Give the voice to wood: Applying Participatory Video in Acitrezza, Sicily
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GIVING VOICE TO WOOD

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter will provide information about the research background; problems that afflict the context of reference; the goals which animate the research underpinning this dissertation, and questions I will answer as a researcher; research area and scope of the study; which meaning(s) the study owns; methods involved with references to the case studies adopted; postulates and assumptions and definition of terms. Lastly, the organisation of the thesis is presented here.

1.1 Background of the study

As present-day archaeologists, anthropologists, ethnographers, and cultural heritage experts, we cannot fail to see the survival of certain class-conscious, elitist and colonial attitudes that all emerge when looking intellectually and professionally at the past and cultural heritage. These attitudes, known as *neocolonialism* nowadays, manifest themselves in the lack of ideological representativeness of alternative histories, points of view, narratives, knowledge, and traditions which belong to subaltern people within the heritage discourse (Lydon & Rizvi, 2010, pp. 17-33). However, a new theoretical framework opposing neocolonialism and labelled as a *postcolonial critique* has been arising within academia in the last twenty/thirty years, aiming at examining the legacy of colonialism in-depth and proving its gnoseological invalidity (Lydon & Rizvi, 2010, pp. 17-33). The postcolonial critique includes the *decolonisation of the cultural heritage* body of literature. This term refers to all those studies that focus on critically analysing what cultural heritage means in a post-, but at the same time, the neo-colonial world; also, they wonder why some narratives and forms of knowledge are prioritised over others (De Jong, 2022, pp. 13-38). How does this prioritisation system work? Who oversees this system? Understanding that should not be a prerogative of experts but the result of a sharing-responsibilities process. I am talking about sharing powers and authority with a broader public, fostering the participation of ordinary people when dealing with cultural heritage and its destination, and brainstorming new solutions for its promotion. Doing that may transform passive communities into aware and active ones. This permutation can have social, political and epistemic consequences.

Pieces of evidence and carried-on interviews hinted legacy of colonialism still conditions the heritage discourse in Acitrezza. A strong link between neocolonialism and local heritage discourse exists and be ready to be investigated. As a researcher, I have tried to break up the correlation by embracing the more relevant precepts of the postcolonial critique and decolonisation of cultural heritage. Among them conceiving cultural heritage as means of individual and collective affirmation and inclusive, multi-vocal representation, focusing on alternative narratives to protect and promote through community participation (Pla & Poznan, 2022).

1.2 Problem statement in context

According to the members of the Rodolico family, in the Sicilian maritime town of Acitrezza, the cultural tangible and intangible heritage that manifests itself in the family's shipyard has been certainly unrecognised over the past years and rarely promoted as part of cultural or economic-oriented activities of the area (Appendix 6). Approaches to cultural heritage in Acitrezza have been celebrating the Verga's greatest masterpiece, Malavoglia, and the local protected marine area, characterised by the presence of the *Faraglioni* basaltic rocks (I Malavoglia by Giovanni Verga | Perlego, n.d.). The protracted indifference of the local authority toward the shipyard combined with economic issues and internal family dynamics – the last heir of this wood craftsman lineage wants to do another job – seems to condemn this *genius loci* to oblivion.

Nonetheless, something is brewing to preserve this timeless place. An attempt to make a museum out of the shipyard is in motion, thanks to a crowdfunding campaign (Gofundme, 2022). For instance, the Sicilian artist, Alice Valenti[1], stated that the musealization of the shipyard would represent the only way to preserve the memory of the place for the community, especially when the last shipwrights will pass away, ceasing to be living witnesses to this art and knowledge

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[1] Alice Valenti is a Catanese painter who has taken the site to heart and narrates Sicilian folk art. Alice is highly appreciated by big brands such as Dolce and Gabbana and Averna, for whom she did the graphics for the limited-edition magnum bottles of Amaro. She decided that she had to take up this battle at a certain point.

(La Repubblica, 2021). She added that the museum could be a civic work, expression of an essential segment of local economic and historical identity, which used to see the boat as a means of transport and sustenance (La Repubblica, 2021). However, this initiative is struggling to take off due to the amount of debt strangling the family, the opposition of the former municipal administration and the physiological latency and inefficiency of the Italian bureaucracy (La Repubblica, 2021).

1.3 Research aims and questions

I took the idea of preserving this *genius loci* to heart. Preserving this place for posterity might be one way to give the community a lieu of memory, a place of heritage and evident proof of being rooted in Acitrezza. For this reason, I decided to enable *action research* protocols to answer the initial question, "is there anything I can do to preserve this place?" The action research will be the theoretical humus and the professional enquiry way of working with/for the community behind this study. Mcniff and Whitehead (2011) stated that action research refers to a set of activities that can shape researchers' agendas about how to investigate to take social actions and initiatives (p.17). The action part of the action research expression can be interpreted as follows. There is something that needs to be studied, analysed, and, why not, improved: the history of the shipyard and the people who work there as shipwrights; the social role of the shipyard for the community of Acitrezza; the hypothetical socio-economic and cultural centrality of that place for the whole citizenry. On the other hand, the research piece of the term action research refers to the fact that any research has to generate new knowledge. Here, I will give readers a complete and detailed description and explanation of what this research has practically been throughout this study: it has tried to offer a further demonstration of one methodology through tearing down neo-colonial instances and fostering democratic approaches to heritage by representing an alternative narration, imbued with an alternative set of values, for the city of Acitrezza. This study has attempted to reach this aim through a collaborative methodology called the Participatory Video (PV).

What I have done here was use *technologies of heritage* and, specifically, implement the participatory video methodology based on videos, considered the

most impactful visual content, nowadays. I strongly believed the *Participatory Video (PV)* methodology could be highly community-oriented. Throughout the duration of the case studies underpinning this research, this methodology has tried to engage individuals and enable them to make videos using a design process and digital technologies through which communities turn themselves into communities of participation. Thus, an interest in technology, media and heritage has led me to investigate the potential of filmmaking and videography technologies to conceive this methodology and conduct this research.

On this basis, this thesis has aimed to enable the principles of the participatory video methodology to evaluate and investigate whether the promotion of alternative heritage needs to tread different paths, such as enabling a fruitful collaboration with local people based on using videos to boost up the process of the crystallisation of memory, and triggering the social change, eventually. Here are three goals I have tried to accomplish with his study:

- Raising awareness about alternative values and stories about Acitrezza, like Rodolico's shipyard.
- How and why enabling collaboration protocols, namely the participatory video methodology based on videos, can prove to be technologies for heritage?
- Gathering different points of view can represent a starting point for a future bottom-up heritage policy within the town of Acitrezza.

1.4 Research area and scope of the study

This thesis is part of a long tradition of ethnographic studies that have opted for a learning-from-the-ground participatory approach underpinning community-based research (CBR). CBR has lately been very popular in community archaeology (Atalay, 2012, p. 65). This approach explores how people engage with the past and how people's views and opinions are integrated into decisions about heritage (ANTCZAK et al., 2013; Abu-Khafajah et al., 2014). At the same time, digital technologies have changed, in recent decades, how ethnographic research has been carried out (Combi, 2016, p. 5). Digital technologies have played a fundamental role recently in engaging people regarding how to use, protect, promote and communicate cultural heritage (Cutting Edge | Protecting and Preserving Cultural Diversity in the Digital Era, 2022)

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This thesis, echoing those trends within scholarship, examines the relationship between humans and technology in the form of videos as a new medium to give voice to people. For Milne et al. (2012), participatory approaches based on videos can represent an advantageous way to "identify and address community needs and social problems" (p.11). Hence, this thesis aims to create a new apparatus revolving around the relationship between culture and technology fostered by implementing the participatory video methodology. Moreover, it is concerned with the methodological and theoretical implications of understanding how to use participatory video to increase the participation of communities in action, like crafting alternative knowledge and shaping new heritage policies and strategies.

1.5 Significance of the study

The significance of this study has been to centre alternative knowledge and promote it by using participatory video. As a researcher, I have opted for the participatory video mode that sought to include ordinary people in some moments of the filmmaking process underpinning the ethnographic research in motion. Usually conducted face-to-face, in one geographical context, this methodology has entailed collaboration, learning, and decision-making during film and editing activities. This research has reflected on the challenges and opportunities when implementing participatory video methodology. Operationally, this thesis has tried to understand how following ethical principles in collaborative research and pursuing best-suited techniques could assist with recording and producing videos. Existing literature like *Participatory Video and Reflexivity: The Experiences of Eight Adult Learners* by Yang or *Participatory Video for Policy Development in Remote Aboriginal Communities* by Ferreira were used as models because they had already taken their first steps in describing and implementing this methodology. So, this study has represented an opportunity to explore it further.

1.6 Methods and study materials

The participatory video (PV) methodology within the dissertation is based on qualitative frameworks that collect crucial information from participants. Two different approaches, underpinning two case studies, characterise this methodology,

and both are based on a bottom-up and equal partnership with informants. Answering the following questions has been crucial to shaping these two qualitative frameworks.

- What is the community of reference? What is the issue being addressed within it?
- To understand the critical perspectives, who must the researcher hear?
- Who can help the researcher build trust with the community and the people who belong to it?

What comes to me when I analyse these questions is that the PV begins in the community, so the very first step I took was about defining which community I wanted to focus on and simultaneously finding out about issues affecting it by interacting and cooperating with "trusted" local people. Indeed, it is functional to be closer to them to understand what is happening and try to help using the PV. In this perspective, building trust is crucial to extrapolate more confidential information that could not otherwise be revealed.

Zooming in, the *postcolonial kind of author approach* has consisted of an equal and peer-to-peer relationship between the researcher and informants (Jayasankar & Monteiro, 2015, p. 622), aka local people, to create videos which reflect their view of the shipyards as a tangible and intangible source of heritage. This approach demonstrates an outsider (or interpretative) kind of action research model (Mcniff & Whitehead, 2011, p. 11) due to the presence of an external researcher who watches and reports on what people think, say and do through videos. The *author as a fly in the soup* approach enables informants to create their own personal and community narrative commentary (Jayasankar & Monteiro, 2015, p. 622) about archival photographs of the shipyard over the years and Acitrezza as the backdrop to the shipwrights' activities. This framework generally calls for a first-person action research model (Mcniff & Whitehead, 2011, p. 11), summarised by the following statement "what am I doing as a living person?" It means that the informants offer a deep focus and explanation about their life and daily practices. In commenting on the carousel of old pictures, our informants have reflected on what they do at the shipyard and what they feel about being a shipwright, simply creating a living theory (Mcniff & Whitehead, 2011, p. 11). The

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last phase of this methodology consists of assessing the result of this methodology and how it may help the community of reference.

Furthermore, the study has followed ethical protocols that consider privacy, vulnerability and representation of residents. Hence, the researcher has attempted to act without causing problems for locals, such as by not exposing their identity in the media or spreading stereotyped images on the Web.

1.7 Case studies

As mentioned, the remote participatory video methodology can also be defined as action research since it has the potential to enhance communities' well-being and prosperity; and for this study, the adapted methodology requires concretely involving locals in a small-scale way. The opportunity for local people, the Rodolico family and me to do something to change things was brought about by people from Acitrezza engaging and participating in two ways that correspond to the following case studies. The two ways of involving people have led to the creation of two videos (see Appendix 4: list of videos submitted for watching the videos).

1.7.1 User-generated videos: case study 1

In a nutshell, this case study worked with local people (namely, the informants) to create user-generated content videos depicting intangible heritage and traditional practices. This case study was an example of a community-authored approach in the making. The design of this case study met the need for creating new practices, social protocols, and unique modes of interactivity to engage individuals interested in changing the *status quo* by promoting unconventional cultural heritage within the town of Acitrezza.

1.7.2 Community commentary on archival photographs: case study 2

A collaborative, community-authored approach characterises this case study. It consists of involving Salvatore and Gianni Rodolico, who had watched a video made up of family and private pictures depicting Acitrezza throughout the years and their shipyard to comment on and provide feedback. For the design of this case study, the researcher adopted the author as "a fly in the soup" approach, whose full implementation has been possible, in practice, by embracing the *video voice*

technique. This technique generally implied a group of people reflecting on a video — consisting of individual photos of past Acitrezza and Rodolico's carpentry activity from their family archive— explaining and maybe reinterpreting them after viewing these multimedia contents on the screen. The video voice technique is an unconventional approach, whose primary output is a metavideo, footage including pictures and audio tracks consisting of informants while they interpret and discuss relevant things to them.

1.8 Postulates and assumptions

In the final chapter, the author tries to test the postulates (P) as follows:

P1. There is a significant advantage in using UGC videos to voice unheard, ignored people in ethnographic research.

P2. The PV methodology could tear down "neo-colonial" instances and overcome existing barriers that could obstruct the complete democratization of digital technology.

P3. The PV methodology can determine a change in Acitrezza through the shipyard and the shipwrights.

This research was anchored on the assumptions that methodologies and the instruments to be used elicited reliable responses and that the informants understood the procedures they underwent. Ultimately, this thesis is based on the fact that the informants (the two shipwrights) were frank and genuine in expressing their knowledge and feelings in response to videos depicting pictures of the city of Acitrezza and the shipyard. Furthermore, it is founded upon the assumption that local people were genuinely and passionately driven by the desire to film videos showing alternative heritage.

1.9 Definition of terms

The following definitions are how the researcher of this thesis tries to define some of the terms. Each description of terms appears, correctly explained and cited, within the chapters that make up the thesis.

- *Action research* refers to political and social activities linked to research agendas. It has the effect of making a significant change for one

community's well-being and prosperity, and it requires concretely involving locals in a small-medium-scale way.

- *Citizen scientists* design solutions as valuable as those sketched by the researcher. So, their contribution can make up the so-called *citizen science*.

- *Co-design research* is not thoroughly planned but adapts to the researcher's explorations in the community. In co-design research, researchers have to come up almost with no research question or allow themselves thoroughly to have their assumptions be continuously questioned, critiqued, and shaped by partners.

- *Cohorts* refer to a group of subjects, in this case, who share certain characteristics or experiences in a specific period.

- *Community archaeology* analyses the relationship between people and their past, creating an environment of openness, participation and constructive debates about archaeology matters.

- open, participatory and rational-critical debate and integrating public opinions into decisions about archaeology.

- *Community-based research* means that social phenomena should inspire studies. The essential criterion is whether one work has contributed to the community by investigating issues and finding meaningful solutions locally.

- *Digital heritage* is a new legacy resulting from information, creative and cultural expression resources increasingly produced, distributed, accessed, maintained, and preserved digitally.

- *Localisation* is a process of cultural transformation aimed at preserving local cultures and transforming global culture into something new through those peculiarities. It opposes *westernisation*, by which the world has become culturally homogeneous under the powerful influence of the United States and Europe since the 80s. Both belong to the tree of the ongoing anthropological debate concerning the *clash of civilisations theory*, which refers to what extent global expansion of capitalism and Western lifestyles has generated disappointment, alienation, and resentment in other cultural systems, especially in former colonies.

- *Materiality* should be meant as *locatedness*, which encompasses physical location and social and cultural location to create a place of heritage, giving life to the meaning-making process and fostering any individual or collective remembering actions.

- *Metavideo* is footage of people filmed while they interpret and discuss videos about relevant things to them.

