Parks, contrary to what is often observed for many of them. For its part, category V seems to collect in Italy a relatively low number of Protected Areas (much lower than the European average), predominantly classified based on national categories as Regional Parks and in the alternative as Regional Reserves.

These purely quantitative considerations certainly merit an interpretive effort – also in light of the analysis produced in this research – that cannot avoid placing

the issue of Protected Area classification within the wider issue of protection and enhancement of environmental and landscape quality in development processes involving the country. In this perspective, the application of the Guidelines to the Italian situation calls for a general reflection on some emerging issues.

1) The first issue evokes the tricky relationship between nature and culture, in light of the recent redefinition of the concept of "Protected Area" proposed by the IUCN, which insists, as a diriment requirement, on reference to nature conservation and, more precisely, to biodiversity. The image of the "good government" which over the centuries has ensured "care of the land" by human communities, combining environmental knowledge and local culture, is not necessarily opposed to that of "wild" nature, but rather alludes to the need to replenish lost or upset balances and to find an effective protection of biodiversity on the diversification of cultures and cultivation. Seeing the complexity, a systematic rethinking of the underlying concepts is necessary, starting from the concept of ecosystem. This rethinking is also stimulated by the large and growing importance in European systems of Protected Areas of the category of Protected Landscapes, intended to protect (not without doubts or contradictions) broad contexts of "widespread naturalness" and complex systems of natural-cultural values.

2) The second issue is evoked by the concept of integration, watchword in the current environmental debate, with a key role in the "new paradigms" proposed by the IUCN in 2003. The integration of policies which affect the protected territories in various ways is indeed essential not only to "spread the benefits of protection beyond boundaries," but also to ensure their effective protection from risk and processes of degradation that aggressively threaten them more and more. Integration is the condition for implementing an acceptable unity of governmental action at all levels and for all potentially interested sectors. A key aspect of integration involves the currently weak and uncertain relationship between national systems of Protected Areas, in some way traceable to the IUCN classification and the Network Nature 2000: a relationship that is difficult to establish as the national and European systems both lack effective system

policies which really bring the individual areas and sites into the “network”, removing them from their isolation. Similarly, it is necessary to overcome the persistent separation of management in terrestrial and marine areas: a separation accentuated in Italy by the different legal and institutional matrices which frustrates the attempts to pursue an Integrated Management of the Coastal Areas recommended at an international level and essential in many cases (as in the delta areas).

3) A third issue, closely linked to the previous, concerns governance, meant as a complex system of government actions competent for multiple subjects and interacting institutions (including the regional management of Protected Areas) and open, at least potentially, to a wide range of diversified stakeholders. In the Italian context, as in many other European contexts, for various reasons (such as the private ownership of the land or the political or institutional importance of local authorities) governance lies increasingly in a framework of cooperation, consultation and participation, inadequately found in the framework law. The more important this view is, the more the management of the Protected Areas widens to peripheral or surrounding areas and bears the economic and social dynamics of contexts in which the areas themselves must be integrated. In these contexts, restricting policies, independently decided by management bodies, were inadequate, while it is necessary to put shared rules and strategies into place. In general, the increasing emphasis on landscape policies, both within and outside the Protected Areas, stresses the need for more well-constructed forms of cooperative governance, also through appropriate forms of co-planning, diversified according to the categories of Protected Areas. The prospect of cooperation and governance calls on monitoring and evaluation as necessary tools for the effective co-responsibility of the parties involved, for the purposes of equitable distribution of costs and benefits of the conservation measures. It is only from a broadened perspective of the concerned contexts that the issue of justification of necessary public investments can be properly raised.