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CULTURAL TRAUMAS

The Earthquake in Italy: A Case Study

di *Emiliana Mangone**

Abstract

Italy's history has often been marked by natural disasters (especially earthquakes and floods). Such a phenomenon requires overcoming mundane interpretations since it encompasses numerous complex experiences and ways of life (different stories, personal events and conditions), which together represent one of the most significant expressions of the social sphere. In this article, our attention is focused on the Laviano area, a little village in the province of Salerno, in Southern Italy.

Keywords

Cultural Trauma, Earthquake, Daily life, Memory

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1. INTRODUCTION

Italy's history has often been marked by natural disasters (especially earthquakes and floods), last but not least the earthquake on August 24, 2016, in two regions: Lazio and Marche. Such a phenomenon requires overcoming mundane interpretations since it encompasses numerous complex experiences and ways of life (different stories, personal events and conditions), which together represent one of the most significant expressions of the social sphere. Catastrophes lead to an array of consequences and economic, psycho-social and cultural transformations (Sorokin 2010; Mangone 2018a, 2018b), whose significance has not yet been sufficiently investigated, despite they causing a real fracture (trauma) in the structure and life of the affected communities. As Alexander claims (2012; Alexander *et al.*, 2004) traumas are not merely psychological experiences, but also collective ones (culture shock), and they play a key role in the definition and resolution of critical situations experienced by the subjects. Indeed, in disaster-prone communities, regardless of their nature, we can always observe a “before” and “after” (Von de Eynde, Veno 1999); getting out of the emergency situation thus becomes a priority. To this end, when trying to establish a new order – needed to cope with the new system of needs, in turn caused by external interventions in the social system – it is necessary to outline the dynamics characterising the population.

Natural disasters cannot be prevented, nor can they be encapsulated into a purely materialistic sphere. They often result in radical, hard-to-reverse changes within the social fabric. For example, we could think about the lingering sense of fear and uncertainty for the future, the regret for the loss of both loved ones and material goods, the sense of disorientation caused by the forced detachment from daily habits, or the inability to recognize the historical and cultural context of origin which is partially or totally destroyed.

The present paper focuses precisely on the above mentioned dimensions of catastrophes, whose consequences reverberate over time and remain apparent even after a considerable number of years. In order to understand the multidimensionality of the consequences of a catastrophe, it is enough to reflect on the depletion of the sense of “belonging to one's territory”, when the importance of the bond between individual and territory emerges. Within this framework, alongside aspects concerning identity and sense of belonging, the recomposition/reconstruction of memory gains relevance as a factor able to influence local communities. The relationship between memory,

identity, and belonging is very close. Indeed, identity, in its entirety and complexity, allows the individual to belong within a social system by identifying her various and multiple connections, and is in turn socially identified. This process applies not only to individuals, but also to groups. Each group has an identity corresponding to its social definition, which places the group itself within a social system. Social identity is both inclusion and exclusion, as it differentiates the group from others. Members of a group share a common identity – and are identical among themselves under a specific aspect – thus distinguishing the group from others – whose members are different from them under the same aspect (Chuce 1996). Therefore, this sense of belonging is to be understood as an active element of affirmation and recognition, an *active feeling of social bonding* that, through emotional attachment (Gasparini 2000), develops loyalties to something people feel they belong to. However, in modern societies, as in the case of communities affected by a natural disaster, the loss of this natural lifelong process does not permit the positioning of an individual within a single social circle and, as a consequence, a well-defined sense of belonging (Bauman 2001) to a community does not take place. In other words, the identity of the modern social actor is placed at the intersection of multiple social circles and, therefore, in several spheres of belonging. A single symbolic universe has been replaced by the simultaneous presence of more “finite provinces of meaning” (Schütz 1960), and as a result there is a concurrent presence of different definitions of the same reality. Given these dynamics, the present paper aims to investigate the memory of a place – an aspect connected to the relationship between identity and membership – pertaining to a community hit by an earthquake. This kind of natural disaster takes on different meanings depending on the time-frame in which it is placed: before the event, during the experience, and in the memories about the catastrophe after it has taken place.