- *Participative culture*, or culture of participation, materialises itself when the citizenship's full (digital) involvement, consisting of the protection, preservation and care, and management of urban heritage.

- *Participatory videos* can also be termed community video or collaborative video because this approach can be used by nongovernmental organisations, community activists, practitioners, and independent researchers to engage with communities deeply, include people's views in the making decision and try to trigger social change.

- *Photovoice technique* is founded upon the utilisation by communities of photography and photographs through conveying a message and representing issues of importance to them.

- *Reflexivity* means that researchers put themselves in people's lives and context, making research a process of companionship and support. It also means listening to and embracing the perspective of others. Through reflexivity, researchers can get so much more out of the research.

- *Stakeholders* are those interested in or might be affected by one research. Different stakeholders may have different points of view.

- *UGC videos* are filmed day-by-day by creators through native smartphone cameras. They can be labelled as bottom-up content since they broadcast ordinary people's day-to-day reality, dreams, expectations, and problems rather than narrative constructs.

- *Video voice technique* generally implies a group of people reflecting on videos, explaining and reinterpreting them after viewing these multimedia contents on the screen.

1.10 Organisation of thesis

The thesis is made up of 5 chapters and two video files as part of the thesis submission. Following this introduction, chapter two provides information about media technology in tackling neo-colonialism and, from a decolonisation perspective, the efficiency of videos, the methodology of Participatory Video, its assumptions and protocols, and its features and implementation in heritage management. Chapter three discusses the context of the study: attention turns to the narration of the history of the shipyard and its picturesque owners, Rodolico's family, as well as the sequence of events that have taken place throughout the existence of this place. Furthermore, this section focuses on the intangible heritage and traditional practices performed at the site. This overview is crucial for identifying all the theoretical premises for applying the PV methodology. Finally, this chapter describes the first step of its realisation: how to find a pool of people to create alternative story-tellings in Acitrezza. Chapter four focuses on the next step, namely the "on-field" application of the different methods involved. This section presents the two case studies, the type of data generated, and how they were collected. Chapter five concludes the study with the final discussion, considering what has been done, the results obtained, and the ability to answer the research questions. This chapter ends the study with conclusions, recommendations, and proposals for future research and follow-up action. This thesis might include four appendices: Appendix 1 is a transcription and translation in English from Italian of dialogues for subtitling video of *case study 1: user-generated videos*; Appendix 2 is a transcription and translation in English of the audio commentary used for subtitling *case study 2: community commentary on archival photographs*; Appendix 3 is the prior informed consent form; Appendix 4 consisted of references to the cases-study videos and the documentary filmed by me and my colleague-student, Roberto Maiolino, all uploaded on YouTube; Appendix 5 consists of the Salvatore Rodolico's letter to the mayor.

Chapter 2: Technology, heritage, and communities

2.1 Introduction: digital technologies for cultural heritage

Sometimes limited resources for cultural heritage call for more contemplative and prudent policies and management. Reduced economic possibilities can raise problems of accessibility and stewardship and inherent issues like deciding what is worthy of being officially labelled as heritage and, therefore, preserved and who has the authority to determine it (UNESCO, 2021). Making these difficult choices (partly) depends on heritage values, context and *format* (Kalay et al., 2008, p. 6). The term format about heritage would allude to (the possibility of) utilising innovative digital technologies and, by them, creating new heritage. Digital technologies have led to a steep and substantial modification in heritage form(at) and provided new ways of preserving and presenting it (Guccio et al., 2016, p. 55). Recently, the European Union has financed several projects using technologies for heritage to turn tangible and intangible heritage into new formats and promote collaboration among European countries based on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to digitally preserve and manage the heritage throughout the Continent more easily (Guccio et al., 2016, p. 60). This community effort has resulted in the creation of the Europeana Program. This program consists of a digital portal, Europeana, where it is possible to find tons of metadata related to all European cultural heritage (https://www.europeana.eu/it?utm_source=new-website&utm_medium=button). At the same time, CulturaItalia, promoted by the Union Catalogue of Italian Libraries (ICCU), integrated into Europeana itself, provides a virtual access point to people who search for anything among all the cultural products held by Italian institutions (http://www.culturaitalia.it). The website's payoff states that CulturaItalia is the national aggregator of Italian cultural heritage (http://www.culturaitalia.it). These two examples have proven the fast-growing use of technologies in heritage in recent years. Most importantly, they illustrate a new synergy between technology and AI on the one hand and cultural heritage on the other and how this leads to new formats, new essences of cultural objects, and a new category or dimension of heritage: *digital* heritage.

"Any unique resources or expression of human knowledge created digitally *ex novo* or converted into digital form from existing analogous resources should be labelled as potential heritage itself and, as such, preserved for the next generations" (UNESCO, 2009, p. 1). Also, UNESCO (2009) defines "digital materials, like texts, databases, still and moving images, audio, graphics, software, and web pages as digital heritage" (p.1). Thus, these quotes defining digital heritage encompasses resources increasingly being produced, distributed, accessed, maintained and preserved in digital forms for posterity. Taking UNESCO just mentioned above's 2009 definition of digital heritage as a starting point, this section reflects, from now on, on some of the discourse arising after the integration of heritage and technology. This reflection concerns heritage's innate qualities and properties and what happens to them when heritage becomes digital. Furthermore, this reflection focuses on whether and how digital technologies for heritage demand decolonisation when they are used to preserve and convey cultural objects in new formats and thus reproducing traditional and inner values, ideas, relationships, and role models of analogical heritage when it becomes digital. Mohamed et al. (2020), in their paper called *Decolonial AI: Decolonial Theory as Sociotechnical Foresight in Artificial Intelligence*, claim that digital heritage is not as neutral and generic as one can think: geographic boundaries and colonial legacies inevitably influence it (p.665). Accordingly, these two factors can equally affect digital spaces and digital technologies. Implementing affected and biased digital technologies for heritage could lead to increasing inequalities and social injustices, forcing the most vulnerable into new subordination and dependence on the few countries that control technologies, for instance (Kwet, 2019). Moreover, biased digital technologies might overlook the issues affecting the poor and subaltern majority (people from former colonies and enthusiasts) who do not, thus, have access to debates on how to design and improve technologies themselves. This state of things can simultaneously lead to the centralisation of a top-down power over the technologies for heritage and polarisation of roles: the more prosperous countries (or minority) have technologies, and the poorer countries (or majority) depend on those who own them. In recent years, postcolonial critique has shown the urgency of questioning this pattern of power (Lydon & Rizvi, 2010, p. 23) and this trend should also

concern digital technologies. By embedding a postcolonial critical approach, academics can centre those marginalised people who usually experience underrepresentation or no participation in the techno-ecosystem. This reimagined approach implies that digital technologies for heritage have to meet three requirements in order to be considered decolonised (Mohamed et al., 2020).

- Academics must remember the context of reference when it is time to use technologies for heritage.
- These technologies must consider a participatory and mutual mechanism whereby all parties are adequately informed.
- Technologies for heritage have to create opportunities for people to change their context.

This chapter aims to illustrate, firstly, how digital technologies can be simultaneously affected by neo-colonialism and be able to foster decolonisation in order to give new life to digital heritage. Then, the goal is to discuss the potential of video technologies as a constituent element of ethno-anthropologic documentary films, adopting new decolonising approaches to addressing social issues while collaborating with local communities. Thus, this first chapter highlights videos' social impact and engaging attitude as a basis for digital cultural heritage.

2.2 The innovative properties of digital heritage

Contemporary discourse on heritage has shifted away from a Eurocentric vision of heritage as object-centred, focused on accumulating objects considered of critical importance in transmitting cultural traditions (Cameron, 2008, p. 175). This typology-curatorial-based vision has been linked to a longstanding tradition of creating static collections and exhibitions of cultural objects, exclusively preserved for their intrinsic value and informed by (implicit or explicit) colonial perspectives, in which European culture and science are uncritically seen as the norm. This Western perception of heritage has been criticised fundamentally in the last decades, and heritage is no more considered a material thing *per se* (Smith, 2012b). Conversely, heritage should be considered heritage because of the meaning and values people and society attach to it to the extent that heritage, so conceived, can perform a functional role for those societies (Smith, 2012b, p. 2). On this assumption, heritage could promote a more comprehensive understanding of itself

and its relationship to people. Therefore, cultural heritage is not material for an exhibition just for the sake of something. Instead, heritage might thus be conceptualised as a combined set of tangible and intangible (cultural and natural) elements, inherited from the past, in which people might recognise their identity.

On this basis, heritage can unfold along many axes, like (perceived) time, value and materiality (Malpas, 2008, p. 15), which all can give structure and meaning to the concept of heritage. The *time axis* expresses itself whenever preserving and conveyancing heritage links past, present and future. Heritage bears a certain degree of value: heritage is not exclusively synonymous with monuments, museums, and architectural and artistic goods, but it is primarily a catalyst for the development of a community by fostering social cohesion and renewing the identity of people. The dimension of materiality means no materialism but *locatedness* (Malpas, 2008, p. 15). Materialism refers to a philosophical position which identifies every aspect of reality in relation to the matter, excluding the effectiveness of any higher moment of a spiritual nature. Locatedness indicates the process of encompassing "bodily location as well as social and cultural location" (Malpas, 2008, p. 15) to create a place of and for heritage. As a result, one can infer that it is not possible to separate the idea of heritage and idea of places, where heritage formation usually occurs, because of this locatedness. Therefore, heritage is indivisible to its materiality. Malpas (2008) claim that even intangible heritage is always linked to specific objects, bodies or sites, as well as "specific sequences of concrete actions" (p.15).

However, does materiality have the same properties as digital heritage? Once transformed digitally, cultural objects have the potential to be disseminated and shared on Internet. Everyone with access to a computer, smartphone, or smart TV can experience them. Magically suspended online, these objects are ethereal, indeed. This immaterial condition is why digital heritage might conceptually present issues related to the dimension of materiality, unlike traditional heritage, for example. One might think that digital technologies might cause a loss of the conventional sense of place and locatedness of cultural objects because of their new form as digital replicas. Hence, cutting-edge technologies can obscure and erase the essence and uniqueness of heritage. Nonetheless, some examples show replicas

preserve materiality because these copies keep a certain degree of locatedness. These examples involve using technologies like 3D model reconstruction software, high-resolution videos, and cloud-based multimedia content. Recently, Māori communities have used technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) to convert their heritage into digital heritage; they also have made replicas of cultural objects displayed in museum collections worldwide or packed into storage deposits. Māori believes that the digital replicas hold the same spiritual and emotional qualities of *taonga*[2], so the cultural significance is still preserved in the process. The replicas are regarded as retaining the same life, force and aura of originals; so, they are able, as other heritage objects, to foster individual or collective memory (Brown, 2007, pp. 78–84). According to Cameron (2008), the Māori's motivation to record and preserve digital cultural objects, like *taonga and waka*, relates to the Māori desire to increase access to their *whakapapa*, namely the genealogy of ancestors, represented by particular objects (p.180). In achieving this goal, the Māori have manifested a certain degree of authorship over those objects, digital replicas included. Also, they have tried to create counter-narratives opposed to the official ones. Is it an example of a decolonising-technologies process in motion? The Māori example can put the digitalisation of heritage in a new, unexpected perspective. Technologies employed by Māori communities have afforded yet another goal: they have brought to the floor new points of view to the extent that digital technologies can thus help widen the range of heritage interpretations. Accordingly, digital technologies for heritage can prove to be innovative or even revolutionary as they are eminently suited to generate alternative narratives and interpretations, opposing the *Authorised Heritage Discourse* (AHD).

2.3 Digital heritage, neo-colonialism and decolonising strategies

One official narrative, or *Authorised Heritage Discourse* (AHD), is often strongly linked to neo-colonialist paradigms based on western hegemonic and institutionalised epistemologies reflecting the present-day shape of colonialism (Smith, 2012b). Elitist groups make choices, constituting the AHD, about what to

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[2] This word means cultural treasures.

preserve and criteria for defining heritage at the expense of others (Smith, 2012b. These elite groups and their cherished discourses act as memory institutions, gatekeepers to specific narratives and interpretations, as opposed to the perception of those who are, for these reasons, merely inert recipients. So, the question arises: do neo-colonialism epistemologies and ontologies have the power to affect digital heritage, too?

Nowadays, it is a fact that knowledge and information are considered as strategic resources and tools in this globalised and Internet-based world. Therefore, how data is used and transformed through technology and who controls it are pivotal to understand the big picture. In the past, maritime routes controlled by European countries were the highways to the Global South (Kwet, 2019) by means of importing resources and, in return, exporting people and knowledge, with unfortunate outcomes. Like the classic colonialism based on those waterways, neo-colonialism within digital heritage might be rooted in the design of a tech ecosystem, whose purpose would be, in this respect, to create one dominant (digital) narrative-knowledge. Therefore, neo-colonialism in digital heritage can manifest itself when digital technologies are used one-sidedly to select only specific objects with lasting value and cultural significance and turn them uncritically from their analogous form to a new digital shape to preserve them for current and subsequent generations. This way of proceeding is how the Authorised Heritage Discourse could work out (and already does!) in the digital heritage domain. Could differently constitute groups, in response to this, use the same digital tools?

Theoretically and discursively, the use of digital technologies for drafting alternative narratives can be possible by displacing the global and centring a local perspective (Szymanski, 2016). This shift from global to local is a pure reflection of the ongoing anthropological duel between the westernisation theory, by which the world has become culturally homogeneous under the powerful influence of the United States and Europe since the 80s; conversely, the localisation theory, a process of cultural transformation aimed at preserving local cultures and transforming global culture into something new through those peculiarities (Miller, 2017, p. 17). Concerning heritage discourse, this opposition manifests itself by contrasting the levelling-off process of the authorised heritage discourse and the

action of embracing a plurality of voices. To answer the above question, these multiple narrations of reality can find new ways to emerge: digital technologies imbued with specific cultural schemes and local agendas to create new digital heritage. In this way, using digital technologies might undo the epistemic violence of globalisation and neo-colonialism (Risam, 2018, p. 79) and, why not, fully realise the localisation of knowledge. Creating new narratives and discourse around local forms of knowledge can offer new solutions for interpreting heritage. Such inquiry takes the form of new methods, tools, projects, and platforms that fall under the umbrella of post-colonial technologies, which are characterised by technologies for heritage being centred on practically involving unheard voices. People can use these tools creatively to enrich the experience of their heritage (Malpas, 2008, p. 24). Indigenous studies provide many examples of this in the heritage domain. The *Mukurtu Content Management System* has been developed as a free and open-source platform through a collaboration between experts and Indigenous communities, with the aim to supporting the development of the indigenous digital cultural heritage on platform (Risam, 2018, p. 82). Furthermore, the platform allows Indigenous community members to exert control over technologies for heritage, so they can decide freely what should be shared and with whom. The project *Chicana por mi Raza: Uncovering the Hidden History* focused on Chicana feminist movements scattered in North America and gave voice to feminist activists who have been ignored for a long time through interviews conducted and registered by using digital technologies (Risam, 2018, p. 83). In this way, interviewed Chicana feminists' contributions were used to create layered digital archives to be considered multi-authored from that moment on.

