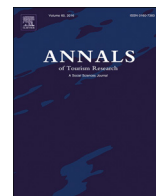


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## INVITED ARTICLE

## Transnational World Heritage, (meta)governance and implications for tourism: An Italian case



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## ABSTRACT

Transnational World Heritage Sites foster international cooperation, with implications for tourism systems within and across State Parties. This work analyses the metagovernance of the Italian portion of the Prehistoric Pile Dwellings, a serial transboundary site. The results indicate that there are specific governance and metagovernance failures due to issues in the Italian system, notably the overly hierarchical structure for heritage policy. The clash between governance modes results in an ineffective decision-making structure, at the national level, laden with 'red tape'. Thus, there is a need for more networked modes of metagovernance in order to improve the efficiency of the Italian site management as well as the complicated process of transnational World Heritage metagovernance and its application to national governance structures.

## Introduction

Since 2011, there has been an approximately 30% increase in transboundary World Heritage sites, encompassing a variety of site types and geographical locations, added to the list. Some examples are: Silk Roads: The Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor, which is located in China, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan; The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, and Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement, with sites found in Argentina, Belgium, France, Germany, India, Japan, and Switzerland; and Sangha Trinational, a natural site spanning Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and the Congo. UNESCO (2016) identifies two types of transboundary properties, either one site across international borders or a serial site that contains two or more components located in different States Parties. While transboundary sites currently account for only 3.5% of the total World Heritage List, these transnational co-operative partnerships uphold the very spirit of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention by encouraging the concept of heritage for all mankind that transcends national boundaries (Swiss Federal Office of Culture, 2010). The governance of these sites, however, can be quite complex due to the plethora of stakeholders, the variety of legal regulations, and conflicting governance styles found within and across different national contexts. The interplay between the States Parties responsible for the transboundary World Heritage Site's management must navigate a complex multi-level governance system of overarching regulation combined with culturally relevant regional and local practices.

The nomination and management of transnational World Heritage Sites can have positive implications for the promotion of effective tourism management practices (Swiss Federal Office of Culture, 2010), and UNESCO (2008, p. 4) has acknowledged the "development of tourism with a similar approach" as part of a coordinated management system for destinations home to serial transnational properties. The cross-border collaboration among State Parties advocated in the guidelines and recommendations for

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transboundary heritage sites underpins “the greater focus on network development” in contemporary tourism planning and governance (Hall, 2008, p. 45). Cross-border governance is a common feature in the Alps (e.g. Valtellina) and Scandinavia (e.g. Lapland), where existing networks of public organizations, private actors, and communities have proven to have “a positive impact on the level of growth and innovation in tourist destinations” (Nordin & Svensson, 2007, p. 64). However, destination transgovernance can exacerbate the socio-spatial divide of neighbouring countries, as in the case of the Bavaria- Karlovarsky Kraj region between Germany and Czechia (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2017).

While transboundary sites are not a new trend in World Heritage listing, with the first two inscribed in 1979, interest in this type of site is growing (Stokin, 2015). However, there have been relatively few studies that address multi-level governance and management, and research on this type of site is limited, with most of the focus falling predominantly on natural sites (Johnston, 2006; Krzysciak-Kosinska, 2011; Makuva, 2012; Svets & Sande, 2016) and only two studies which concentrate on cultural sites, specifically cultural landscapes (Albrecht, 2010; Sallay et al., 2016). Nevertheless, there have not been any previous studies that directly discuss heritage governance, metagovernance and tourism at a transnational serial World Heritage Site. To address this gap in the literature, this work presents an analysis of the governance structure of the Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps World Heritage Site, with a focus on the implications for local tourism planning in the Italian portion of the site.

To this end, this work begins with a presentation of the literature covering transboundary World Heritage governance, transboundary tourism governance and metagovernance theory, with the latter built from political theory (Jessop, 2011) and tourism policy and planning studies (Amore & Hall, 2016). This theory is then used to frame the analysis of the case of the Italian segment Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps World Heritage Site. Through an examination of secondary sources, in particular legislation, policy documents, and the transnational management plan, the discussion focuses on the legal framework, governance failures and metagovernance alternatives in relation to the World Heritage Site and local-level tourism policy and planning. The results of this analysis emphasize the complexity inherent in the incorporation of incongruent governance systems and, thus, the necessity of ensuring that transnational World Heritage Sites adequately plan for potential governance clashes.