2. THE “PLACE” AS AN EXPRESSION OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Everyday life takes place within a social space but, according to scholars of humanities and social sciences, this is a polysemous concept. It remains an abstract entity if we do not refer to other operational concepts depending on it (Gasparini 2000) and allowing the creation of a cognitive totality leading to the identification of its multiple meanings. Space has been transformed from a “container” into an “arena” where people carry out their everyday lives and construct their social reality.

Among the many operational concepts (such as place, city, countryside, community, to name a few), for the purpose of this paper we will take into account only two of them (*local* and *community*), as these terms have undergone the greater transformation over the last few decades. They have influenced people's ways of life and habits in general, especially in those communities who suffered physical, material, and cultural trauma because of an earthquake.

In the local-global dichotomy that always accompanied the globalization processes (Robertson 1992; Martell 2010; Rodrik 2011), the latter term (community) is well-known for its effects. Here, however, we want to highlight and define the importance of the former term (local), in its spatial, relational, and environmental aspects. Appadurai (1996) points out this process when he defines locality as a phenomenon in people's social life produced by intentional activities which, in turn, cause material effects. Meanwhile, Giddens (1990) affirms that with the term locality what is expressed is an idea of "place"; the physical environment of geographically-situated social activities. In previous societies space normally coincided with locality, since the spatial dimensions of social life were characterized by the "presence" of activities taking place within that space. Instead, contemporary societies separate more and more the idea of space from that of locality, favouring the relationships between people not physically present; who are locally distant from a given face-to-face interaction. This process is based on the spatial-temporal "extension", increasing the attention towards complex relationships taking place between local occurrences (co-presence of circumstances) and long-distance interactions (the connection between presence and absence). A more original position in dealing with the juxtaposition between local and global is the one expressed by Beck (1999), who asserts that the study of global society should not adopt a reductionist perspective, but must instead acknowledge its complexity. Beck considers globalization as an intrinsically-conflicting phenomenon that can be understood only by reflecting dialectically on its contradictions. In this way, globalization brings about a re-localization, which does not lead to a mere return to tradition, but rather to an effective synthesis between global and local.

The local-global dichotomy fades away in Robertson's definition (1992) of *glocal* or *glocalization*. These processes are carried out by groups of people (community) in order to defend themselves from the uniformising effects of globalization, although they keep themselves open to the latter process, non considering it as opposed to the

specificity of the individual places. Therefore, there is a new affirmation of the local leading to an “appropriation of identity of a territory” (Badie 1995): local culture and population become the main protagonists. They are able to select the intervention strategies and apply them by mobilizing resources, with the aim of constructing human and sustainable development strategies whose benefits fall exclusively on that area.

In light of what we have said so far, we can state that the central role of the “local” is still possible in a global society. Indeed, the latter actually sets some circumstances which can increase confidence and self-determination with regard to the opportunities for development given by a suitable use and valorisation of the resources and characteristics expressed by the community. In recent decades, when reflecting on overcoming disasters, the focus of attention is no longer on lack and losses, but rather on the ability of individuals and communities to adapt and grow despite their critical conditions. The key concept is that of “resilience” (Manyena 2006), generally defined as the ability of an individual or group to return to normality after catastrophic events (Bonanno 2004; Bonanno *et al.* 2006) through two components: a personal one (how the person is and how it responds to events), and a situational one. The latter brings attention to the community and in particular to the concept of resilient communities (Norris *et al.* 2008), linked to that of social vulnerability (Singh *et al.* 2014) and social capital (Coleman 1990), and the meaning they assume in the construction of resilience along with other components contributing to adapt to a disturbance. What emerges is a new form of community, understood as collective intelligence (Levy 1994), whose foundation is the mutual enrichment of people and not the “worship” of the community *per se*.