These initiatives show the potential of digital technologies for heritage to object to neo-colonialism epistemologies and strategies in knowledge systems, subverting colonial-based and meaning-making practices in heritage. Also, both projects are crystal-clear examples of how to rehabilitate what has traditionally been relegated to the subaltern position, namely Indigenous knowledge, which may be subject to their cultural protocols when transmitting knowledge for posterity, however (Risam, 2018, p. 83).

2.4 Postcolonial authorship and documentary film

Still in agreement with what has been said before, I think that the design of any project aimed at decolonising heritage by fully realising a localisation of knowledge should be based not simply on the analysis of the cultural values at stake but also on the existing structures and relations of power. Indeed, the creative, practical, and thoroughly critical aim of projects designed for this scope may be to transform technologies to be more democratically powerful and empowering. This goal can be accomplished through new ethno-anthropological documentary films, either shorts or longs, centred on addressing social, economic, political and cultural issues.

According to Jayasankar and Monteiro (2015), a documentary refers to a work to document reality and actuality without preconceived categories (p.620). This was not always the case, however. Before the dissemination of the postcolonial critique within academia, most documentary film productions, coming under the rubric of ethnographic and anthropological films, were involved in the scientific and etic (structuralism-based) on-field observation of ethnic groups, mainly in the Global South. Accordingly, this kind of visual product used to be polemically defined as the youngest offspring of colonialism, referencing the relationship of power between researchers (the dominant figures) and the other (the subaltern), which generates a highly biased-ethnocentric and structured view of what is filmed during fieldwork observation. This idea of the ethnographic film has recently been revised and put under critical investigation by academics (including myself as researcher acting in this field!), causing this type of documentary to change dramatically in theory and practice. A new cultural arrangement had to be developed, therefore. It had to be based on post-structuralism, more democratic technologies and, simultaneously, a new emic and "biased-free" approach, which included alternative POVs and personal histories through creating new narratives. Following this principle, a new, inclusive typology that accounts for various documentary films due to the vast array of themes, styles, formats, and modes of addressing narratives arose. Outlining a taxonomy for classifying ethnographic documentaries based on the role performed by the filmmaker, it was found that

there are six, not mutually exclusive, modes of representation (Jayasankar & Monteiro, 2015, p. 620).

- The *expository mode* tends to inform viewers about the world outside, using a sort of poetic narration, also called "the voice-of-God" commentary.
- The *poetic mode* depicts facts in a cinematic way.
- the world representation becomes central to the film's narrative in the reflexive mode. Specifically, it focuses on the relationship between the filmmaker and the subjects represented. So, the equipment is not used to collect insights about informants in a structuralist way; consequently, the conventions of realism are attenuated. Cameras are used to put questions about the world in a post-structuralist way.
- The *performative mode* refuses the idea of knowledge as something universal and objective but instead embraces knowledge as something empirical and experiential.

For decolonising ethnographic documentaries, the participatory model seems – to me as the author of this study – to be the most suitable because of its natural inclination for including small-scale equipment (smartphones) to push people to get involved. How? Smartphones can be seen as innovative tools through which informants can collect video data, thus transforming their reports into ethnographic mini-documentaries. On the other hand, a taxonomy for classifying ethnographic documentaries can also be based on the notions of authorship and viewership that motivate authors in making these visual contents (Jayasankar & Monteiro, 2015, p. 621). Two of them stand out in the perspective of decolonising ethnographic documentary films, the postcolonial kind of author and the author as a fly in the soup: the former acts as an opposer to official narratives by prioritising alternative knowledge, while the latter equipment acts as "precipitators of action" (Jayasankar & Monteiro, 2015, pp. 622-623).

These approaches have the potential to let people get the full authorship of what representing and, later on, what is represented. In this way, people are the co-authors and, simultaneously protagonists. As co-authors they will take control over the digital tools to the same degree as researchers; a new relationship at the same level will occur. As subjects are represented, people will directly construct

representations of themselves and/or something they feel attached to. As a result, it will be possible freeing ethnographic filmmaking from the yoke of neo-colonial instances, by bringing different narratives in.

2.5 Heritage and participatory video

I have already mentioned multiple times how an effective change within heritage discourse should be based on taking into consideration multi-vocal perspectives. Attempting to trigger this change through visual content means making part of the authorship shift to the locals. Among several approaches within this new way of thinking in neo-colonial-free ethnographic filmmaking, the participatory model consists of researchers and informants[3] working together (Milne et al., 2012, pp. 25-29). The increasing use of participatory models has been facilitated by web 2.0 and the dissemination of new technologies, especially concerning content creation. Some of them imply using videos filmed through smartphones. The daily use of smartphones is growing dramatically to the extent that we can talk of a revolution in the media landscape (Srl, 2021), web-marketing). Nowadays, the primary way to enjoy what the web can offer is through smartphones, which have assumed a position of extreme importance (Srl, 2021). That is why there has been a shift to a "mobile first" philosophy, especially when watching visual content, such as videos. Here are the most relevant statistics regarding videos (Mohsin, 2023; Sarika, 2021).

- On average, people spend 6 hours and 48 minutes per week watching online videos.
- One-third of all users' online activities is spent watching videos.
- 17% of companies use video content as a part of their social marketing strategy.
- 88% of videos transit through YouTube, which is the most popular platform for sharing videos, followed by Facebook [76%], LinkedIn [66%], and Instagram [65%].

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[3] In this case, the term informants can also refer to those people who may be marginalised in some way and whose perspectives are meant to offer something that is missing from mainstream discourses, like the digital heritage strategies adopted by the Māori.

So, millions and millions of online people spend hours scrolling through pages and feeds searching for videos. Consequently, one can infer that communication is no longer based exclusively on texts but on visual content, pictures, and, especially, videos. The widespread dissemination of mobile devices and the intensive utilisation of them favoured has determined new communication and protocols for media production. Nowadays, the most trend-topic are user-generation videos[4] and UGCs (Babudro, 2017). Just scrolling down the home feed of the most popular social network it is noticeable how millions of UGC videos are creatively filmed day-by-day by teenagers or sub-adults. They belong to Generation Z's members – born between 1997 and 2001. They have first experienced a digitally shaped world. They are at ease with using digital tools to create content through smartphones and upload them on content platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, for instance.

UGCs can be labelled as bottom-up content since they broadcast ordinary people's day-to-day reality, dreams, expectations, and problems - rather than narrative constructs - filmed with native smartphone cameras[5] (Babudro, 2017). The following features characterise UGC videos (Masi, 2019, pp. 9-10).

- They have a certain degree of persuasiveness which guarantees the sincerity and integrity of what is produced.
- They own evocativeness, through which they can draw forth emotion.
- UGC videos are action-oriented, so they can inspire one to do or say something. Think about videos made by influencers for their target community.
- UGC videos are characterised by a certain degree of reflexivity; they can contribute to a great self-awareness of the subject who film the video.

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[4] At some point, Internet users started talking and sharing information about products, services, companies and, more generally, their relationship with the brands that had marked their consumer experiences (Bahtar & Muda, 2016). It took less time for marketers to realise that a profit could be made from it. The possibility of creating Brand Awareness and reaching new potential customers at low cost, nurturing those already engaged, and triggering digital word-of-mouth to catch users and let them perform specific actions and obtain valuable product feedback was in front of companies.

[5] For this reason, I will use, henceforward, the terms participatory video and mobile filmmaking with the same meaning.

New media formats, such as UGC videos filmed with smartphones, can enter the mediascape and situate themselves as bottom-up visual technology. This premise would distinguish them from the most mass, non-participatory media, namely "fictional[6]" media channels like television or streaming platforms (i.e., Netflix). This fictional media can undoubtedly reach millions of people, put issues under spotlights, make people aware of trending topics, and spread information efficiently.However, they use a monologic language[7] to spread out messages (*Modelli monologici e dialogici: un'introduzione allo studio dei processi comunicativi e della comunicazione interculturale, n.d.).* In contrast, UGC videos as community media use dialogic language, where everyone can express themselves: mutual understanding and empathy mark this type of communication (*Modelli monologici e dialogici: un'introduzione allo studio dei processi comunicativi e della comunicazione interculturale, n.d.*). Furthermore, community media allow people to access different information, thereby quickly and freely developing personal points of view without coercion, pressure or fear (Milne et al., 2012). On these bases, UGC videos could potentially enable people to represent themselves and try to bring about change, unlike traditionally produced and distributed social documentaries[8]. As such they bear the potential to create change through an increasingly personal utilisation of this technology. These developments can potentially converge with existing fictional media. At the same time, they can also provide an alternative to them, positioning mobile filmmaking outside the mass media production environment in a cultural context, however. Mobile filmmaking can position itself within its niche as mundane rather than spectacular, UGCs-based rather than fictional-inclined. Democratic mobile filmmaking based on UGC videos can productively involve an audience in all the stages of film production (Milne et al., 2012, pp. 16-17). Development, financing, shooting, editing, launching, and

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[6] Unlike documentary and nonfictional genres, fiction film is constructed to give back to audience an interpretation of reality (Jayasankar & Monteiro, 2015)

[7] Monological communication can be described as when one person speaks, and the other listens. However, there is no interaction between participants as the communication is only one-way (Differenza tra comunicazione monologica e dialogica, n.d.)

[8] This expression refers to multimedia products made by professional film crews with no or limited interaction with the movie's subjects (Ruby, 1992, p.45).

marketing can be partially or exclusively pertinence of informants. Based on these assumptions, the shifting in the authorship can transform the role of the informants from passive to action-oriented. Mobile filmmaking can be seen as the category of the content creation process underpinning the participatory video approach brought about through the interdependence of advancement in mobile technology and new forms of creativity. For these reasons, the participatory model based on smartphones-created videos can also be termed *community video*, or collaborative video (Milne et al., 2012, p. 13). Factually implementing the participatory model based on videos will be practically demonstrated through the working methodology underlying this study.

2.6 The Participatory video: assumptions and protocols

The struggle against neo-colonialism can avail itself of the transformative possibilities of technology to limit its ongoing effects. Technologies for heritage can embrace bottom-up and local approaches. These elements make up the participatory video, the implementation of which could lead, I hope, to a shift on account of authorship capable of generating alternative knowledge. Furthermore, the participatory video as a decolonising ethnography framework using technologies for heritage can represent a new way of addressing present cultural challenges in the context of reference. A shift on account of authorship implies a learning-from-the-ground principle, according to which communities can shape policies and practices to preserve and promote their cultural heritage (Eriksson et al., 2020, p. 3; Valjakka, 2020, p. 54; p. 64). This statement suggests that the PV methodology belongs to the *participative culture*, or culture of participation, which materialises itself when the full involvement of communities occurs (Jackson, 2020, p. 21). Furthermore, Smith (2012b) stated that participative culture places so much emphasis on cultural assets, which can play a part in forming communities' identity and, if well protected and managed, also help to address social issues (p. 3).

This new sense of responsibility that falls on communities is the reason why the theme of the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage has proved to be, over the last years, an integral part of the international debate on criteria and indications for sustainable growth to the extent that the United Nations have included the preservation and promotion of global cultural heritage within the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda for 2030 (Labadi et al., 2021). Labadi et al. (2021) calls for the *usability of heritage*, namely the inner property of heritage, by means of filling social and cultural needs, to achieve SDGs. By embracing the "5Ps" (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships), ICOMOS converges with the UN's Agenda in the following statements:

Generally, heritage *should be used* to achieve the well-being of **People**. Also, a "Culture-Nature" duo *should be used* to achieve the **Planet**'s well-being when adopting landscape-based solutions. Next, heritage's inner properties, such as value and cultural significance, *should be used* to accomplish the **Prosperity** of communities. After, the power of heritage for social cohesion, connection and dialogue *should be used* to achieve **Peace** within and among societies. Lastly, the intrinsic capacity of cultural heritage to affect communities and bring people together *should be used* to create **Partnerships** (Labadi et al., 2021, p. 18).

This statement puts stress to the benefits of heritage and its sustainable usability. Most important, the sustainable usability of heritage implies the responsible use of tangible and intangible cultural heritage by/for communities. Any action aimed at achieving SDGs goals should guarantee sustainability throughout the years and unforeseen events. Concerning heritage, adverse conditions usually take the form of economic profitability, social solid or political interests that could materially transform the cultural goods or compromise their scope as a witness to the past, or even worse, ascribing them a new role, wiping them out the previous one. Such difficulties could prevent any sustainable-based action from achieving full sustainability. They could increase the odds of degradation and partial/total loss of the heritage value and significance[9] connected to a specific place or group of people.

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[9] value refers to a complex of features that make one cultural asset important to a specific community and people who inhabit it. The term significance means the overall importance of one cultural asset (*Didactic Case Study of Jarash, Jordan*, n.d.).

To prevent this from happening, the participatory video can put a constructive, equal, and profitable collaboration with communities. In this regard, an increasing interest or community engagements at all stages has meant the importance of communities to foster conservation and achieve sustainable development through a constructive dialogue, mutual understanding, and collaboration between all members within a given group of people (Brown & Hay-Edie, 2014, p. 36; pp. 41-42; p. 90). The regulation of the term community by World Heritage Convention (WHC) follows up the discourse on the concept of community within the theorization of the *parity of participation* by Nancy Fraser (Waterton & Smith, 2010, p. 10), according to whom all members of a given society can interact with one another as peers, in line with point four and five of UN's SDGs' agenda. These two points express the power of heritage for cohesion, connection and dialogue among members of societies and the intrinsic capacity of cultural heritage to affect communities and bring people together, respectively.

Within this dissertation, participative culture and the focus on communities combine to create community-based research – the phylum the PV methodology belongs to – whose primary goal would be using heritage to improve the well-being and inclusiveness of people in any given community through heritage. This combination might give people the chance of interacting with heritage matters on the same level as experts. Also, it may level off any differences between those groups entitled "by right" to make decisions about what is (or is not) heritage and those who are excluded because of maldistribution (economic factor), as they lack the resources to participate in heritage projects, and because of a certain degree of misrecognition (cultural), simply because they are not heritage experts, thus lacking a particular vision or understanding of heritage.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has stressed how its materiality, uniqueness and identity provide the value and significance of heritage. Combining these features enables cultural heritage to fill social or cultural needs, according to the principle of usability. In the context of this thesis, I have investigated how to communicate this social-oriented intrinsic feature(s) of cultural assets in a comprehensible way, firstly, to increasingly large segments of citizens involved and then to a general audience.

From my point of view, this might be achieved by embracing new communication protocols based on a *partial cinéma verité*[10], and using digital technologies and current visual languages and formats (i.e., videos) through conveying values and significance attached to local cultural assets. Concerning the heritage discourse, these communication protocols, based on new storytelling techniques and fully accessible and democratic technologies, can determine a shift in the role of academics and heritage experts in charge of any community-based research: from top-down controllers to facilitators of the implementation of bottom-up approaches, by means of cooperating with a multi-layered network of people, forming communities, to communicate the importance of cultural heritage. This assumption can be considered, for a good reason, a prerequisite to asserting further that communication of heritage properties should be accessible to a broad public and should not be reserved for a group of specialists or experts. This assumption does not imply working on the level of banality and simplification but instead using innovative language and communication devices more in line with modern times for the construction of a new discourse on heritage through which communicating personal identity, feelings and thoughts, resulting from the intimate relationship between the content, the cultural assets, and the container, where each of them is located.