## Literature

### *World Heritage governance*

The World Heritage Convention has created an overarching global governance structure through which to protect, conserve, and promote both natural and cultural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value (see Schmitt, 2009, 2015). While the Convention provides a legal framework that details heritage norms with which each signatory is expected to comply, state sovereignty has been strongly incorporated into the document (Francioni & Lenzerini, 2008). Therefore, while the heritage is acknowledged as having ‘international significance’, it is still governed by the national legislation of the state in which it sits (Francioni, 2008). The way in which the World Heritage system exerts control over the various level within its global community resembles the hierarchical network mode of governance (Jessop, 2011) as well as the broad definition of governance as “the management of the common affairs of political communities” (Healey, 2006a, p. 59).

The governance structure of the World Heritage system “encourages the development of hierarchically-structured bureaucracies, focused around technical and administrative expertise, in which officials justify their actions and decisions upwards to their seniors and the politicians to whom these are accountable” (Healey, 2006a, p. 221). It is comparable to the political archetype of territorial governance where the outer layers of governance (global/state) look inward to regional and destination governance levels (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Hall, 2011; Pechlaner & Volgger, 2013). Such hierarchical governance is characterized by a top-down, goal-oriented policy approach (Adie, 2019; Hall, 2011; Jessop, 2011) and is best emphasized in Adie's (2017) conceptualisation of World Heritage as a franchise system, with the state fulfilling the role of the franchisee.

While individual site governance is dictated, in part, by the World Heritage Convention, there are no explicit standards given regarding how the List ought to be managed. Instead, the norms related to the listing process and management of sites are discussed in the Operational Guidelines. The latter “are a genuine example of soft law” (Galera, 2016, p. 240) and provide the ‘how’ of the World Heritage Convention's legal structure as management is one of the collective activities of governance (Healey, 2006a). However, the emphasis on state sovereignty, which allows for the varied types of governance systems found throughout the world, can cause complications, specifically in terms of the inter-relation of different levels of the governance process (Adie, 2019; Hall, 2008). This is particularly relevant when discussing the multi-level relationships that need to be developed to ensure adequate management of World Heritage properties. This management is often inclusive of tourism planning as the World Heritage Centre considers tourism a potential “driver for preservation and conservation of cultural and natural heritage and a vehicle for sustainable development” (UNESCO, 2012, p. 2), intertwining the conservation and visitation aspects of the List.

As the majority (96.5%) of World Heritage Sites are located in a single state context, national legislation generally solidifies the roles within the governance framework. This, then, results in a wide array of political systems at play within the World Heritage governance structure. However, in recent years, there has been a general shift within this system in terms of governance style, specifically away from top-down management towards a more inclusive approach with multiple stakeholders (UNESCO, 2016). For example, in a study of industrial World Heritage Sites in the United Kingdom, Rodwell (2002) found that the management plan development at each site included a variety of stakeholders, both non-governmental and local as well as public and private. Conversely, the governance for cultural heritage in Italy is much more centralized under the nation state. Boggio (2000) indicates that the Italian government needs to cooperate with the private sphere in order to ensure better management and allocation of resources. This suggested shift away from strict state control is visible in the Crespi d'Adda World Heritage Site, where a multi-stakeholder approach

compensated for a relative lack of local involvement in the management of the site (Borgarino, Della Torre, Gasparoli, & Ronchi, 2016). At Herculaneum, Thompson (2007, p. 5) found that public-private partnerships and bottom-up management had been particularly effective, but there was no strong will within the public sector to “increase ties between the site and local community”. Therefore, though the multi-stakeholder approach has been increasingly implemented at UNESCO World Heritage Sites, problems can occur, particularly in traditionally hierarchical systems. How then does multi-level governance, involving multiple stakeholders at various levels, operate at the transnational level?

#### *Transboundary governance and World Heritage Sites*

Research focusing on destinations in cross-border contexts is gaining momentum, and, while still an emerging topic, there is consensus that embedded institutional and decision-making structures affect cross-border cooperation and, in turn, tourism policy and planning at the local level (Blasco, Guia, & Prats, 2014; Ioannides, Nielsen, & Billing, 2006; Stoffelen, 2018; Timothy, 1999). While these structures can enhance the emergence of a cross-governance structure, as in the case of the Cerdanya Valley between France and Spain (Blasco et al., 2014), they can also exacerbate structural governance divisions, with local institutions failing to address the needs of cross-border destinations, as observed on the English-Welsh Border (Saxena & Ilbery, 2008). In the latter case, institutional shortcomings can undermine transborder collaboration between destination stakeholders (Ioannides et al., 2006) or result in an ‘institutional asymmetry’ between the modes of governance and decision-making processes across the border (Stoffelen, Ioannides, & Vanneste, 2017). Arguably, pre-existing national legal and regulatory frameworks (Lovell & Boyd, 2006) and embedded policy processes (Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2017) can undermine cross-border collaboration and governance.