What follows is that, even if the social whole is taken into account, the analysis of people’s daily lives in a “community” is now often seen as the only interpretation – or one of the possible few – able to explain, understand and plan interventions concerning specific social phenomena.

The term *community* in a global society refers to a set of relationships. It is based on the individual, expressed in its uniqueness and completeness, and not in relation to the roles she takes on in a society. The community is also a set of experiences and thoughts, traditions and commitment, participation and will. At the same time, it enhances the social dimension of existence and, above all, it provides a sense of belonging to a common destiny, as in the case of those hit by natural disasters. Today, the community recognizes the dignity of the

individual and within it everyone's freedom is protected by the civic sense of citizens, as well as by their self- and mutual respect; through the respect for their rights and the observance of their reciprocal duties. Thus, the concept of community has regained its popularity after several decades of oblivion, together with the renewed idea of collective identity. It is a communitarian concept which does not oppose the centrality of the individual. On the other hand, it is *embedded, rooted, belonging to a place*, not disembedding (Giddens 1990) and alienated from the local context. Such conditions create identity and are able to build actions that attempt to address people's needs more effectively – create safety nets, and social and human development. The cornerstone of a community that is at the same time both a resource and the representation of a place fits into this perspective.

Various aspects are affirmed through the community: social commitment, mutual respect for rights and freedom, the balance between needs and civic responsibilities, the reconstruction of satisfying relationships between individuals and, finally, the strengthening of social capital. The latter not only represents economic development, but also – and more so – civil growth and freedom founded on the cooperation between all the stakeholders within a territory. The community becomes a promoter of individual growth, with residents becoming active and productive citizens of a “living organism”, as per Tönnies' (1887) definition of community. The community becomes an instrument for action if it is considered as a “place” in which environmental and social networks are intertwined in order to ensure the sustainability of initiatives aimed at territorial development and social protection. Acting towards the appreciation of differences, starting from the identity and sense of belonging (embeddedness) to a “place”, means also “to create a community”. The community, as presented in this paper, is not only manifested as a concept of consolidated identities and shared traditions (Magnier and Russo 2002), but it is also seen as a social organization aimed at meeting people's needs in order to have the strength to face and overcome “traumas and social pathologies”, such as those resulting from a natural disaster, like an earthquake.

3. THE MEMORY LOSS OF A PLACE: THE 1980 EARTHQUAKE IN ITALY

On Sunday, November 23, 1980, at 7.34 pm, a magnitude 9-10 earthquake (Mercalli scale, equivalent to magnitude 6,5-6,9 on the Richter scale) struck a vast territory in Italy – Campania and Basilicata regions – (Ventura 2010; Mangone 2011). The towns of the epicentre

area, known as the “crater area”, were 37¹, but many others felt the earth tremor, although suffering less damage (both material and human). The earthquake claimed nearly 3,000 victims.

The earthquake destroyed not only homes and human lives, but also the shared identity and the collective memory (see Halbwachs, 1968) of some towns, already damaged by the wave of emigration in that area. The earthquake definitely de-structured the identity of some towns in that mountainous region, and this disorientation still permeates citizens’ lives. There is a “fracture” that has not healed yet, accentuated by the generational gap. Life before the earthquake sank into “oblivion” in order to accelerate a “new renaissance” for those who survived, marking a discontinuity (see Jedlowski 2002) with the past. An interaction between individual and collective memory (Felice 2010; Gribaudo 2010) takes place after an earthquake as such an event is equated to other traumatic experiences. In fact, after an earthquake, “there is an initial form of collective suppression of memories, ‘necessary to motivate the will to continue living in that territory’, and an individual suppression evidenced by the reluctance to speak about the experience” (Ventura, 2012: 25). Therefore, in order to understand the consequences of the 1980 earthquake affecting all the towns involved, we need to go beyond that specific moment and see what happened during the years after the earthquake. Many wounds have been left open because of the high number of victims. The trauma currently existing among the people is due not only to the elaboration of their grief, but also because of the loss of “their” village. The example of Laviano is important in this sense: the loss of the “place” representing the community and thus the daily life and culture of local people, who acted according to the rules of mechanical rather than organic solidarity (Durkheim 1893).