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[10] The term cinéma vérité was introduced by the French sociologist Edgar Morin in a January 1960 article in the weekly *France Observateur*, where he interpreted the cinematic poetics of Dziga Vertov, a famous filmmaker of the Soviet avant-garde. *Pour un nouveau cinéma verité*, we refer to a cinema of total authenticity, as accurate as a documentary but with the content of a fictional film (ENCICLOPEDIA DEL CINEMA, 2003). For the thesis purpose, the researcher embraces the first part of the definition regarding total authenticity and dissociates himself from the idea of fiction-like content. Hence, the expression "a partial cinéma verité".

Chapter 3: Acitrezza and the context of the study

3.1 Introduction of the chapter

This chapter first provides the necessary historical background of Acitrezza, showing that the town is rich in historical narratives and cultural heritage, dating from the seventh century BC (D'Urso, 2020) to the modern age (17th-18th-19th-20th centuries). This chapter presents the history, practices and narratives that led to the creation of this study of a "forgotten" past of Acitrezza: Rodolico's shipyard and its picturesque owners. Attention turns to the narration of the general history of the shipyard as well as the sequence of events that have taken place throughout this particular heritagescape. Finally, this chapter focuses on the intangible heritage and traditional practices of fishery and carpentry performed at the site, of which the family concerned was and still is the guardian. This introduction to Acitrezza is crucial for describing the participatory video methodology that finds a further practical application in this context. At the same time, this section includes all the theoretical premises for applying this methodology, and the first step of its realisation: how to find a pool of people to create alternative story-tellings in Acitrezza.

However, the next step, namely the "on-field" application of the different methods involved, is explained in Chapter 4. The analysis of data gathered in collaboration with informants and the eventual-changing-oriented outcomes of PV methodology implementation constituting a proper conclusion for this thesis will be discussed in Chapter 5.

3.2 Acitrezza, a brief history of the context of this study

«[...] perché il mare non ha paese nemmeno lui, ed è di tutti quelli che lo stanno ad ascoltare, di qua e di là dove nasce e muore il sole, anzi ad Aci Trezza ha un modo tutto suo di brontolare, e si riconosce subito al gorgogliare che fa tra quegli scogli nei quali si rompe, e par la voce di un amico[11]».

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[11] From Italian to english: For the sea has no country, either, and belongs to whoever will pause to listen to it, here or there, wherever the sun dies or is born; and at Acitrezza it has even a way of its own of murmuring, which one can recognize immediately, as it gurgles in and out among the rocks,

(Giovanni Verga, *I Malavoglia,* XV) (*[PDF] I Malavoglia by Giovanni Verga | Perlego*, n.d.)

Acitrezza, *Trezza* in Sicilian dialect, is a charming town located in the Catania municipality, containing about five thousand inhabitants (Comune di Aci Castello, 2022, p. 3), facing the Ionian Sea, and overlooking the small rocky archipelago called *Faraglioni* (Fig.1). The name *Faraglioni* derives from the Greek word *pharos* meaning lighthouse, after the island on which the Lighthouse of Alexandria was built. Acitrezza has a unique historical background, which has put the town at the heart of myths and legends, as well as history.

Figure 1

The view of Acitrezza's bay: the port and the Faraglioni. Reprinted from Acitrezza, In *Wikipedia*, n.d., Retrieved January 25th, 2023, from https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aci_Trezza#/media/File:AciTrezzaaerea.jpg. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.

The myth and the legend. Acitrezza is the location around the tenth Canto of Odyssey: this Homeric tale is the background of the encounter between Ulysses

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where it breaks, and seems like the voice of a friend ([PDF] I Malavoglia by Giovanni Verga | Perlego, n.d.).

and his companions and Polyphemus (Fig.2), who lived, like his other Cyclops brothers, in caves inside the hill area overlooking the Gulf of Acitrezza (Homer, 1991, pp. 105-566). Homer (1991) in *Odyssey* recounts the Faraglioni are the stones thrown by an angry Polyphemus at Ulysses during the Achaean hero's escape after he blinded Polyphemus (491-500).

Hence the name *Isole dei Ciclopi* (Cyclops' islands) for the Faraglioni and *Riviera dei Ciclopi* (Cyclops' coastline) for the gulf overlooking them. Acitrezza also seems to be the setting for Canto III of Virgil's Aeneid, which narrates the encounter between the Trojan Aeneas and the Greek Achaemenides, a former companion of Ulysses, whom his companions forgot in the land of the Cyclops during the escape narrated in the Odyssey (Virgil, 1953).

A legend seems connected to the suffix *Aci*, making up the town's name, Aci Trezza. The area where Acitrezza stands was the heart of the ancient Greek city of Xiphonia (D'Urso, 2020). According to the historian Diodorus Siculus, this city was founded by the Greeks in the 7th century B.C. with the name *Xiphonia* from the name of the sharp promontory overlooking the sea (D'Urso, 2020). The legend

of the city of Xiphonia is handed down by the poets Theocritus, Virgil and Ovid, who set here the love story between a nymph called Galatea and a shepherd boy called Aci (Fig.3), killed out of jealousy by the Cyclops Polyphemus. According to the myth, the shepherd boy Aci was transformed by the merciful Jupiter into a river, the river Aci, to reunite him with his beloved nymph for good. Since then, the river has flowed copiously there.

Figure 3

The statue of Galatea and Aci inside Villa Belvedere in Acireale. Reprinted from La storia di Aci e Galatea: un sentimento che scorre ancora verso il mare, In *Sicilianpos.it*, n.d., Retrieved January 25th, 2023, from https://www.sicilianpost.it/la-storia-di-aci-e-galatea-un-sentimento-che-scorre-ancora-verso-il-mare/ Copyright 2020

Although the legend of the Homeric poem sees the birth of the Faraglioni as the result of the unfortunate encounter between Ulysses and Polyphemus, in reality, the islands of the Cyclopes were formed as a result of intense volcanic activity about half a million years ago (INGVvulcani, 2022) (Fig.4). Instead, the entire area in front of the archipelago was of course not inhabited by the mythological Cyclopes, but, perhaps, by Greek exiles who, after crossing the Ionian Sea, arrived here and settled, as suggested by some local archaeologists, founding the city of Xiphonia. Some archaeological findings may prove that an ancient city existed where Diodorus Siculus, Theocritus, Ovid, Virgil and Silius Italicus placed Xiphonia (D'Urso, 2020). Among the significant archaeological discoveries, mention must be made of the archaeological area of *Santa Venera al Pozzo*, a site on which a spring

of sulphurous water from Etna emerges and where Roman settlements, especially thermal baths, have been found. Other artefacts, such as a mosaic from the Roman period known as *Il Pegaso* (The Pegasus), have also been found near this area. In the 1950s in Aci Castello, in the *"Vigna vecchia"* area, traces of a vast Hellenistic necropolis came to light (D'Urso, 2020).

Figure 4

A view of Faraglioni rocks stand before Acitrezza town. Reprinted from Aci Trezza, In *Sicilia-etna.* n.d., Retrieved January 25th, 2023, from https://sicilia-etna.it/citta-e-paesi/aci-trezza/, © Copyright 2011 - 2023

The history. The town of Acitrezza was founded in the late 17th century, during the Spanish domination of Sicily, by Prince Stefano Riggio di Campofiorito (RISERVA NATURALE INTEGRALE ISOLA LACHEA E FARAGLIONI DEI CICLOPI 13 MAGGIO 2019 GIORNATA DI STUDIO A CURA DELL'ISTITUTO NAZIONALE DI GEOFISICA E VULCANOLOGIA E DELL'UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI CATANIA INTERVENTO DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CENTRO STUDI ACITREZZA ANTONIO CASTORINA ACITREZZA NELLA STORIA, n.d.; RISERVA NATURALE INTEGRALE ISOLA LACHEA E FARAGLIONI DEI CICLOPI 13 MAGGIO 2019 GIORNATA DI STUDIO A CURA DELL'ISTITUTO NAZIONALE DI GEOFISICA E VULCANOLOGIA E DELL'UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI CATANIA INTERVENTO DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CENTRO STUDI

ACITREZZA ANTONIO CASTORINA ACITREZZA NELLA STORIA, n.d., p. 2). The Prince, the vicar of Viceroy Francesco Fernandez de La Cueva, moved from Palermo to Catania in 1669 to help the population afflicted by the destructive eruption of Mount Etna. There, he fell in love with the territory of Acitrezza, enchanted by its landscape, to the extent that he decided to purchase the extensive feud of *Aci Sant'Antonio e San Filippo*, of which Acitrezza was the only open gate to the sea (Ruta, 2001). Over the years, the community was managed by the descendants of Stefano II, including Luigi Riggio Branciforte, who dedicated himself to the restoration and reconstruction of the building affected by the strong earthquake that occurred in 1693 (Pellegrino, 1996, p.2). Furthermore, he took care of the further transformation of Acitrezza's port: more houses, new warehouses and workshops and boathouses for the ever-greater numbers of ships that arrived there. Furthermore, for the first time, he built up a road connecting Acitrezza with the rest of the feudal districts. Lastly, he built its palace, stood out as his most sumptuous architectonic construction (RISERVA NATURALE INTEGRALE ISOLA LACHEA E FARAGLIONI DEI CICLOPI 13 MAGGIO 2019 GIORNATA DI STUDIO a CURA DELL'ISTITUTO NAZIONALE DI GEOFISICA E VULCANOLOGIA E DELL'UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI CATANIA INTERVENTO DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CENTRO STUDI ACITREZZA ANTONIO CASTORINA ACITREZZA NELLA STORIA, n.d., pp. 3-5) (Fig.5).

Figure 5
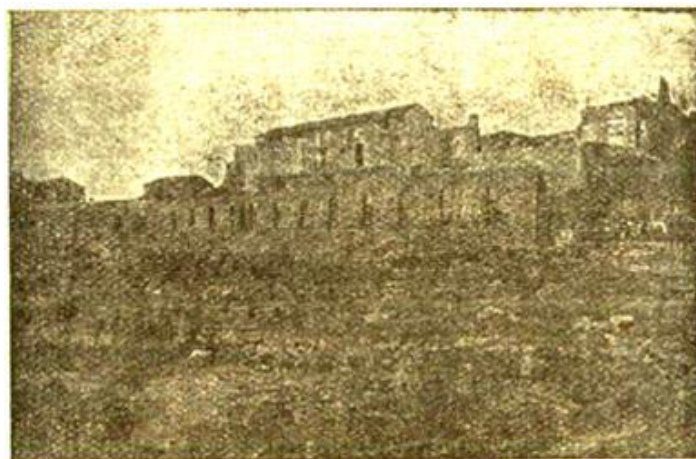
In that same period, Acitrezza was also a destination for Johann Wolfgang von Goethe pulled there by the natural beauty of the town (Goethe, 2015, p. 128). By the time of Giuseppe Riggio Grugno, bourgeois and liber-democratic uprisings against the *Ancient Regime* and its centuries-old privileges led to the outbreak of the French Revolution. This event had consequences everywhere, Sicily included – albeit belatedly. Here, the abrogation of feudalism took place in 1812 (Bella, 1999, p. 97); consequently, Acitrezza got the status of free territory and Giuseppe Riggio Grugno was expelled from the feud. He was killed in 1820 at the hands of the mutineers after being sentenced to death by beheading (Bella, 2020). Administrative management was initially passed to the *Catenoti*[12] jurists, thus envisaging democratic management of the territory for Acitrezza (Blanco, 1993, p. 144). On 20 February 1821, a petition, signed by thirty-four citizens and forwarded to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies' bureaus, requested the creation of Acitrezza's municipality, representing an autonomous community of citizens. From now on, the city maintained a certain degree of autonomy, recognised even during the most emblematic periods in Italian history (the fall of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and reunification) (Blanco, 1993, p. 197). In the meantime, the economy of Acitrezza was gradually oriented towards fishing, especially sardines (Bella, 2019) (Fig.6). For most of the 20th century (in the 1970 precisely) the activity of the fishermen, gradually facilitated by the spread of engines as propellers for ever larger fishing boats, was the town's main source of income (Fig.7) (Appendix 6). At the end of the century, while the size of the fishing trade grew impressively, Acitrezza - with the spread of mass tourism - experienced a very robust infrastructural development (Guida, 1955). Facilities had to be built to accommodate the tourists who came here to experience a glimpse of the Italian dolce vita (Fig.8). In the last twenty years, the tourist industry has expanded: new hotels and restaurants have arisen over the last decades (Fig.9)

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[12] This term refers to the inhabitants of Acicatena.

Figure 6

This is an ancient photo illustrating Acitrezza's beach. Reprinted from La fondazione di Aci Trezza, In *Acitrezzaonline.it.* n.d., Retrieved January 25th, 2023, from http://www.acitrezzaonline.it/fondazione.htm Copyright 2000 by Grasso Giovanni e Antonio Guarnera.

Figure 7

A picture showing fishermen coming back to the piers after having caught a swordfish. From Cantiere Navale Rodolico – Acitrezza, In *Facebook,* n.d., Retrieved January 25th, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/827525033997253/photos/pb.100057614831271.-2207520000./934342029982219/?type=3. Authorised by the owners of the page.

Figure 8

Postcard from 1975 depicting Acitrezza shoreline. From Catania bedda, In *Facebook,* n.d., Retrieved January 25th, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/Catania.CT/posts/acitrezza-anni-60-70/10155500200645472/. Adapted with permission.

Figure 9

People gathered around bars and restaurants in Acitrezza. Reprinted from Aci Trezza, In *Wikipedia,* n.d., Retrieved January 25th, 2023, from https://it.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aci_Trezza. Copyright 2009 by sailko.

3.2.1 Acitrezza in the history of literature and cinema

Acitrezza is the setting for one of the most famous novels in Italian literature, *I Malavoglia*[13]. Narrating the ill-fated story of the fishing family from *Trezza*, the Toscano family, Giovanni Verga made some of the distinctive places of the seaside village famous by describing them with veristic traits. Places like "*La Casa del Nespolo*" (Medlar-Tree House) are iconic due to the description made by the Sicilian writer. The port of the town is equally important. This place, lit by the sun and crowded with colourful boats pulled ashore, still seems to be populated by the same characters created by Giovanni Verga: Maruzza, Master 'Ntoni, Mena, Bastianazzo with his boat *Provvidenza* (Providence) and all the other wretched Malavoglia family's members. It was here, in fact, that the writer set the fictional events of that miserable family of fishermen struggling against an adverse fate caused by the shipwreck of the Provvidenza.

Furthermore, it was again at Acitrezza that Luchino Visconti set his neorealist masterpiece *"La Terra Trema"* (The Earth Trembles) in 1948, respecting the setting of Verga's novel on which the film is based (Fig.10).