Transboundary governance in parks, conservation zones and protected areas is not a new topic of study. Overall, authors tend to agree on the role of states in creating and legitimising cross-frontier coordination (Buckley, 2005; Timothy, 1999), though they are not always the most important actor, as observed in Duffy (2006). However, Lim (2016, p. 808) also underscores that the success of any transboundary work requires that organizations “be linked horizontally at each level across the international boundary as well as vertically across each scale of organization from the local to the transboundary”. This is echoed in Heslinga, Groote, and Vanclay (2017, p. 11) who note that “flexibility in decision-making at the local level was considered to be an important factor in facilitating benefit-sharing from tourism in protected areas”.

Studies examining cross-border interaction in natural Transboundary World Heritage Sites show varied results in terms of successful integration of management and governance structures. At the Waterton Glacier International Peace Park, located on the border between the USA and Canada, Johnston (2006, p. 82) observed that multi-stakeholder cross-border work was the most successful, with “more than 20 organizations and agencies, of which only two have national park management responsibilities”. The Belovezhskaya Pushcha/Białowieża Forest World Heritage Site uses an overarching management framework, but Belarus and Poland each have their own nation-specific management models for their portions of the World Heritage Site (Krzysciak-Kosinska, 2011). In comparison, at the High Coast/Kvarken World Heritage Site, found in Sweden and Finland, there is no overarching management plan. Instead, both Sweden, which has little management structure, and Finland, which has a top-down management process, have little local involvement in the site’s management with transnational management occurring within the consultation group, which is merely advisory without full power to enact decisions (Svels & Sande, 2016).

In comparison, there are only two cultural transnational site management and governance studies, which focus specifically on cultural landscapes. Albrecht (2010) notes that there is very little state-level cooperation at the Curonian Spit World Heritage Site on the border between Lithuania and Russia, which in turn keeps local communities at arm’s length in the governance process. This has resulted in vertical processes only occurring within a national context as opposed to horizontal actions (Albrecht, 2010). Similarly, the Fertő/Neusiedlersee Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site in Austria and Hungary experiences cooperation at the local level, but there is a need for a greater level of integration across all levels. This could be particularly difficult given the power structures within the two nations, with Austrian control over the site being regional in comparison with Hungary where the central government manages the site (Sallay et al., 2016). These studies, combined with those focusing specifically on natural World Heritage Sites, illustrate the complexity and problematic nature of integration of governance and management systems across different national contexts, particularly in their multi-level implementation.

#### *(Trans)governance, World Heritage and tourism: a metagovernance perspective*

In comparison, tourism governance “lies at the intersection of a number of different intersecting multi-level policy arenas” (Hall, 2008, p. 137) that determine and implement policies that “are rarely exclusively devoted to tourism per se” (Hall, 2008, p. 14). Tourism governance is extremely complex and reflects the government structure of sovereign states, the policy processes, and the co-presence of different bodies with specific spheres of regulatory and policy influence typical of representative democracies (Ham & Hill, 1993; Healey, 2006a). Furthermore, it is an expression of the complex network of hybrid and multi-jurisdictional forms of governance (Bevir, 2011) within which different stakeholders “with diverse and often divergent goals and objectives” (Laws, Argusa, Richins, & Scott, 2011, p. 1) coalesce towards a common goal. Steering modes, type of actors and institutional thickness determine the typologies of tourism governance and metagovernance as hybrid forms of hierarchies, networks, markets and communities (Amore & Hall, 2016; Costa, 2013; Hall, 2011; Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2017).

Mainstream literature in tourism policy and planning acknowledges the multiscalar nature of governance and the enactment of transnational partnership between nation states (Hall, 2005, 2008). This is particularly evident in Western democratic contexts where destination governance adheres to the governing principles of integration and subsidiarity (Hall, 2008; Zahra, 2011). In particular,

EU-funded initiatives like INTERREG enable the implementation of multiscalar coalitions across borders through development programmes that permeate the governance of tourism at the national, regional and local scale (Prokkola, 2010). Conversely, the World Heritage Centre provides manuals and guidelines to help site managers adhere to the principles of long-term sustainability, cultural authenticity, and natural integrity (UNESCO, 2002, 2012), but cannot provide policy guidance to the States Parties and still respect their individual territorial sovereignty. This means that there is no enforceable legal framework for the metagovernance and transgovernance of World Heritage Sites.