There is no collective memory of that place, because there is no *re-composition* of the past: to *re-construct* means not only to preserve the memory, it means also the *re-construction* of memory in order to connect it with the present. This process involves the relationship with the other (as a single individual and as the group to which the subject belongs) within a context – a framework in Halbwachs’ terminology – containing objective and objectifiable references. In other words, the past is sinking into “oblivion”, in contrast with the opposed “attachment” process. Both processes take shape as a construction of reality – Berger and Luckmann’s phenomenology (1966) or Assmann’s socio-constructive notion (Assmann, Czaplick 1995) – that searches for

¹ This towns, which will be juridically defined as “disastrati” (devastated), belong to the territories of Irpinia (province of Avellino), Alto-Sele (province of Salerno), and Basilicata.

the meaning (or meanings) and collocates them in the present.

Today, the towns and the life before the earthquake are testified by some documentation found among the ruins (citizens' pictures and videos and some official documents from the local administration). There are a few ruins left in those towns. For this reason, experts refer to them as “new towns”, but non-experts call them “a beautiful body without a soul” (Klein 2007), and this is especially true for the town of Laviano. This definition is reinforced by the fact that the reconstruction was a decision made by the politicians and technicians of that time – without any form of involvement or participation of the population who had moved downhill for security reasons – which allowed the demolition (in truth, these towns were actually razed to the ground!) of the few ruins likely to be recovered. They “invented” a new architecture for those territories with no connection to the rural past, but close to the building boom in the 1970s, following the idea that “new is beautiful”.

The relationship between memory, identity, and sense of belonging is, therefore, very close because the latter is an active element of affirmation and recognition of identity: “*the sense of belonging is an active feeling of connection* that implies (emotional) affection, so it develops a kind of loyalty to something it feels it belongs to. This produces first an objective integration and then a subjective one. As a consequence, it reinforces the identity of being identical to the others by being identical to the collectivity as a whole. From the point of view of identity, this means to be identical to oneself and, at the same time, to the collectivity” (Gasparini 2000: 143). Such identifications are needed both by single individuals and by the whole of the collectivity – the latter in order to carry on “existing”. Due to the problematic nature of this relationship, the complexity of its ambivalent concepts, and the identity changes happening in modern society, we here wonder how and by which means is it possible to substantiate memory as a strong element that generates the sense of belonging to a territory, and what is its function in the territory development process.

The memory of a place is thus not only the expression of a territory, but also the “life” of the place itself and of the community as well, “because it represents the lasting continuity of past and present. In this continuity, the images of the past are constantly re-imagined, re-shaped and selected according to their adjustment to daily life needs, and not according to the exigencies of philological perfection” (Ferrarotti 1997, 14). To those aspects, it is possible to add that memory can be an element able to create a “bridge” between generations in order to connect them to each other. This is particularly true in the case of

Laviano (one of the towns destroyed by the 1980 earthquake), whose population appears divided into two groups: the witnesses who remember the old town, and those who have no element of knowledge of the pre-earthquake town. By consulting birth, marriage, and death records, we find that just under 50% of the population was born after November 23, 1980. If we add to those the ones who were born immediately before that date (thus unable to remember anything at all) it emerges that the “Lavianesi” able to remember the “old town” are a minority that within a few years will be unable to organize and socialize the memories of that territory (where their fathers and grandfathers lived) in order to narrate them to young people. Perhaps, this is the main reason why the former *Pro Tempore* (temporary) Mayor Rocco Falivena and his Municipal Administration were the promoters of the “Laviano Restored” project in 2010.