Figure 10

A scene from "La Terra Trema" set in the port of the marine town. Reprinted from La Terra Trema: genesi, evoluzione e considerazioni finali sul film di Luchino Visconti ispirato al capolavoro del verismo "I Malavoglia" di

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[13] This novella represents a masterpiece of verism, and with it, the so-called "Cycle of the Vanquished" begins

Once again, the protagonist is a family of fishermen living in poverty. Young 'Ntoni tries to rebel against the exploitation of the wholesalers, but adverse fate seems to turn against the weakest, and the family is forced to mortgage their house to buy a boat. A special anchovy catch seems to help the low-income family, but later a storm destroys the boat. Forced to sell the anchovies to wholesalers at a derisory price, the "Malavoglia" lose their home, and the family disintegrates forever. Testimony to this literary and cinematic microcosm is the Casa del Nespolo, the small two-room urban fabric dating from the 19th century (Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo, n.d.), located near the church of San Giovanni Battista. The two rooms are set up as a museum, one dedicated to the film "La terra trema" by Luchino Visconti and the second dedicated to the village's fishing activity; both overlook a courtyard with a medlar tree, which gives the building its name.

The high rocky archipelago emerging from the sea, the Faraglioni, makes the seaside village of Acitrezza unique. Setting for ancient myths and legends, as well as history and art ("I Malavoglia" and "La Terra Trema"*)*, the whole area is now a protected marine reserve in order to ensure that pristine magnificence (*Isole Ciclopi*, n.d.). The sun rising slowly from the sea and behind the Faraglioni at dawn is one of the most beautiful spectacles Sicily can offer.

3.3 The shipyard and the shipwrights

In today's Acitrezza, we do not find the Malavoglias waiting for us: no Master 'Ntoni and Mena or Bastianazzo[14]. Other lives flow now. However, some of those lives recall one of the characters from Verga's opera. No Master 'Ntoni, but *Zzu' Turi*[15] the shipwright; not "La casa del Nespolo", but the shipyard; not the Provvidenza, but the boat *Speranza* (Hope). Lastly, not the shipwreck of the small

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[14] All characters from Giovanni Verga's veristic novella.
[15] The expression *Zzu* stands amicably for uncle.

boat used for fishing but the whole Rodolico family struggling against the adverse fate (Fig.12). The historical *excursus* concerning Acitrezza does not mention Rodolico's shipyard, its history and the set of activities that have been carried out there for years. This is not a slip-up. Not mentioning them, not even once, in the previous section echoes the official heritage discourse (see *supra*). No mention of the shipyard is a positive and useful provocation aimed at demonstrating how the heritage discourse is strongly polarized around only a few narratives: the ancient myths and legends, modern age history, the natural peculiarity of the area, as well as the literature and cinema. However, there is far more behind that. However, there is far more behind that. At Acitrezza, a family of shipwrights still exists for five generations, and its members love taking time to design, build and repair boats for navigation and fishing in the Mediterranean (Gofundme, 2022). They are the Rodolico family, whose members are custodians of an ancient craft handed down, unchanged, for centuries – the art of boat-building art. Even today, very few multi-coloured wooden boats docket at the piers – the so-called *varche trezzote* (literally, the boats of Acitrezza), created by the Rodolico's family –, bear witness to a long-lasting tradition worthy of being told (Fig.13). And this tradition materializes itself at the shipyard. The history of this place is rich in events, highly emotional, and full of *coups of theatre*; all these elements can make our understanding of "being rooted in Acitrezza" more clearly comprehensible.

Figure 11

The Rodolico's family: in front, Gianni; back, his mother Pina and father, Salvatore, as well as his brother, Sebastiano.

Adapted from *Facebook*, by Vittorio M.,

https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=596239148973241&set=pb.100057614831271.-2207520000.&type=3.

Copyright by Massimo Vittorio. Adapted with permission.

Figure 12

The boat Spiranza, which is a typical Trezzota boat, and Gianni Rodolico. From Cantiere Navale Rodolico -

Acitrezza, In *Facebook,* n.d., Retrieved January 25th, 2023, from

https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=596239148973241&set=pb.100057614831271.-2207520000.&type=3.

Adapted with permission.

3.3.1 The film, "Shipwrights", set the whole thing up

Before proceeding to the narration of such an engaging story, a question may arise spontaneously among readers. Given the scarce representation within the AHD, what sources have been drawn to tell the story of Rodolico's shipyard? What the author wrote about the history of this iconic family is mainly based on information gathered through interviews and personal communications. These were not interviews and conversations for their own sake. Roberto Maiolino and I, both students of archaeology and anthropology at Leiden University carried them out as part of a documentary, filmed in April 2021. This documentary, named Shipwrights, represents the two researchers' attempt at conducting their first on-field community-based research (see Appendix 3 to find the link to the video).

Any community-based research starts with the definition of the community of reference and its problems, research questions and goals to achieve (Albadra et al., 2020). Putting aside, for now, the identification of the community of reference for implementing the methodology, let us focus on the definition of problems, questions and goals. Defying these factors goes through a total identification of the

author with people's point of view, according to the principle of *reflexivity*[16]. The term reflexivity means that researchers put themselves in people's lives and contexts (Yang, 2015). On this assumption, research questions are conceived in various ways but develop in the community (Yang, 2015). For this reason, community-based research differs from academic research, which can usually begin with a research question derived from reviewing other studies and the need to develop a theory. On the contrary, community-based research means that social phenomena should inspire research. Likewise, in the case of the documentary about the Rodolicos, the core of the investigation was not thoroughly planned but adapted itself to the researchers' explorations in a given context – that of the local community. This exploration resulted in having discovered, by casualty, the shipyard and chitchatted with Gianni Rodolico. The shipwright introduced me enough to the place and its history to stimulate him to conduct further heritage-centred research. I identified with Gianni's perspectives and context to the extent that I had begun to think that that was the place, something on which to base future ethnographic research, indeed. After me and my colleague-student, Roberto, had discussed whether to opt for this subject, we agreed to declare the history behind Rodolico's shipyard and what it represents as worthy of being the subject of the documentary. This project has portrayed the shipwrights at work or intent on explaining their art and craft; the documentary is composed of location-aware and breathtaking aerial, which introduce viewers to the geographical context, Acitrezza and the shipyard. Therefore, the documentary narrates the story of the shipyard and those who work there, the shipwrights, tout court. Above all, it contains some interviews addressing some shipyard visitors' accounts, which tell us a lot about that place, as well as interviews with the shipwrights themselves in which they opened their hearts when it came to telling us about their present-day lives and what happened there.

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[16] The term reflexivity should be distinct from the term reflexivity used in chapter two about one of the inherent properties of UGC videos. In that case, reflexivity means how UGC videos can contribute to a great self-awareness of the subject who film the video.

3.3.2 The history of the Rodolico's shipyard

«Omero, Odissea…Verga. I Malavoglia … Visconti, La terra trema …
Acitrezza, il mare che ispira[17]» (Fig.13).

Figure 13

The wooden signage at the entrance of the shipyard. From Cantiere Navale Rodolico - Acitrezza, In *Facebook,*
n.d., Retrieved January 25th, 2023, from
https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=578901617373661&set=pb.100057614831271.-2207520000.&type=3.
Adapted with permission.

This inscription stands out on the Rodolico shipyard's entrance wooden sign. A romantic sanctuary set in the incredible scenery of the Acitrezza harbour, the shipyard has existed for five generations. Rodolicos are even mentioned in the Italian *Verismo* masterpiece by Giovanni Verga. Within this novella, *Zzu Turi Zuppiddu*, an ancestor of the Rodolico family (this fact has not been verified to be honest!), appears, repairing the Provvidenza boat (S. Rodolico, Personal Communication, 2021). The Rodolico's shipyard is currently led by Salvatore Martino Rodolico, known as *Zu Turi*, assisted by his sons, Giovanni and

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[17] «Homer, Odyssey, Verga, I Malavoglia, Visconti, La terra trema…Acitrezza, the sea, which inspires». This sentence demonstrates how much the shipwrights (and the shipyard) perceive themselves, like the Greek myths, I Malavoglia and La terra trema, as an iconic facet that characterizes the seaside village of Acitrezza. The opposite, how Acitrezza and its people perceive back the shipwrights as a vital part of that town, must be demonstrated in this study.

Sebastiano[18] (Fig.14). The shipwrights skillfully carve the wood to create the multi-coloured *varche trezzote*, which still punctuate the waters of Acitrezza (Fig.15). The Rodolicos can be considered transversal specialists: shipwrights, designers, naval engineers, carpenters, artists and fishermen. Aged and seasoned seamen inspired by that supreme source of perennial enlightenment: the sea! The Rodolico's shipyard as an institutionalized entity[19] was founded at the end of the nineteenth century by Salvatore Rodolico senior[20], who, with the help of his son Sebastiano (Fig 16.), started building rowing and sailing boats for Catania-based customers (G. Rodolico, Personal communication, 2021). The Rodolico family have been shipwrights for five generations. All of them have chosen to do this job (Appendix 6).

Figure 14

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[18] Sebastiano claims to be viewed as a fully-fledged shipwright despite having decided to quit the job long ago. Now he works as a nurse. For this reason, given his daily absence at the shipyard, we decided not to include him in the documentary or this research. From now on, no further mentions have been made of him.
[19] Long before this place operated as a shipyard at total capacity, any carpentry activities were carried out by the Rodolico's ancestors near their homes, as they were freelancers. A very old invoice for the construction of a boat found at the shipyard dates to 1808, the first boat construction ever carried out by a family member. So, this document proves 213 years of carpentry activities performed by the Rodolicos (S. Rodolico, Personal communication, 2021).
[20] Salvatore Rodolico Senior is the grandfather of Salvatore Rodolico junior, the protagonist of our history. Naming newborns after their grandfathers is a long-standing tradition in Sicily.

A portrait illustrating, from left to right, Gianni, Salvatore and Sebastiano Rodolico. Adapted from *Facebook*,
by Vittorio M., https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=630902175506938&set=pb.100057614831271.-
2207520000.&type=3. Copyright by Massimo Vittorio. Adapted with permission.

Figure 15

The picture shows the launch of a Trezzota boat and its owner ready to row. From Cantiere Navale Rodolico - Acitrezza, In
Facebook, n.d., Retrieved January 25th, 2023, from
https://www.facebook.com/827525033997253/photos/pb.100057614831271.-2207520000./872922809457475/?type=3.
Adapted with permission.

Figure 16

Sebastiano Rodolico, the father of Salvatore Rodolico, is caulking a boat. From Cantiere Navale Rodolico - Acitrezza, In
Facebook, n.d., Retrieved January 25th, 2023, from
https://www.facebook.com/827525033997253/photos/pb.100057614831271.-2207520000./843237012426055/?type=3.
Adapted with permission.

In the 1960s, the shipyard experienced its Golden Age of development, thanks to the young Salvatore's passion and brilliance, who transformed the business forever (Appendix 6). He was behind the epoch-making change for boating: from the oar sail to inboard engine wooden boats of any tonnage. Salvatore, therefore, with the help of more than thirty in-site workers, took over the plant operations, which led to the construction of many fishing-wooden boats (Fig.17). «He made boats for Naples, Liguria, islands, and the whole coast, here: Riposto, Santa Maria la Scala, Santa Tecla» said Gianni (Appendix 6).

Figure 17

The picture shows the boat, Raffaelo, ready to be launched at Rodolico's shipyard. From Cantiere Navale Rodolico - Acitrezza, In *Facebook,* n.d., Retrieved January 25th, 2023, from

https://www.facebook.com/827525033997253/photos/pb.100057614831271.-2207520000./934339106649178/?type=3.

Adapted with permission.

The year 1990 was pivotal in the history of the shipyard (Appendix 6). That year, the last motorized wooden fishing vessel, the *Agatino*, was built. In 1990, the Ministry of the Merchant Navy decided to stop issuing permits for fishing and constructing new fishing boats; as a result, non-mass production shipyards, such as the Rodolico's, faced a decrease in their production. Lastly, a Ministerial Decree was established in 1990, and the creation of the Marine Nature Reserve of Cyclops' islands resulted in an absolute prohibition of repairing boat activities in that area. «He always made boats, six per year, without resting. We had a small amount of rest in the 1990s when they stopped releasing licenses, so the boat-building process stopped at that time» stated Gianni (Appendix 6). Undoubtedly, combining these

factors changed the course of the Rodolico shipyard's history. In the meantime, an inevitable change in the nautical market has occurred over the last decades. People have moved away from wood, preferring to buy resin-glass boats because the latter is cheaper and requires less maintenance. This change was the killing blow for the shipyard. Nowadays, the majority of those approaching navigation buy resin-glass boats, indeed. Only one wooden *gozzo* (skiff) was made at the shipyard in the few last years. Nobody wanted it, so it turned unsold, like many others created by Salvatore and Giovanni.

Giovanni "Gianni" Rodolico is the youngest shipwright at work – the last shipwright in the line of succession. His nineteen-year-old son, Martino, does not want to take up the reins of the family-intergenerational activity. As part of the new generation, he has different expectations and life plans. Martino argued, «The point is that, unfortunately, or fortunately, times change; materials and technologies change; and while, once upon a time, boats were mainly made of wood, now they are mainly made of resin. […] therefore, it is a job that is being lost because of that» (Appendix 6). Martino has stepped aside but should not be blamed for this decision. On the other hand, Gianni has consistently refused to get out of the shipyard and quit the job. He has continued, over the years, to defend his right to work as a shipwright in that place. Perhaps, today more than ever. He is striving to relieve the shipyard from recent adverse events, which still affect the Rodolicos. In recent history, local administrations put the family in financial difficulty. Local governments accused the shipyard owners of illegally occupying the port's public area. This accusation was followed by a fine, which was 20,000 euros. Consequently, Rodolico's family was forced to run into debts over debts to pay the fine. «It is unfair…They want to kill us and shoot the shipyard down», Gianni stated (Appendix 6). Despite the shock, the Rodolicos reacted. Salvatore Rodolico wrote a letter (Appendix 5) to the former mayor – from whom he has not received any reply. Here, Salvatore pointed out all the wrongs done to the family; also, he claimed that someone tried to destroy the shipyard for pure economic profit. Lastly, the shipwright underlined that the mayor did not have to think twice about damaging the shipyard, despite the prestige the shipyard has given to the town of Acitrezza over the years. A resounding act followed the letter: Salvatore, at the ripe

age of 88, protested and chained himself up in front of the town hall. Fallen and humiliated but not submitted, the shipyard is still in Acitrezza bay.

In the last few years, the shipyard and the shipwrights have received further recognition for their work. In 2014, the Region included the local wooden boats (in Sicilian dialect, *varche trezzote*) within *REIS, Registro delle Eredità Immateriali Siciliane*[21]. In 2018, Salvatore Rodolico was listed as Living Human Treasured since "Mr Rodolico – it is said – embodies the old tradition of the maritime art; also, he is the last representative of a lineage of great wooden craftsmen" (Appendix 5; S. Rodolico, Personal communication, 2020). That year, the outgoing mayor gave Salvatore a celebratory plaque to bestow honours on those who had accomplished great things (Fig.18) (Appendix 5).

Figure 18

This picture shows Salvatore Rodolico receiving the award as Living Human Treasured. From Cantiere Navale Rodolico - Acitrezza, In *Facebook,* n.d., Retrieved January 25th, 2023, from
https://www.facebook.com/827525033997253/photos/pb.100057614831271.-2207520000./1703983516351396/?type=3.
Adapted with permission.