Research in the governance of heritage and tourism in transnational contexts is varied. Most define governance as networks (Stoffelen, 2018) or markets and communities (Saxena & Ilbery, 2008), with few studies explicitly addressing networked hierarchies of governance and decision-making. With the exception of Stoffelen et al. (2017), political theory is overlooked as theoretical insight in the study of transboundary heritage and tourism governance. To overcome this gap, this study builds on metagovernance theory, which was first introduced in public policy analysis to address governance failures resulting from governmental overload, steering crisis and ungovernability (Jessop, 2011). The shift from governance to metagovernance in political theory enables scholars to identify institutional flaws resulting from the actions of the state (Scharpf, 1994). Its application in spatial planning allows for the analysis of the “reworking of privileged scales and sectors of policy making” (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009, p. 631) and “the designing and managing, shifting between and combining” between hierarchical, market and networked modes of governance (Meuleman, 2008, p. vii).

The introduction of metagovernance in tourism studies is recent (see Amore & Hall, 2016 for a review) and suggests that multi-scalar and trans-scalar hierarchical networks determine coalitions, collaborations and integrated frameworks of governance and metagovernance at the local destination level (Amore & Hall, 2016; Whitehead, 2003). As Amore and Hall (2016, p. 112) further suggest, “metagovernance focuses explicitly on the practices and procedures that secure governmental influence, command and control within governance regimes”. It is in such a policy setting that “the negotiations and political struggles associated with governance are played out, without necessarily ascribing a deterministic logic to the exercise of hierarchical power” (Scharpf, 1994, p. 40). From an etymological standpoint, metagovernance implies a failure of a given mode of governance and its restructuring in response to policy ineffectiveness and fragmentation between key institutional actors (Amore & Hall, 2016; Jessop, 2011).

Metagovernance theory acknowledges that modes and archetypes of governance vary in time and space (Hall, 2009, 2011; Meuleman, 2008) and significantly determine “the dynamic ebb and flow of policy issues” (Simmons, Davis, & Sager, 1974, p. 460). The latter are likely to result in blockages (Simmons et al., 1974) culminating in governance failures (Jessop, 2011), which form the basis for a redefinition of policy steering mode, hence metagovernance. These rules of thumb apply to policy development and planning for heritage and tourism, including transnational World Heritage Sites. The following sections discuss the principles of metagovernance and apply them to the Italian portion of the Prehistoric Pile Dwelling around the Alps.

## Methodology and analysis

In order to best assess the multi-tiered management structure at the Italian components of the Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps World Heritage Site, it was necessary to undertake an analysis of a variety of documentation, including legislation, UNESCO documents, and the transnational management plan. The legislative documents were sourced from the management plan which highlighted all relevant national, regional, and local legislation for the Italian portion of the site. Additionally, the relevant authorities in Italy were contacted to obtain information regarding the current status of the management processes at the Italian sites. However, these contacts yielded little information, potentially due to the open nature of the communication wherein all the individuals involved in the management of various sites were required to respond via group email, as dictated by the Italian managing body. “As is the case in many planning studies that examine the relationships between policy actors and decision-making, the possibility of legal action, the commercial-in-confidence nature of data, or the potential identification of informants, may mean that the best policy stories are often left untold” (Hall & Wilson, 2011, p. 134).

Empirical insights from the fieldwork were analysed in light of the literature on metagovernance theory. According to Amore and Hall (2016, p. 118), a focus on metagovernance makes governance “more transparent and raises questions as to why some strategies are employed and not others [...], especially with respect to the values and interests in what is an overtly political context”. The metagovernance theoretical framework allowed for an interpretive approach wherein both action and inaction could be analysed in tandem in order to attain a more holistic understanding of the overall governance structure.

The collection of secondary sources and scrutiny against established theoretical backgrounds is not new in cross-border governance research. Prokkola (2008) examined cross-border cooperation along the Finnish-Swedish border using concepts and theories from regional studies. Similarly, Dredge and Jenkins (2012) used reflexive modernization and political modernization theories to analyse relevant tourism policy documents issued by regional and national governments in Australia. Instruments such as documents, laws and regulations are legitimized within a framework in which the role of the state is determinant. Ultimately, the drafting and release of policy documents is the “consequence of the political environment, values and ideologies, the distribution of power, institutional frameworks and decision-making processes” (Whitford, 2009, p. 675). Documents represent the ultimate output of specific episodes of governance (Healey, 2006b). The latter are central in providing empirical evidence on a given policy process. The use of episodes of governance is mainstream in policy and planning research (Tewdwr-Jones, 2011) and in tourism policy and planning (Dredge, Jenkins, & Whitford, 2011).