4. RECOVERING THE MEMORY: THE “LAVIANO RESTORED” PROJECT

In this perspective, recovering the lost memories of “places” (whose loss was caused by conflicts, earthquakes, etc.) becomes an important human and sustainable development strategy of a territory, as memory plays an essential role for its cultural reproduction and development (de Varine 2002). It is the cultural heritage in which the future grounds its roots.

The present essay is focused on the Municipality of Laviano, a little village in the province of Salerno in Southern Italy, between the territories of Irpinia and Lucania, destroyed by the earthquake. The date marks not only the physical and material destruction of the town, but also a “cultural shock” from which the population does not appear to see a way out (Mangone 2011). The population wants to transform this event in a strategic development, through the recovering of collective memory (Halbwachs 1968).

The area's geomorphologic layout, with a mountain overshadowing the town, contributed in defining a “closed” identity for the local population, reproduced until the first half of the 20th century and reinforced by the substantial migrations of the time. In this difficult context, the earthquake on November 23, 1980 hit Laviano with ruthless force, wrecking the town and claiming 300 victims: an astonishing 1/5 of its population (Fig. 1). In addition to destroying the buildings, the earthquake contributed to damaging the “common identity” of the territory, already in crisis due to earlier migrations (Barazzetti 1988). The earthquake somewhat deconstructed the local identity, and this “confusion” is nowadays still existing in every citizen: there is a “break”

not yet healed today, but the community does not appear to surrender and is now trying to rebuild a new identity based on the young people, born and grown after the earthquake.

Fig. 1. Detail of Laviano before and after the earthquake



In addition to historical memories, we also analysed all the components that contributed to the culture, an old culture that had preserved an equilibrium and its own identity for centuries but that today seems lost. The old town, surrounded by green areas in spring and enclosed by fog and smoke from fireplaces in winter, is nowadays lacking its old vitality: it has a beautiful, new body, but without a soul (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Laviano rebuilt after the earthquake



The “Laviano Restored” research project, object of the present paper, is based on the idea that a “soul restitution” to the Laviano population could still be possible by recovering the collective memory of the “place”, starting from an interactive 3D virtual reconstruction and a scale model of the town before the 1980 earthquake, with the aim of reinforcing the territorial sense of belonging (Mangone 2008). The choice of different representation techniques stems directly from the need to create a flow of information between the older generations holding the memory (the tangible and immediate reconstruction through the scale model) and the newer generations which are entrusted with the

living preservation of memory (the technological 3D virtual reconstruction). Here the relationship between memory, identity and belonging is very close, as the latter is an active element of affirmation and recognition: belonging is an active feeling of bond, entailing emotional attachment and therefore it develops loyalty to what we feel we belong to, and this produces both objective and subjective integration.

This multidisciplinary research² is strongly based on the active involvement of the Laviano community, thus representing a good practice in intermixed technological-cultural procedures for the recovery of the collective memory by the narration of individual or collective reminiscences; in this way, the process ascribes to memory an essential role in cultural reproduction and development processes.

The objective of the research was to provide a 3D reconstruction and a scale model of the original town area through the survivors' memories, with the support of biographical methods, between biography and auto-biography (see Rampazi 1991). The latter were crucial, because of the limited quantity of available documents. The research and acquisition process of information resources for this research was carried out in several steps:

- Documentary collections recovered from debris (cadastral maps, pictures, images, video, etc.) coming both from institutional entities (such as the technical office of the Laviano Municipality) and from the population;
- Analysis of: 1) the collected documents and their revision through specific techniques, in order to transform them into suitable sources to be used by the graphic modelers in the interactive 3D reconstruction; 2) the typical building materials of the area and the recurring architectural elements for the right representation of the plastic model; 3) trees and plants, with the aim of reconstructing the green belt;
- Regular meetings with the earthquake survivors in order to define the real image of the town before the earthquake where no other documentation was found, through the biographical method of individual or collective reminiscence narration (Fig. 3). Such methodology not only allows information recovery but also the

² The research group is composed by Emiliania Mangone, scientific coordinator along with Vittorio Scarano (Department of Informatics and Applications "M.R. Capocelli" - ISISLab), the architects Flora Rosso and Flavio Belli, in charge of the technical implementation and the realization of the architectural plastic scale model, Roberto Andreoli and Rosario De Chiara.

sharing of it, and fosters an active role of the population as co-builders of the final product which will become part of their identity.