This award sounded paradoxical to the shipwrights. On the one hand, the mayor awarded Rodolicos, recognizing their history and art; on the other hand, they

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[21] The List of Sicilian Intangible Heritage.

conducted a struggle against the shipyard. Salvatore, in this regard, wrote in his letter, «Isn't it paradoxical to have a mayor who simultaneously rewards and tries to bring you down? Is not hypocritical?» (Appendix 5).

In Sicily, there is no joy without suffering: the shipyard certainly experienced a period of great professional satisfaction in the 1960-70s, but now they are weathering the storm of crisis. Life comes with bad times and good ones. The same is true in today's Acitrezza. The small seaside town appears like an outdoor neo-realistic film set characterized by stunning scenery. The main characters are the picturesque and genuine shipwrights. Zzu Turi *parra pica* (a man of few words) when it comes to talking about his private life; instead, he is a swollen river when he speaks of his art, the shipyard, and its history. It is possible can find him working or sitting on a chair, surrounded by the trusted dog Blasco – it is funny that a Siberian Husky has such a devoted adoration of the sea (Fig.19). Giovanni, instead, is like a volcano: always active and reliable. *Gianni furria e sauta comu un ariddu* (Gianni never stops and jumps like a cricket), instilling dynamism all the way around. This *mis en place* stands out for its contrasts: wooden boats besieged, but not vanquished, by the resin-glass boats. The former administration simultaneously celebrated and harassed the shipyard. Favourable winds first marked the shipyard's history, then by storm. However, after a storm comes the calm.

Figure 19
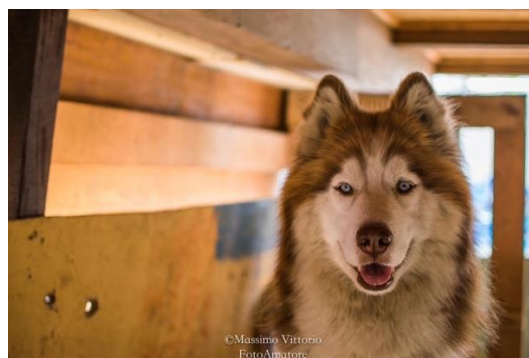
Blasco, the Siberian Husky, "the dog who can speaks". Adapted from *Facebook*, by Vittorio M., from
https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=590155219581634&set=pb.100057614831271.-2207520000.&type=3.
Copyright by Massimo Vittorio. Adapted with permission.

The shipyard has recently tried to rise again and revive the wonder. Economically speaking, boat-building activities have started to grow again, not achieving the level they used to in the 1960s, but still. Two models are the most popular: pleasure boats and anchovies-like fishing boats (*sardare)* with Lateen sail. Both commissioned work by those who want to embellish their restaurants with old-navy style furniture; otherwise, tour operators who want to give tourists an authentic experience to Faraglioni aboard an authentic *varca trezzota*. Last but not least, shipwrights occasionally build scaled-down wooden and floatable fishing boats (Fig.20).

Figure 20

Salvatore building up a scale-down wooden fishing boat. Adapted from *Facebook*, by Vittorio M., from https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=551445293452627&set=pb.100057614831271.-2207520000.&type=3.

Copyright by Massimo Vittorio. Adapted with permission.

Figure 21

Schoolchildren visiting the shipyard and joining an open-air class. From Cantiere Navale Rodolico - Acitrezza, In
Facebook, n.d., Retrieved January 25th, 2023, from
https://www.facebook.com/827525033997253/photos/pb.100057614831271.-2207520000./1621388317944250/?type=3.
Adapted with permission.

Socially, the shipyard has decided to open up to the community[22]. As such, the shipyard offers spaces for visits, meetings and free guided tours (Fig 21) (Appendix 5). In these visits, Gianni and Salvatore, as shipwrights, illustrate the art of carpentry through objects, stirring the audience with the originality of their style and fabulous folkloristic presence (Appendix 69. Also, they generally evoke memories and describe the different working tools placed everywhere – axes and *paledde* (small shovels) for caulking. Alice Valenti, the *Catanese*[23] artist, makes an essential contribution as well. The openness to the community, fostered by Alice's constant presence and continuous support, has contributed to creating hype around this magical place (Fig.22) (G. Rodolico, Personal communication, 2021).

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[22] Thanks also to Alice Valenti, who helped make the shipyard a place of interest, knowledge and culture by painting a boat, the Speranza, on which the artist brought back that complex figurative code learned in the workshop of Domenico Di Mauro, the last *maestro del carretto siciliano* (the master of Sicilian cart), now deceased.
[23] The adjective *Catanese* refers to people who come from Catania.

Figure 22

Alice, as a friend of Rodolico's family, is always willing to help their members. Adapted from *Facebook*, by Vittorio M.,
from https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=548960913701065&set=pb.100057614831271.-2207520000.&type=3.
Copyright by Massimo Vittorio. Adapted with permission.

This enthusiasm has been practically translated into several initiatives: articles in prominent regional and national newspapers; several documentaries, one of which starred Alice Valenti herself, entitled "Alice painting a gozzo at the Rodolico shipyard". Another documentary, shot by three young men from Ragusa and entitled *Last ship*, tried to cast a light on the historical, ethnological, and social value of the Rodolico shipyard. The film, filmed by me thesis and my colleague-student, Roberto Maiolino, *Shipwrights*, has had the same purpose. Videos and articles increased visits to the shipyard. This outcome has fueled Rodolicos' fire, being beaten down by the events over the last years. Gianni stated, «[…] we're happy when people come. It's a great pleasure for us. Many times, we even stop working to account for the people who drop by» (G.Rodolico, Personal communication, 2021), assuming they are interested in shipwright's history and art.

This increase could change the game, making shipwrights again aware of their importance and the renewed role they can play within the community of Acitrezza. No longer a place where picturesque but elusive figures dwell; no longer a mysterious and barred yard where intriguing boat-building activities are practised. Sooner, an open to others and free access to knowledge place. Perhaps, a non-conventional space opens to the public, which contains the material and immaterial evidence of men and their environment, conserves, communicates and exhibits them explicitly for purposes of knowledge, education, and enjoyment. The

accomplishment of this transformative process takes time, however. While waiting for this to happen, every *biniritta* (blessed) morning our tireless shipwrights wake up with a certainty: going to the shipyard and happily building boats, following a secular tradition.

3.4 The current issues afflicting the shipyard

Have you ever participated in a tug-of-war competition? There is a moment when two groups of people pull the rope toward themselves to win the competition. Scientifically, the two parties involved exert two forces, which have opposite directions, cancelling each other out. Consequently, the system is balanced and static. This kind of competition takes so long to finish; it usually happens when one force prevails over the other. This Newtonian principle metaphorically matches the context of this study. The stationary corps is the shipyard, while the two forces are the local authorities and the community of people, respectively.

From 2016 onwards, the shipyard entered the bad sights of the former local administration (Appendix 5-6), in office for the five-years 2014-2019. This institutional antagonism has resulted in ideological and physical isolation of the boat-building site (Fig.23). Physically, the extension of the original shipyard's area has shrunken considerably over the years since part of the property has been deemed unauthorised, to the extent that the place now stretches for just a few square meters of space (Appendix 5). The shipyard appears to be located in a small area of the marina, overshadowed by a giant wall, which constitutes the above waterfront. The lack of any brown signs exacerbates this physical-structural isolation[24]. Local administration never did anything to fill this gap; the opposite is true when pointing out to passers-by the Faraglioni or the places related to Giovanni Verga's principal work. By themselves, the shipwrights created wooden signs indicating the site's location. By doing this, they seem to scream, «we do exist». However, the signage is thematically scarce of information – Here the Rodolico's shipyard is located' (together with the sentence given in the previous paragraph). So, this "business card" lacks specific information, such as a summary of the shipyard's history and

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[24] In Italy brown signs indicate the presence of a relevant historic-artistic-cultural heritage site.

any information in English, for the tourists the town of Acitrezza welcomes yearly. Ratifying that part of the shipyard's property was unauthorized came at a cost. The former administration obliged Rodolico's family to pay 20,000 to legitimize the "illegal" area (Appendix 5). The Rodolicos got into debt with the banks to settle their payment. The economic instability of the family, however, has inhibited any capacity to carry on any maintenance work to deal with the decaying structural condition of the shipyard (Appendix 6). Nowadays, the site has a shabby-looking roof, prone to leakage. Also, the shipyard needs toilets and even floors. If people would like to visit that place, the experience would be compromised due to the lack of visiting and facilitating paths; and, lastly, the place is filled with wooden tools and trinkets, but also valuable handicrafts, deserving better luck. All these factors have an impact on the way people perceive that place. Some passers-by exclaim, «is that place a shipyard? It looks like a heap» (G.Rodolico, Personal communication, 2020). The shipyard needs some adjustments and maintenance. As already mentioned, limited funds do not allow the family to do what needs to be done. It was about to get worse. The former administration promoted the idea of retraining the marina of Acitrezza by enlarging the port area with new docks for resin-glass boats and facilities (Appendix 6). And then they began working on that. «When the Acicastello's municipality decided to enlarge the marina of Acitrezza, they assured me nothing would happen to the shipyard throughout the project realisation. Not only I was forced to shut down any activity inside the shipyard but also, I had to move all the carpentry types of machinery as well as dismantle part of the electrical system» (Appendix 5). However, the situation got worse. According to the local administration, the whole shipyard area should have been considered unauthorised (Appendix 5-6). Gianni concluded, «At that point, you can't do anything; they even fined me twenty-four thousand euros, unfairly. They wanted to take us away» (Appendix 6).

Figure 23
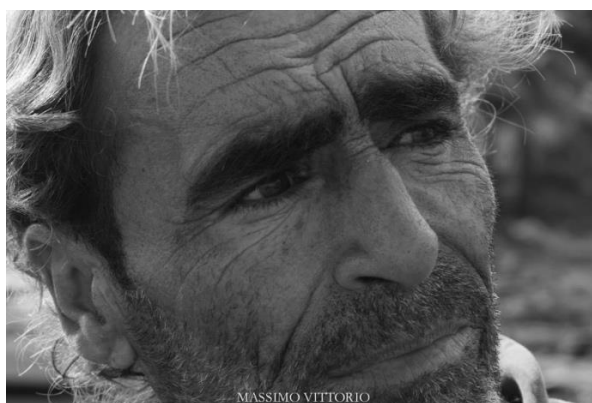
The afflicted and worried look of Gianni. Adapted from Facebook, by Vittorio M., from
https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=552967779967045&set=pb.100057614831271.-2207520000.&type=3.
Copyright by Massimo Vittorio. Adapted with permission.

The former administration was one of the Newtonian forces at play. As we mentioned, that defenseless and static corpse, mocked and martyred, was the shipyard. What is the other force at play? People from Acitrezza protested vociferously against the initiative, to the extent that the following administration (2019-present) decided to slow the realization of the project down (Local officer, Personal communication, 2020). Surprisingly, people were also animated by their love for the shipyard (Fig.24). A touched Gianni stated that «people accused the project's advocates to pursue personal interests: they would have preferred spending money on creating facilities and new touristic spaces just for those who own a boat, even if it would have meant tearing down an important place as the shipyard» (G.Rodolico, Personal communication, 2020). These words betray great empathy from local people, who perhaps consider the shipyard part of their reality[25]. That is the reason why, from now on, this dissertation has started to focus

[25] It was quite surprising to note, during the filming of the documentary, how many people Gianni Rodolico talked to, starting a conversation or having a coffee with them. Most people paid their respects to the shipwright whenever they walked along the waterfront. *Ciao Gianni, s'abbinirica* (Hello Gianni, God bless you). They demanded to know the current state of the shipyard; or if there was any update on the unpleasant situation experienced by the shipwrights.

on people, giving credit to their voices, to investigate more their sentiments and opinions about the shipyard.

Figure 24

The group picture shows people, belonging to Centro Studi Acitrezza (CSA), standing aside the Rodolicos. From Cantiere Navale Rodolico - Acitrezza, In *Facebook,* n.d., Retrieved January 25th, 2023, from
https://www.facebook.com/827525033997253/photos/pb.100057614831271.-2207520000./1674484349301313/?type=3.
Adapted with permission.

3.5 The Participatory video: premises

This thesis aims to gather different points of view through collaboration protocols to raise awareness about alternative values and stories about Acitrezza, like the history behind the shipyard and what it can represent for the town and its citizens. It has already been said that collaborating with people usually marks out the participative culture whose primary focus is on different perspectives, attitudes, and needs about heritage. Getting deeper, this way of thinking implies perceiving people, and their points of view, as assets rather than hindrances, especially in heritage narration, to prevent standardisation, simplification and abstraction. On these bases, this participative culture contrasts the *ivory tower model*, which emerges as a top-down model through which local authorities and heritage experts see themselves as the only heritage narration specialists (Grima, 2016, pp. 2–4). Accordingly, they have privileged access to the evidence and own the prerogative of deciding what deserves to be chosen as heritage or not; this is what separates them from the others, the wider public. The opposite is true for the *multiple perspective model* (Grima, 2016, pp. 5–8). acknowledging the importance of a more reciprocal relationship between people and experts. This multiple perspective model is reflected in any activity interacting with people and incorporating unique local narratives, histories, memories, needs, meanings, and new readings – the very source of their cultural identity (Smith, 2012b). Still, local knowledge is believed

to be an asset when it is time to implement new heritage policies and management, breaking down top-down conceptual schemes and narratives (Abu-Khafajah et al., 2014, p.447). Echoing the postcolonial critique, new approaches to heritage can appear as something to bring up current issues and contemporary challenges and contribute to the community's needs.

Again, the multi-perspective model can lead to practical initiatives involving people. Engaging people from Acitrezza and giving them partial ownership over the alternative heritage narrative underpinning the new heritage policy might trigger a process of sustainable revitalisation by enhancing the perception of the shipyard, fostering social cohesion, and helping to identify ways to bust the local economy. One practical approach I want to focus on within this dissertation embraces the Participatory Video methodology. This methodology is theoretical and practical, simultaneously. It is one of the most prominent examples of the multiple perspective model approach. This initiative is fed by the appearance and dissemination of technologies, able to prompt a change of direction through which it might be possible to enhance protocols and methods within anthropological and ethnographic research. So, the driving force that guided me towards improving the methodology has been appraising the growing innovations applied to cultural heritage. Hence, creating collaboration and using videos as the main audio-visual content for the research has been undertaken. Therefore, the Participatory Video adopted for this thesis seek to demonstrate that the promotion of alternative heritage might undertake different paths, in line with technological advancement and contemporary issues, to carry out a new kind of research and address the community's issues by involving people. Specifically, this path will revolve around participatory protocols based on videos in the form of innovative methodological and theoretical frameworks for collecting data and thus boosting the participation of communities within a given society.

Since the participatory video implies the active involvement of people, one can legitimately state that this methodology can also be termed *co-design research,* due to the fact that one is not thoroughly planned in advance but adapts to the researcher's explorations in the community (Albadra et al., 2020, p. 248). In other words, the researcher may plan their project quite differently once they find a new

perspective on the issue they had not considered. In co-design research, researchers must come up almost with no research question or allow themselves thoroughly to have their assumptions be continuously questioned, critiqued, and shaped by their partners (Albadra et al., 2020; Popple & Mutibwa, 2016, pp. 201-211). Thus, local people have a fundamental role in acting like *stakeholders,* namely anyone interested in or who might be affected by one research. Different stakeholders may have other points of view. When it is time to co-design one on-field project, some stakeholders might have a great interest in the outcomes of one research, significantly if they are affected by it, so it is crucial that they feel involved; others might have the power to influence the outcomes and the success of that given research, so it is essential to attend to their requirements as well. Therefore, a preliminary analysis of stakeholders' interests in one project could help develop strategies to engage a range of local people successfully; keeping continuously in mind the diverse needs of the stakeholders might increase the chance of success of the project itself.