## The prehistoric pile dwellings around the alps: the Italian context

### Historical background

Pile dwellings, also known as stilt houses, are living spaces, which are constructed on top of poles either over land or over water. There are examples of this type of architecture across the globe, but prehistoric remnants are rare, found almost exclusively in the Alps region. The pile dwelling period in the Alps encompasses the years from 5000 BCE to 500 BCE, with the oldest site, Isolino Virginia in Lombardy, Italy, dating to approximately 5000 BCE. The prehistoric pile dwellings were generally constructed over water or wet areas, such as along the banks of rivers and lakes or on top of bogs. The remnants of these houses, along with other archaeological finds, such as tools, food, and fabric, are exceptionally well preserved due to the protective nature of water, particularly for organic materials (Prehistoric Pile Dwellings, 2010). While the remains found at Isolino Virginia date from the Neolithic period, pile dwelling in Italy became increasingly common in the Early Bronze Age, with the oldest, and most numerous, sites clustered around Lake Garda. Though these structures continued to be used into the Middle Bronze Age, they began to fall into obsolescence and eventually were completely abandoned during the final part of the Late Bronze Age around 1200 BCE.

The pile dwellings would remain hidden until 1854 when a site was uncovered in Switzerland as a result of work undertaken during a period of low water levels. This resulted in an increase in interest surrounding prehistoric archaeology, specifically focusing on the new pile dwelling sites. Mercurago was one of the first pile dwelling sites found in Italy, where it was uncovered in a peat bog in Piedmont 1860. Isolino Virginia was the first lakeshore site, discovered in 1863. This was followed by the unearthing of Bodio (1863) and Sabbione (1864) in Lombardy. There was a lull in research in the early part of the twentieth century, but interest in the sites was renewed following the end of World War II. This was motivated in part by the availability of more advanced technology, which assisted in the study of a wider array of sites, particularly those that are completely submerged.

### World Heritage listing

There are currently 937 recognized archaeological pile dwelling sites in the Alps region (Poggiani Keller & Ruggiero, 2013). Of those 937, the majority are clustered in Switzerland (453) with the second largest group located in Italy (156). The site was first inscribed onto Switzerland's tentative list in 2004, with Austria, France, Germany, and Italy placing it on theirs in 2009. Slovenia was the last to inscribe it on their tentative list in January 2010. Given the number of potential sites, it was necessary to carefully select properties, which were best representative of the proposed statement of Outstanding Universal Value when compiling the nomination documentation. A total of 156 sites were chosen based on the following characteristics:

- Geographic and chronological representativity;
- Significance of putting forward values of the archaeological phenomenon;
- State of conservation (Prehistoric Pile Dwellings, 2011a, p. 17).

Following this selection process, the serial site was presented for nomination on 26 January 2010 under Criteria III and V.

In September and October of 2010, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) evaluated the site in order to assess its suitability for inscription. While the overall reception was favourable, the ICOMOS representatives recommended several changes in order to strengthen the nomination. The first of these related to the large number of sites, to which the States Parties responded by re-evaluating their selections in order to ensure that there was no overlap between sites while prioritizing those that were the "best protected and managed sites" (Prehistoric Pile Dwellings, 2011a, 12). This enhanced selection process culminated in the deletion of 45 sites, which resulted in a total of 111 sites, 19 of which are located in Italy, listed in the final nomination document. Following this response, ICOMOS submitted their final evaluation on 10 March 2011. While they recommended inscription, they also stated that the serial nomination did not fulfil Criterion III, and instead suggested that inscription should occur under Criterion IV. The Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps serial transnational site was officially inscribed on the World Heritage List at the 35th session of the World Heritage Committee in June 2011 based on criteria IV and V, highlighting the site's archaeological and historical importance (UNESCO, 2011).

## Findings

### Legal framework

While the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and Operational Guidelines create a system of heritage norms, Italian legislation regarding cultural heritage is almost exclusively derived from *Decreto Legislativo 42/2004*, "Codice dei beni culturali e del paesaggio". This decree provides the *Soprintendenze*, the regional representatives of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Cultural Activities, and Tourism (MiBACT), with significant power over archaeological sites. Should a site be at risk of damage by an external activity, Article 28 allows the appropriate *soprintendente* to either suspend the works in progress or, in the case of public works, undertake archaeological testing of the area. Additionally, as per Article 88, only the state is allowed to engage in archaeological research. Furthermore, while the research described in Article 88 can occur on private property, Article 91 indicates that all heritage of cultural interest, which includes archaeological goods, that is found beneath the soil or underwater is the property of the state. While the earlier portions of the *codice* focus on protection and ownership, Articles 111–121 focus on the management and valorisation of



cultural heritage, which includes promoting academic research and educating students. As can be seen, general national legislation places archaeological goods fully under the control of the state with clearly defined positions of power within a centralized, hierarchical model.