Fig. 3. Meeting with the population of Laviano



Researches had to face many problems in the implementation of the different phases of the project:

a) on a *scientific level*, the multi-disciplinary research group needed to have a shared understanding of the codes and language in order to smoothen the transfer of information and, consequently, the interdependence of the components for the substantial and effective operation with respect to the stated and shared objectives. This was reached through meetings, discussions and debates;

b) on a *psychological level*, the citizens involved had to face the difficulty of “remembering” what was there before the earthquake both on the material level (the memory of their homes) and the emotional one (narrating and describing episodes of their everyday lives, the memory of the many victims, of their neighbourhood, of the shopkeeper, etc.). This led, on the one hand, to some citizens refusing to participate in the meetings and, on the other, to the implementation of a strong persuasion and mediation process by the researchers, in order to help the community members understand that narrating their experiences would have a “therapeutic effect” and that the end result of this recovery of memories of the “place” would be their heritage and that of future generations;

c) on an *interpersonal level*, between the researchers and the community of Laviano. In this case the challenge was two-fold: firstly, the “linguistic code” (Livolsi 2004) used among the group of researchers and the people turned out to be very different. This resulted in eliminating nearly completely the use of Italian and technical terms to avoid creating a barrier that would not have been easily overcome; the second is related to the “distrust” and “distance” that produced a greater degree of uncertainty among citizens, if not straightforward closure towards the researchers who, for various reasons, were considered “strangers”. The latter aspect was mitigated with the aid of meetings with the people who had been the main proponents of this project.

From a social point of view, the research tries to overcome the cultural shock caused by the abrupt substitution of the “old town” with a “new town”, which has nothing in common with the community before the earthquake. The results of the sociological research will be available for the cultural development of the community with two main objectives: a) supporting the search, knowledge, recovery, protection, valorisation and availability of Laviano memory and cultural heritage, considered as an identification element for the Laviano population, but also as an attracting force for external interested stakeholders and a possible opportunity of development; b) supporting the appropriation or re-appropriation, by the local population, of this knowledge enriched by values and reminiscences, as a process of cultural development.

5. FROM CULTURAL TRAUMA TO DEVELOPMENT

Memory recovery is a process able to steer and substantiate the

territorial sense of belonging through the development and reinforcement of consensus and social equilibrium. In order to achieve this function, the social groups, which are the holders of material interests and of different needs and necessities, have to identify themselves through shared memories, in order to encourage civil life, participation and the increase of social capital, inexhaustible source of cultural resources for the territory.

From the “Laviano Restored”³ research achievements, aiming at the above-mentioned objectives, three fundamental elements have emerged: a) the first confirms what previous memory-based studies have found, *i.e.* that memory is an elaboration, thus representing a form of construction of an updated reality which cannot be separated from interaction, and a large understanding between the various actors involved in the *re-composition* process. For Laviano, these observations highlighted the need of a strong cooperation on both local and research group levels. This operation involved a cultural “leap” that caused behaviour changes, such as the increase in communication skills between individuals belonging to different territorial and cultural contexts (“sacred system” for the researchers and “profane system” for the citizens), and a stop to the proliferation of micro-conflicting initiatives within the local community as well as within the research group itself; b) the second finding is that the biographical research method cannot guarantee an exact correspondence between the final product and the actual place, as it is not possible to compare what the subjects remember of their houses – intrinsic truth (Bertaux 1981) – and the building themselves (there being very few documents giving proof). However, this remains the best method to analyse the stories of citizens, in a hermeneutical and multi-level way, in particular for the sociological field. The aim is to draw, unambiguously, the everyday life scenario before the earthquake; c) the third is the fact that this research was still in its beginning. The Municipality of Laviano, with this research, sets out a path that is still very long and complex. Memory, with its knowledge and emotions, represents the integration of all parts of society. For this reason, it articulates itself in two dimensions: micro- and macro: nobody is left out, on the contrary, the more the integrated subjects, the more the collective memories are consolidated as the cultural heritage of the territory.