3.5.1 The participatory video in Acitrezza: community of reference

Being driven by the co-design research's protocols means that the first step of implementing the PV methodology is to identify a community of reference, namely stakeholders, within the process of familiarising with the reference context. Both premises can lead to shaping an action plan in collaboration with locals to answer specific research questions and achieve goals. When identifying a community, asking the following questions can be preparatory to this stage.

- What is the community of reference? What is the issue being addressed within it?
- To understand the critical perspectives, who must the researcher hear?
- Who can help the researcher build trust with the community and the people who belong to it?

What comes to us when we analyse these questions is that the PV begins in the community, so the very first step is about defining which community we want to focus on and simultaneously finding out about issues affecting it by interacting and

cooperating with "trusted" local people. A cohort[26] of people was necessary to identify and select for research purposes. Indeed, being closer to them is "functional" to understanding what happens in each group. In this perspective, building trust is crucial to extrapolate more confidential information that could not otherwise be revealed.

The community of people in Acitrezza has been defined as the community of reference. The first reason for this choice consisted of providing experience with the methodological and practical implications of using community-based research, the participatory video, as a collaborative filmmaking methodology within a context experiencing structural issues, as was the case with the city of Acitrezza. Regarding the third question, trust-builder approaches to shipwrights to investigate shipyard issues have been possible thanks to the involvement of Alice Valenti. She talked with Gianni and Salvatore to inform them about my will to carry on the investigation underpinning this thesis; she asked shipwrights to participate in both case studies; lastly, she facilitated a network of participants to collaborate with the project for the Case Study 1, specifically. On these bases, Alice was a *pinpoint informant* because she was critical in the early stage of methodology development when looking for local people willing to join the PV to collaborate to identify issues. So, Alice was crucial in facilitating contact with local people. The researcher has gotten precious information since Alice knew that context years before the researcher's commitment. She shared some important clues about what was going through local people's heads about how they felt and perceived the context. Creating the participatory video as community-based research has required me to think about managing and negotiating the intensive interactions required for the making process, filming, and editing. I had to find innovative ways to involve and collaborate with locals more easily. Collaborating with them was my priority. This collaboration expressed itself within the WhatsApp platform, where we created a

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[26] Cohort analysis has long been one of the most exciting innovations in the digital marketing industry. It is an analysis tool that deeply tracks the behaviour and interests of visitors to a website and allows trends to be identified on a time scale to assess the effectiveness of content, graphic formats, or even advertisements. The aim is to arrive at a precise logic for calculating the result. So, the definition of cohort refers to statistical analysis and refers to a group of subjects, in this case, who share certain characteristics or experiences in a specific period (R. 2020).

private group called Il *cantiere dell'Ancòra* (literally the shipyard of continuation[27]). I opted for this solution to create a more robust, digital, and remote relationship with collaborators, discussing various topics first. There, we have discussed the terms of that collaboration, setting up the scenario and getting all the materials I needed. In WhatsApp, Gianni and his brother Sebastiano joined the group, alongside people involved in the project. They shared some pictures from their collection, showing several subjects relating to the shipyard's history in the twentieth century. In WhatsApp, the pinpoint informant became involved in the process of shaping the methodology before it started. Simultaneously, that virtual platform has been used to think about creative ways of setting PV frameworks and protocols as we went along with the project. To that end, WhatsApp was crucial to make smartphones for the video-content process a viable option for Case Study 1. The PV methodology would entail informants filming videos while getting around the shipyard. To make this happen, smartphones with a medium-high native camera had to be the sine qua non-condition for adopting this methodology. For example, I investigated by asking in the group how many had a smartphone with advances recording native cameras. They replied that all of them owned a smartphone with these features.[28]

3.6 Conclusion

PV is constantly in motion since this methodology has the power of daily change to become relevant to the current situation and needs. Its real nature was revealed on WhatsApp. This methodology was edited and shaped incessantly in its frameworks and protocols because several discussions and chats about how to carry it on frequently occurred among the research and pinpoint informants. For this reason, WhatsApp proved to be a positive and confident space for collaboration. Now, it is time to move on to the next step, which constitutes the beating heart of the methodology: the two case studies.

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[27] The name of the group wants to convey the idea of continuity. The shipyard wants to survive the difficulties of the present.

[28] Mobile use (Smartphone and/or Tablet) reached a concentration level of 89.8% of the population aged 18-74 years, with 39.1 million individuals connecting monthly on average in 2021 from these devices (PrimaOnline, 2022b).

Chapter 4: the Participatory Video in action

4.1 Introduction: Participatory Video (PV) Methodology

The participatory video (PV) methodology I set up for this thesis is based on theoretical principles and protocols, as well as a set of practices and relationships which can lead to cooperation between researchers and local communities. The methodology aims to identify new paths for reshaping the heritage discourse in Acitrezza by addressing community needs or social problems through a heritage lens and, perhaps, triggering a social change in this way. Accordingly, the PV methodology can be further defined also as action research, a type of research where researchers in collaboration with locals can try to improve a context, eventually making a meaningful change for the community's well-being and prosperity (Mcniff & Whitehead, 2011, pp. 14 -17).

From a perspective on the research project dealt with in this thesis, the PV has intended to highlight the importance of the involvement of local people as agents of change in unleashing the full potential of Acitrezza's cultural heritage. Therefore, the adopted methodology has been designed by following these assumptions: (1) conceiving heritage policy and management as multi-layered cooperation and participative trajectory, based on (2) creative enterprises and new forms of work centred on using technologies for heritage through (3) encouraging the inclusion of citizens, not in the preservation of "mainstream" cultural assets for posterity, but in choosing alternative heritage – their "own" heritage – to be protected, promoted, and managed in the here and now. Schematically, the PV methodology has been applied as follows:

- The PV methodology started with identifying the relevant community, or communities, of reference and investigating, in collaboration with them, the main issues affecting Acitrezza.
- The PV methodology involved collecting heritage data based on a democratic use of technology.
- The cooperation between the researchers and local people has also been practical during the analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

- The outcomes could help the community sketch new action plans for local heritage policies and management.

Chapter 3 provided the necessary historical background of Acitrezza before narrating the general history of the shipyard and the sequence of events that have taken place throughout this particular heritagescape. Finally, it focused on all the theoretical premises for applying this methodology and the first step of its realisation: how to find a pool of people through collaboratively investigating the main issues affecting Acitrezza (see first point). In this chapter, I have first focused on the second point, dealing with technologies used in the context of the two case studies, which have allowed him to obtain valuable data in the form of videos. Acitrezza residents and the shipwrights were practically engaged and asked to participate in two ways, corresponding to the two cases study. The two case studies were selected considering the context, people involved, and the outcomes of a virtual conversation via WhatsApp between local informants and me. To conclude, in Chapter 5, I will focus on analysing the data gathered and interpreting the data collected, as well as the eventual-changing-oriented outcomes of PV methodology implementation.

4.2 Case study 1: user-generated videos – the shipwrights

This section presents one of the two case studies of the participatory video framework. This case study is based on a collaborative and community-based approach and concerns tangible, intangible and traditional practices and knowledge performed/conveyed by the shipwrights. The design of this case study has met the need for engaging individuals interested in using video technologies and representing something unique and valuable from their cultural point of view: the carpentry art performed by Gianni Rodolico and its knowledge, as well as one example of how a boat is decorated performed by Alice Valenti. This way, local stakeholders were invited to promote unconventional cultural heritage. This process was done to create alternative heritage narratives rather than the official "iconic" history, like the narratives about the Faraglioni and the Casa Del Nespolo, for example. Among the new protocols, the so-called postcolonial author framework stands out because of its vital role in drafting the counter-histories, writing back to the dominant narrative, and recovering alternative aspects of local knowledge that

have historically been overlooked or displaced. Thus, this approach has been chosen because it would allow participants to give free rein to their memory and creativity, exploring the possibilities of videomaking while rediscovering themselves as "tourists" in their town and, as such, showing alternative stories to the public.

Videos, especially the UGCs, can illustrate the reality of feelings, knowledge, points of view and ways of beings of the participants. Simultaneously, videos can contribute to valorising tangible and intangible heritage through the acquisition-, exchange-, and exhibition process of videos which can bring a new, alternative perspective to cultural heritage. I had high expectations of videos as the most suitable medium to address this act of promotion. This Case Study was based on a peer-to-peer collaboration between local people, Alice and me. It encouraged informants to use UGC videos with their smartphones to represent tangible and intangible heritage and traditional practices. Alice and the other informants have been considered our closest collaborators because they were intrinsically motivated to "reshape" the shipwrights as valuable heritage in these experiments. At the genesis of the case study, random people who had heard about the shipyard were invited by Alice to record videos.

LIST OF ATTENDEES

NAME	PROVENIENCE	OCCUPATION
Alice	Catania (CT)	Paintress
Claudio	Catania (CT)	Student
Corrado	Acitrezza (CT)	Artist
Domenico	Acitrezza (CT)	Shopkeeper
Martina	Catania (CT)	Social Media M.

Before involving informants concretely, it was essential to understand how to adapt the research to informants' skills and materials. The most suitable option would have been to let them use their smartphones. In this way, these devices have been recording devices and a precipitator of action so that local people would play out scenes of their choice according to their value system. Once there, at the shipyard site, Alice approached the informants, inviting them to film whatever they

wanted – what they would consider worthy of recording in terms of value and significance. The shipwrights gave them the green light – they accepted to be recorded and photographed by people during the experiment. The net outcome was a series of visual representations of shipwrights, their skills, crafts, and context, and Alice's performance on decorating one boat. I have collected, in total, sixty videos, classified under the following labels:

- the daily spatial setting of the shipyard and its main characters;
- Gianni Rodolico talking about the history of the place and his family, as well as mentioning shipwrights' know-how;
- Gianni performing general carpentry tasks;
- Alice decorates one *gozzo* and introduces Spiranza.

The videos taken with smartphones by the informants were sent to me on Telegram to prevent any quality loss and stored in Microsoft Team. Here, a specific channel, called "The Rodolico experience" (Appendix 4) including me and my supervisor, has been created to collect all the videos so they are available to everyone; specifically, one folder, named "Case Study 1: UGC videos, tangible and intangible heritage", has been created there. Once videos were collected and organized as set out above, the editing phase started. The editing process took place at the shipyard. I performed the editing in coordination with the informants, acting as "advisors" and Alice as the pinpoint informant. The informants had their say, along with me as editor. The editing has occurred within DaVinci Resolve, as I was most familiar with this software and its functional properties. Here, I uploaded videos into DaVinci Resolve's Media Pool, which was definable as a container of videos where it was possible to classify and organise them before the editing began. I did not use storyboards BEFORE the editing started. Instead, the participants and I together developed a sort of storyline throughout the editing process, with repeated cycles (the different topics captured on video presented and shown) of editing, whose main goal was to make a smoother video sequence to give an appearance of professionalism, using transitions and explanatory titles. This step is when the idea of creating the above topics came out, for instance. This step consisted of creating a video sequence divided into five blocks singularly introduced by a black screen indicating a number and a recognition title. These titles are *the context*, *the history*,

the know-how, *the artwork,* and *the painter.* However, it is essential to emphasise that the editing aimed not to change the local people's creations drastically but only made them more cinematic and experienceable. Once the editing process ended, the final video project was uploaded to Youtube. To conclude, this methodology addressed the need to perform the editing process in a collaborative framework involving researchers, the pinpoint informant and participants.

4.3 Case study 2: video-voice technique on private photographs

Alongside the first one, this case study is based on a collaborative approach, but it regards archival records showing pictures of the shipyard and shipwrights at work (and more) in the form of a video.

For the design of this case study, I adopted the author as "a fly in the soup" approach, whose full implementation has been possible, in practice, by embracing the *video voice* technique developed by me as an evolution of the concept of the *photovoice technique* (Nykiforuk et al., 2011, pp. 104-106). While the photovoice technique is based on the utilisation by local communities of photography, in this way representing issues of importance of them, video voice is based on videos since videos are trending up and are considered the most suitable among media to achieve the project goals (*see supra*-Chapter 2). Videos are characterised by a certain degree of reflexivity; they can contribute to a great self-awareness of the subject who film the video. Because of their personal-action-based nature and unique features, UGC videos can be action-oriented: they can inspire one to do or say something. Echoing what photovoice tries to pursue, the video-voice technique entails explaining and reinterpreting shipwrights after viewing the audio-visual contents on the screen. The output is a *metavideo* – footage of visual content and an audio track - containing people's feedback on relevant things. A metavideo, showing old and more recent pictures of the shipwrights, the shipyard and Acitrezza, feedbacked and commented on by Gianni Rodolico and his father, is what the author has tried to achieve through this case study.

The initial step in implementing this technique was again to use DaVinci Resolve to create an independent video illustrating Rodolicos discussing and commenting on the photos. Pictures gathered up for the sake of the case study were assembled in Salvatore Rodolico's house, precisely one big room filled with them

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– a sort of domestic museum-area adorned by photos. There, the pictures were scanned to make them available digitally. Once all were set with care and attention to detail, the next step of the video-voice technique was conducted: Rodolico's family commented on the pictures and gave their opinions. So, I recorded the audio of Gianni and Salvatore's reactions to the selected images through his iPhone. This phase led to the creation of the metavideo: a video showing a carousel of photos with audio comments by Gianni and his father. I only supported the process through moderation and facilitation of content discussions, and I did not decide what Gianni himself and his father should say! When I received personal feedback from them, I put our hands back on the storyboard, filling it in with the information provided. The pictures and the metavideo have been stored, once again, in Microsoft Team, specifically within the channel "Case Study 2 – metavideo" →

the folders, "Archival Pictures" and "Edited video", respectively (Appendix 4).

4.4 Ethics in the case studies

The lack of trust and respect between researchers and informants can represent a challenge when conducting community-based research. If this is the case, people may refuse to get involved and collaborate with researchers, and the project may fall through. If it is not the case, the methodology has the fundamental requirement to be effective.

Concerning the cases-study, a fundamental ethical difficulty could have arisen from the relationship that I established with the participants: they could have been harassed by the damaging effects of public exposure since both case studies were founded upon the creation, acquisition, exchange, and exhibition of their image on videos across digital platforms. So, I had to prioritise the proceeding without causing problems for participants by considering their privacy and vulnerability in digital representation. Hence, I created an ethical policy to safeguard the participants around the following cornerstones. Firstly, adopting an ethical course of action to approach pinpoint informants confidentially by explaining the research and asking how best it would be to contribute. Secondly, personal consent and privacy have been one of my concerns; therefore, a protocol was designed to safeguard the participants' privacy. This protocol entailed asking participants to fill in an image release form (Appendix 3). Through this form,

informants authorise the reproduction and publication of images or videos depicting them across the Web. People's images cannot be exhibited, copied or used for marketing purposes without their consent, indeed. In any case, published images must never violate people's honour, reputation or dignity. Hence, the necessity for these forms to be signed. So, they got acquainted with terms and policy, permitting me to use multimedia content across the Web. Third, keeping away me, as researcher, from directly or indirectly instructing participants about what communicating through videos should have been in terms of content. In other words, I avoided influencing our collaborators about what to film (Case Study 1) and what to say or comment on (Case Study 2). The opposite would have reinforced the persistence of colonialism instances within digital knowledge I have been trying to fight throughout the project. Communities, and the people who belong to them, often have their cultural protocols for knowledge transmission and what they communicate (Risam, 2018, p. 83).