In addition to the *Codice, Legge 77/2006*, “*Misure speciali di tutela e fruizione dei siti Italiani di interesse culturale, paesaggistico e ambientale, inseriti nella «lista del patrimonio mondiale», posti sotto la tutela dell'UNESCO*” specifically provides regulations for World Heritage Sites located in Italian territory. This law underpins the necessity of the development of a management plan for each UNESCO site in Italy. Additionally, each management plan needs to take into account both tourism and cultural services. Following the plan's implementation, research projects and services for the public on-site are envisaged along with an effort to raise awareness of the site, including the promotion of cultural activities and educational field trips for school children. In order to assist in the implementation of these proposed works, there is special funding available for World Heritage Sites. While the original law only stipulates that funding is available until 2008, there have been several *circolare* that have extended the funds. The most recent, *Circolare n.21 (MiBACT, 2016)*, states that at most 90% of the total budget for either management or valorisation activities will be provided, with a maximum of €250,000 for a serial site.

At the regional and local level, the *Protocollo d'Intesa (Giunta Provinciale di Torino, 2012)* functions as a binding legal document through which the various stakeholders can work collaboratively in order to protect, conserve, and valorise the site. It was prepared on May 25, 2012 by the representatives of MiBACT, four regions, eleven provinces, twenty-three local councils, and two regional parks. The *protocollo* calls for the creation of a national-level management plan that corresponds to the transnational one. Following its inception, this document was then distributed to all the relevant public partners in order to receive official approval. Once approved, the document entered into force and required the creation of a suitable management plan, which is still being developed at the time of writing.

The territorial governance of tourism in Italy at the time of the inscription of the Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps World Heritage Site was the result of the 2001 reform of the *Titolo V* of the Italian Constitution (*Legge Costituzionale 3/2001*). The reform devolved the powers associated with tourism legislation and governance from the abolished Ministry of Tourism down to the regional authorities. These regional bodies were then encouraged to draft new regional tourism legislation in accordance with the principles included in *Legge 135/2001, Legge Quadro sul Turismo (DPCM, 2002)*. The act introduced local tourism systems as contexts characterized by an integrated mix of cultural and environmental sites, tourist attractions, hospitality, agriculture, and local craftsmanship (Art. 5, para 1). More importantly, the act acknowledged the likely cross-regional nature of prospective local tourism systems and foresaw local stakeholders as the key actors in the establishment of such systems (Art. 5, para 1–2). The public administration of tourism at the regional and local level adheres to the principle of vertical subsidiarity in accordance with the Article 118 of the Italian Constitution.

#### *(Meta)governance failures*

The governance structure of the Italian segment of the Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps World Heritage Site is outlined in the transnational management plan. The World Heritage Convention influences and permeates all other levels of the site's governance, but control of management activities is still in the hands of the six nation states. In order to properly implement the goals of conservation, protection, and transmission of the heritage to future generations, the Operational Guidelines ([UNESCO, 2016](#)) require that a serial site has a management system that fosters cooperation between the various site components. To accomplish this, the Pile Dwellings site has created an International Coordination Group, which is composed of delegates from each State Party and meets at least once per year. Each year, a new State Party, the next alphabetically, assumes leadership of the group. As part of its management process, “the Coordination Group considers the national and regional/local action plans that its members submit regularly, in order to enhance international synergies and coordination” ([Prehistoric Pile Dwellings, 2011b](#), “Procedures,” para. 4). By submitting their nomination to the World Heritage Committee, Italy agreed to be bound to the transnational management plan as well as to abide by the International Coordination Group rules. Therefore, the International Coordination Group became a guiding force in terms of the metagovernance structure. This in turn informs the national governance system in Italy, which follows the top-down structures described in [Healey \(2006a\)](#), [Jessop \(2011\)](#), and [Pechlaner and Volgger \(2013\)](#).

The first level of national governance is the cultural wing of the government, MiBACT. As noted previously, heritage management in Italy is centralized within this ministry as the state owns all archaeological artefacts and has significant scope in terms of legal actions available for the protection and conservation of heritage. MiBACT is represented regionally by the *Soprintendenze*, who are responsible for decision-making within their respective regions. For the Pile Dwellings site, the Archaeological *Soprintendenza* for the region of Lombardia is responsible for the coordination of all components of the Italian portion of the site ([Poggiani Keller & Ruggiero, 2013](#)). They work in coordination with the other *Soprintendenze* to exercise their authority, which is derived from national legislation, over the local stakeholders. This local level of governance must ensure that the Pile Dwelling sites, which fall under their purview, are appropriately protected, and, in the case of museums, accessible to the public. However, as the governance structure in Italy is hierarchical, all proposed activities or measures that originate at the local level must be approved by MiBACT, normally through the *Soprintendenze*. In fact, several individual locations lack site-level management plans, as each regional *Soprintendenza* is responsible for the protection, research activity, and dissemination of information as well as the management structure (personal communication, 2017).