³ The final products, the interactive 3D virtual reconstruction and the scale model have been presented on the 30th anniversary at the Longobardo Castle of Laviano, where they are still on display.

The “Laviano Restored” research starts with the conviction that earthquakes cannot be avoided, nor can they be encapsulated in a purely material sphere. As it happens with many natural disasters, earthquakes cause painful and onerous changes within the social fabric, often incurable in comparison with the physical and material damage. It is enough to think about the sense of fear and uncertainty about the future (let us recall the earthquake in Emilia-Romagna, which destroyed some towns and a relevant economic district for the Italian GDP), about the sorrow related to the loss of affections and goods, the disorientation due to the forced detachment from daily habits, and the impossibility to recognize oneself in a given historical and cultural environment. But there are also needs: starting over again, resuming the relationship with both oneself and the others, searching for a possible socio-economic development, especially through an actual interaction between the population and the “society” of public institutions. The consequences of an earthquake are not only related to physical and material destruction, but also to other effects that can be verified after some years, such as the impoverishment of the sense of belonging “*to that territory*”, which implies a link to that territorial reality, and the capacity of all the territory components to produce the desirable affection to the system and the *community*. This shows how the recompositon/reconstruction of the houses has influenced the collectivity and why, for this reason, the involvement of the whole population in the choices related to the “reconstruction” of houses and to the productive realities is so important during the post-emergency period. Beyond these aspects, it is possible to identify more coherent and updated instruments, and to suggest new objectives to the community in order to permit the achievement of its “future”, keeping the link with its “past” alive but, at the same time, reaching a *true modernization*.

Following the above, the Municipality of Laviano is committed to recovering the collective memory and the community identity lost after the total destruction of the urban and social fabric caused by the seismic event. In order to reach this aim, it planned to build a memorial museum in the Longobardo Castle. The museum will become a documentation center on calamities, while at the moment there are an interactive 3D reconstruction (Fig. 4) and a scale model (Fig. 5) showing the place before the earthquake.

Fig. 4. Detail of Laviano before the earthquake and a 3D image reproduction



The development strategy based on cultural heritage is constituted by a whole range of choices to make; the strategy must be explained, thus taking the form of a “declaration of intent” with regard to these choices, through general and specific objectives.

If the general objective is to start a development process, the specific objective here highlighted is the need to consolidate, extend and qualify the actions of protection and restoration of the artistic and cultural heritage that survived the 1980 earthquake, also through private funding. Another important aspect in order to revitalize the Laviano territory is the valorisation and recovery of the collective memory of the

“place”, which could bring tourism to the area. This happened, for example, for other small Italian municipalities, such as Gemona (in the Friuli Region), also destroyed by an earthquake, or San Pietro in Fine (in the Campania Region) destroyed during the 2nd World War and now an open air museum.

Fig. 5. Laviano scale model



Nevertheless, for a real valorisation of this territory, one of the most effective experiences is the creation of itineraries, that is, the dynamic fruition of a homogeneous cultural area, whose basis are uniform environmental features, while cultural and artistic sites are considered as places for rest and reflection.

In conclusion, the example of Laviano can *actually* help the whole society (civil and political) to avoid the “snatch” of “social life” and, therefore, of memory among these populations struck by such disasters.

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