As can be noted, the Italian system functions as a traditional, hierarchical, top-down governance model informed by legislation which, as [Hall \(2011\)](#) states, creates a defined power structure in which actions are performed by the government or government-sanctioned actors. However, it is precisely this governance model that has led to the appearance of several significant flaws within the

Pile Dwelling governance in Italy. While the *Protocollo d'Intesa* was originally developed in 2012, there is still no national-level management plan. There is currently one being developed, but the specificities of the plan are not yet available (personal communication, 2017). As the Pile Dwellings site was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2011, the Italian sites have been running without an official management plan for more than seven years. While the legislation in Italy provides ample protection in regard to the actual archaeological artefacts and excavation sites, a management plan is still a necessity for UNESCO World Heritage Sites, in accordance with the provisions under *Legge 77/2006*. Furthermore, the transnational management plan proposes a three-tiered management strategy that works on the international, national, and local level. Additionally, the failure to implement an Italian-specific management plan is in direct opposition to the transboundary management plan project aim for Italy ([Prehistoric Pile Dwellings, 2011b](#), “7. National Management Italy,” section 7.3). Therefore, it can be said that the lack of a national as well as a local-level management plan in Italy is not only problematic for the Italian components but also to the site as a whole.

Though there currently is no Italian management plan for the Pile Dwellings site, this is not to imply that there have been no valorisation activities undertaken at the various Italian pile dwelling sites. While the pile dwellings are often quite difficult to see in situ, if they are visible at all, Italy has a very good network of museums that present the history and archaeological findings from the sites ([UNESCO, 2014](#)). This network provides a platform from which to inform and educate the general public about the importance of the Pile Dwelling sites without risk of damage to the actual archaeological remains. For example, the *Museo Civico Archeologico* “G. Rambotti” has a room dedicated to the excavations at Lavagnone as well as space dedicated to the study and research of the museum's collection ([Città di Desenzano del Garda, 2011](#)). In fact, according to the museum's regulations, raising the awareness of the area's prehistoric pile dwelling sites is a primary task ([Città di Desenzano del Garda, 2015](#)). Another museum, *Museo delle Palafitte del Lago di Ledro*, has reconstructed an approximation, based on evidence from local excavations, of how a pile dwelling village may have appeared. These museum activities are complimented by continued excavations at the Pile Dwelling sites throughout Italy. Therefore, it needs to be noted that there are certain activities, which do function, by virtue of Italy's strong heritage legislation, without a management plan.

Despite the input from the central government in defining guidelines for the harmonization of local tourism governance, the tourism legislation of the regions home to the Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps World Heritage Site is extremely fragmented and characterized by bureaucratism and red tape ([Jessop, 2011](#)). To date, none of the local tourism systems outlined in the regional database in Piedmont, Lombardy and Veneto are transboundary ([Regione Lombardia, 2013](#); [Regione Piemonte, 2016](#); [Regione Veneto, 2013](#)). This is surprising given the proximity of most of the Pile Dwelling sites to Lake Garda (Lombardy-Veneto border), Lake Maggiore (Lombardy-Piedmont border), and the Italy-Switzerland border. Fragmentated governance at the tourism systems level is particularly notable in Lake Garda, wherein there exist two distinct systems under two different regional authorities. Moreover, there is a strong disconnect between the hierarchical governance for heritage and the networked archetype of local tourism systems on the Italian side of the Pile Dwellings site. The latter is partly acknowledged as a feature of the local tourism system of Varese, but there are no specific agreements for the promotion of heritage tourism in the property ([Serati, 2012](#)).

## Discussion

The metagovernance failure addressed in the previous section can be attributed to the hierarchical and centralized Italian heritage context. According to [Amore and Hall \(2016, p. 118\)](#):

metagovernance illustrates how the shadow of hierarchical power serves central state and other interests (and their values), is connected to power relationships at various scales, and provides for different sets of winners and losers depending on the intersection between growth interests and central government.

This is particularly evident when noting the lengthy gestation period in relation to the creation of the management plan. In his presentation of the hierarchical governance model, [Jessop \(2011, p. 114\)](#) identified “ineffectiveness” as the primary reason for this system to fail. This in turn can be attributed to “bureaucratism” and “red tape” which is particularly evident in the case of the Italian Pile Dwelling sites. The [Decreto Legislativo 42/, 2004](#) clearly states in Article 112 that valorisation is the responsibility of the State, the regions, and other public territorial entities. Therefore, both local and regional actors are responsible for valorisation of the site while they lack the power to enact any decisions as this rests firmly with the *Soprintendenze*. It can be seen, then, that the bureaucratic system involves multiple tiers of “red tape” that must be removed prior to any action being undertaken. This centralization of power results in an ineffective system of decision-making that elongates the necessary process involved in undertaking various valorisation activities as this system side-lines local stakeholders.

The difficulty related to the inclusion of these local stakeholders is in part a result of the Italian system's governance structure falling under [Healey's \(2006a\)](#) definition of representative democracy, which, as stated in the beginning of this work, is premised on the foundation of hierarchical bureaucracy. [Healey \(2006a, p. 222\)](#) highlights that “public involvement challenges the basic premise of the model” specifically as this removes the power structure underpinning the hierarchy. The problems associated with the lack of engagement with the local level within the heritage hierarchy have already been noted in Italy, specifically at the community level in regard to Herculaneum ([Thompson, 2007](#)) and Crespi d'Adda ([Borgarino et al., 2016](#)). According to [Hall \(2011, p. 445\)](#), a structural simplification which includes “transfers of power” is the solution to ineffective hierarchical governance models. Therefore, the governance failures identified in this work could be improved through the sharing of certain decision-making powers, which are currently held by the *Soprintendenze*, with the local authorities, which is similar to the findings of [Heslinga et al. \(2017\)](#). The sharing of decision-making powers would then create a more effective vertical power network wherein the State still controls the heritage while activities on-site could be implemented more quickly.

The findings of this study indicate that the complexity of territorial governance, as acknowledged in the literature (Hall, 2008; Healey, 2006a; Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2017), exacerbated the already fragmented policy environment of the Pile Dwellings around the Alps World Heritage Site. The study shows that the national and regional Italian legislation obstructs cross-border governance at supranational and regional level, with little-to-no transgovernance between heritage and tourism. This supports the findings of Stoffelen and Vanneste (2017) along the German-Czechia border but contradicts Hall's (2008) assertion that supranational agreements effectively permeate the governance of tourism at the national, regional, and local level. The Italian segment of the Pile Dwellings site is representative of Zahra's (2011) principle of subsidiarity in tourism governance. However, the aforementioned failures hinder effective territorial governance for heritage and tourism at site level.

## Conclusions

The Pile Dwellings around the Alps World Heritage Site was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2011, with a transnational management plan already developed for the entirety of the site. Through an analysis of legal and management documents in conjunction with informal communication with professionals responsible for the Italian components of the site, this work has sought to analyse the complexities related to application of the Pile Dwelling transnational metagovernance framework within the national Italian heritage governance structure. The absence of a national level management plan is indicative of a metagovernance failure within the heritage system in Italy, specifically as a result of its hierarchical structure. This hierarchy results in decision-making processes being too removed from the site context. As has been previously noted, de-centralization of these decision-making powers to the local context could assist in the more expedited management of activities on-site. This is supported by Hall's (2011) solution to hierarchical governance implementation deficits, namely the simplification of the implementation structure. The Italian case illustrates one specific example of governance and metagovernance failure, but generalizations cannot be made due to different policy contexts. However, the findings of this study can be seen as a reaction to the implementation of non-complimentary transboundary governance regimes within a specific framework.

Based on these results, it can be argued that the governance and metagovernance failures illustrated in this study may potentially cause problems, albeit of a different nature, in other transboundary cultural sites and protected areas wherein there are distinct governance differences between the states. Therefore, those responsible for transboundary sites should take into account blockages and failures before they become potentially problematic. Ideally, this should occur in the planning stages, during the drafting of the transboundary World Heritage site management plan. Furthermore, as education and transmission of World Heritage to future generations is a key principle of the World Heritage system, any heritage governance issues will have a domino effect on visitation policies and planning as good practice in conservation management, and by extension protection of authenticity and integrity, is key to the World Heritage visitor experience.

This study has several limitations, most notably the lack of access to the working management plan document. Additionally, this work did not take into account the implementation of the transnational management plan within the other national contexts in order to assess if the Italian situation was unique. Furthermore, there was no contact with the other members of the International Coordination Group, which limited the analysis of the transnational management structure to that defined in the management plan outlined in 2011. Future research should include all of this missing documentation in order to better assess the management structure of the World Heritage Site in its entirety. Additionally, further studies should pursue a comparative study between the Italian portion and other portions of the Pile Dwelling around the Alps Transnational World Heritage Site in order to provide a transnational metagovernance perspective. It would also be of interest to compare this site with another serial site within the Italian national context in order to assess if the same issues arise outside of a transnational context. In relation to broader transnational governance research, particularly as it pertains to World Heritage sites, there is a need for additional case studies in various political contexts in order to assist in the creation of guidelines for the development and implementation of successful transboundary World Heritage management plans.

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