4.5 Conclusion

With these case studies, we have tried as much as possible to use current strategies and modern technologies, stay up to date with current trends within community-based research and create an atmosphere of innovation and creativity through the PV methodology. We have provided participants with a digital centre, namely WhatsApp and Telegram, where we have given our support and birth to cooperation and a trustworthy environment. Here, we have worked hard to build trust, acting patiently. As a result, this digital environment, first, and the on-field collaboration was where a new social pact arose: the researchers/technicians and citizens collaborated as peers and co-designers. The methodology implemented here made people independent from researchers and gave them a degree of control and ownership that otherwise would not have been possible. Once the videos were shot, through the implementation of case study number one, within the PV methodology, the researcher had only limited control over all methodology's stages and no control over videos, which meant that the content production process was positively shifted to participants.

Chapter 5: Discussion and conclusions

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a conclusion from implementing community-based research through collaborative approaches underpinning the Participative Video methodology, whose features have been described in the previous sections of this dissertation. In Chapter 4, I have also discussed the two frameworks underpinning the cases-study, based on collaboration protocols since the participants and I were present and interacted in the same physical (and digital) space. My version of the PV methodology embraced two approaches, which strongly marked out it and, zooming in, the two cases-study. In both cases, I decided to rely on smartphones, online platforms and software, such as WhatsApp and DaVinci Resolve, to manage the outputs of interactions in the field of heritage practices. Any following reflection is based on the experience of setting up the PV methodology throughout this thesis, primarily the data (videos) gathered through implementing frameworks.

I will explicitly discuss what I have obtained through this study in the following order: the outputs the implementation of this methodology had, the outcomes and limitations I have been faced throughout the study, the conclusion and future developments.

5.2 the PV outputs

This section focuses on the results of the PV's cases-study. I try now to spot evidence of the outputs of this methodology.

- Participants have created +60 UGC videos showing Rodolico's tangible and intangible heritage.
- A digital "public arena", on WhatsApp, where the shipwrights, experts, participants and I have joined together as a team to discuss and feedback UGCs videos collected through the framework underpinning Case Study 1.
- One Metavideo composed of +30 archive pictures commented by Salvatore and Gianni Rodolico.

Concerning the first point, the net outcome of Case Study 1 was a series of videos about shipwrights, their skills and crafts, the shipyard and Alice's performance on decorating a gozzo. Discussions and reflections about the output of Case Study 1

have happened within the group *Il Cantiere dell'Ancóra*. This space was WhatsApp, where collaboration facilitators, informants, and I joined to create a collaborative relationship and a trustworthy environment. On WhatsApp, I asked informants to give opinions about their experience and whether they could imagine what their videos would be useful for. Domenico stated, «It was fun to go around the shipyard and film things I did not know at all». Claudio added, «those videos can be useful to the shipwrights to say something about their way of being». Regarding heritage policies and strategies with an eye to the economy, Martina, as a graduate in communication, answered my inputs by saying, «videos could act as a preliminary driving force for boosting it». She added «it might be important to create new communication strategies depicting the tangible and intangible heritage embodied by shipwrights' actions with the help of our videos» (Fig. 25) – it is also noteworthy how they used the pronoun "our", stressing out her (and their) authorship on videos. All informants added, «promoting online Rodolico's history and art through videos can benefit them and the local economy since they can boost tourism». Alice Valenti, as creative as usual, suggested that «our videos can be stored in a single portal, such as the official tourism website of Acicastello[29], to promote this heritage more». In addition, echoing what has been said in Chapter 2 about the lack of signage, they stressed, «alongside promoting this place through videos, local administration should consider setting up a bunch of physical signage within the area of the town or in front of the main entrance of the shipyard». Alice added, «these signages can act as attention-grabber points for hit-and-run tourists». Again, Alice wrote, «this can generate a growing attention to the extent that tourists could be potentially interested in staying longer, getting further information about how Rodolico's art is performed, in person». Corrado stated, «it could be an idea to organise touristic tours headed to that place where that art takes place daily since Rodolico's activity is so important for themselves, but also for people of Acitrezza since that knowledge is part of its history».

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[29] We are referring to http://acicastello.turismo.comunelive.it. Very little information about the Rodolico's shipyard can be found here, but no multimedia content such as videos.

Regarding Case Study 2, it entailed informants (Salvatore and Gianni Rodolico) having the chance to view and give feedback on a video showing private pictures of the family and the shipyard (and what they have been through over the years in Acitrezza), giving, in turn, personal accounts about them. The main output of this framework has been the "metavideo".

Figure 25
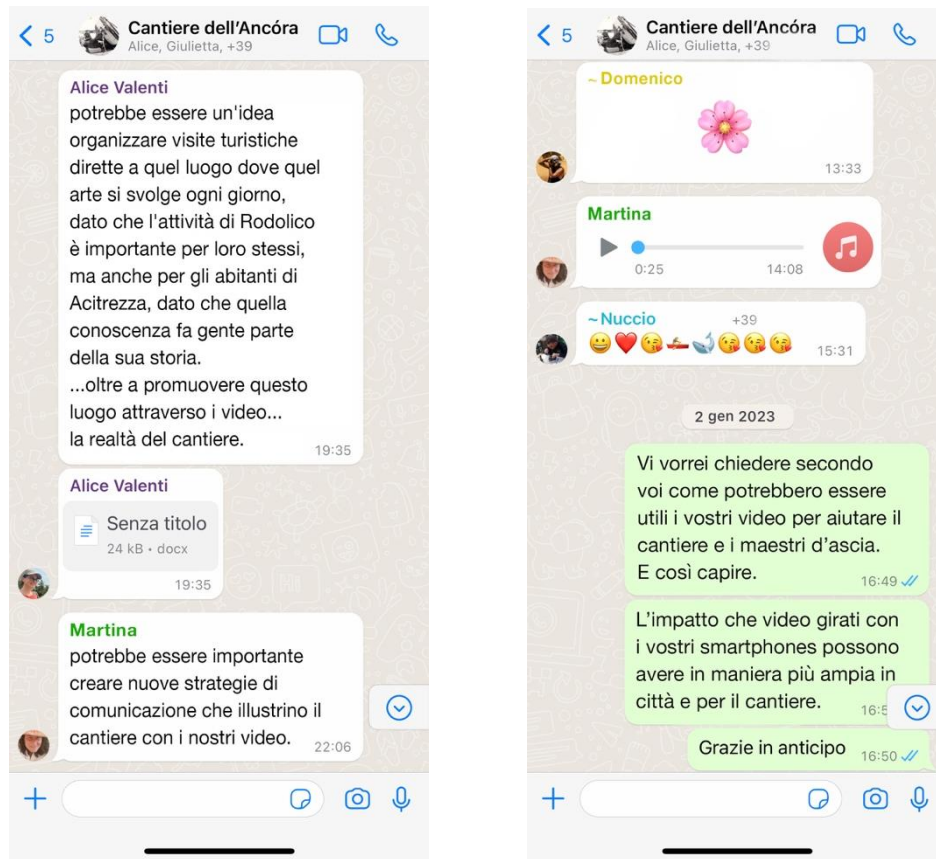
These two screens show part of conversation hold in italian on WhatsApp between me and the informants.

5.3 Outcomes and limitations

Il Cantiere dell'Ancóra was conceptualised as a test to engage with informants more directly and personally and provide a new space for dialogue and sharing. It resulted in a digital arena that exceeded scientific and academic dimensions, by including the locals. There, I have witnessed informants giving back to me heterogenous accounts about how they perceived THEIR videos created through the postcolonial kind of author protocol that has involved them. Also, I have enthusiastically seen informants suggesting how they would practically take

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advantage of those videos to help the shipwrights. From their statements I can say that today-Acitrezza residents (and beyond!) are more interested than ever in seeing enhanced tourism in the town by incorporating the Rodolicos activity into a broader scheme. Within the group, people have echoed Rodolico's complaints about how the local administration has done its job here over the years, giving me accounts about how much people are keen on teaming up with the Rodolicos. For example, informants unanimously have the same negative and neutral opinion about the former and present-day local administration, respectively, because of the lack of open channels of communication and collaboration they had and still have with the shipwrights. This fact has sowed, and still does, dissatisfaction among them. Informants believe that working with videos could have the potential to make a difference in this sense. Here, I present very few ideas, which outlined a well-established process in motion that start with many videos and eventually will finish with something more concrete. In this sense, Alice's and Corrado's statements are indicative. Both of them pushed to organise touristit tours which will include the shipyard so that people will see what they had the chance to film through their smartphones' cameras. However, a certain degree of inconclusiveness could characterise those ideas. Concerning the recent history of the Rodolicos, any suggested proposal either from experts or citizens has been ignored, indeed. Have those ideas been "snubbed" by a lack of a "sense of authority"? The lack of a sense of authority represented and still represent one of the most significant *limitation* in bringing bottom-up solutions to the attention of those who have the power to make a difference (Smith, 2012b). Thus, what makes those solutions easier to present and carry out? I believe people need guidance from collaborating with experts/researchers to give those solutions much more significance and structure. In this regard, my crucial role as the researcher of this study has to crystallise out. I must play an essential role in answering questions asked by informants about the lack of sense of authority and orchestrating discussions between myself, participants and other subjects about how to overcome it. We debated on WhatsApp the effectiveness of bottom-up initiatives like the one concerning the inclusion of the shipyard into "heritage itineraries". Also, we examined in depth the possibility of giving this idea more theoretical structure, implementing the counter-mapping

theory, for instance. First, I explained the theory by stating that counter-mapping can be defined as a community mapping process that often includes alternative local knowledge (Peluso, 1995, p. 387; p. 400)[30]. Then, I tried to elucidate this theory and make it easier to understand for participants contextualising it within the living space of Acitrezza. I told them that counter-mapping could legitimise locals' will to represent alternative heritage. In other words, local people might make their conceptual maps, including the shipyard. Practically, this can be possible through brown signage[31] around Acitrezza that informs people about the existence of a magical place, the shipyard. Counter-mapping, thus, would have the potential for challenging the omissions of alternative heritage from the official narrative, contesting the homogenisation of heritage management and policy and conventional zoning areas of interest within the town – the only area of cultural interest within the city corresponds to Faraglioni and Verga's masterpiece related points of interests. To conclude, a peer-to-peer discussion about counter-mapping theory implementation has shown how collaboration between different actors, namely me and ordinary citizens, led to imbuing with theoretical substrates bottom-up initiatives making them somewhat as credible as the ones carried out by academics and thus overcoming the lack of sense of authority. Aside from this, a change in the political behaviour from an unwillingness to cooperate of the former administration to a more neutral position of the current one can shuffle the card.

In WhatsApp, locals turned themselves into proponents of change thanks to their idea which can unleash part of the tangible and intangible potential of Acitrezza's cultural heritage. I strongly believe this transformation could trigger virtuous circles that can impact the citizens' quality of life and the local economy in a broader scheme thanks to the inner qualities of UGC videos. In the first chapter

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[30] counter-mapping theory falls under the umbrella of post-colonial studies. Specifically, This theoretical approach originated when alternative maps opposed state maps commissioned by local authorities by mapping out forests in Kalimantan, Indonesia. In this case, governmental cartography has been accused of being a colonialist strategy to hurt indigenous people and control their territory (Peluso, 1995, p. 392). In Indonesia, counter-mapping arose as a tool people used to draft maps against dominant power structures. Consequently, creating alternative maps using the same technology used by authorities, but this time for their benefit, can help people not to be passive recipients of top-down maps.

[31] Those ones which indicate the presence of sites of cultural interest according to Italian policy.

of this thesis, I wrote three postulates which correlate UGC video qualities and social-change-based outcomes. Confirming the following postulates will amount to strengthening those qualities.

- There is a significant advantage in using UGC videos to voice unheard, ignored people in ethnographic research.
- The PV methodology based on UGC videos could tear down "neo-colonial" instances and overcome existing barriers that could obstruct the complete democratization of digital technology.
- The PV methodology based on UGC videos can determine a change in Acitrezza through the shipyard and the shipwrights.

Since the beginning, I had high expectations for videos as the most suitable medium to "reshuffle the cards". I believed since the beginning of this story that community-based research could express their creative potential through UGC videos, collaboration and the acquisition-, exchange and feedbacking-process of UGC videos' informants. Case study 1, specifically, tasked people to make videos, shifting the authorship of the filmmaking process on them; this case-study's main output led to the creation of a digital space where it was possible to exchange materials; on WhatsApp they commented their videos. This process shows that videos created by informants could illustrate their self-reflexive and intimate feelings and knowledge. So, UGC videos allow informants to listen, observe and respond to community inputs and address them on their own terms. For the success of this community-based research, it translates into creating new points of view and valorising alternative narratives. Furthermore, UGC videos have stimulated people so much to the point that "merely communities of interest" have been transformed into active, participative and change-oriented communities. As a result, informants have turned themselves into *citizen scientists* (Viduka, 2020, p. 89). Project's informants, as citizen scientists have developed, on WhatsApp, strategies that can potentially change the *status quo*. On these bases, postulate number one can be confirmed: there are several reasons to use UGC videos to get good results from community-based research in ethnographic research. What about postulate number two? As a consequence of using UGC videos, the adopted methodology based on them has the potential to mitigate the power of central authorship, which generally

tends to level off the diversity of the cultural offer – by prioritizing narratives underlying the marine protected area or Verga's masterpiece in the case of Acitrezza. Through UGC videos are possible to promote alternative pasts that reflect local identity and roots by showing intangible and traditional practices, namely the Rodolico's shipyard. Thus, this new digital protocol could help overcome barriers that obstruct the complete democratization of digital technology and the spread of alternative knowledge in heritage matters in Acitrezza. So, postulate number two is confirmed.

If the first and the second protocol have been confirmed as valid and their expression achievable, the opposite is true for the third one. A far more difficult exercise is assessing the participatory video's ability to address issues and bring about real change. Cain (2009) argues that any development occurring within a given society is challenging to measure because it occurs over time. I have to agree with this statement because the effects of the methodology implementation to create a change cannot be fully explored within a short timeframe, because the PV here adopted does not fall under the umbrella of "project-oriented" initiatives. What does it mean? Project-oriented initiatives often depend on the sustainability and life expectancy of subjects that economically sponsor/set up them – if something is going to miss, such projects are often dropped. *This is not the case*: (1) we do not have sponsors and any economic support by any subject; (2) no commitment to goals to achieve and metrics to be observed according to some top-down disposition. Project-oriented initiatives' outputs are often affordable through a list of predefined activities in a limited time frame without ever achieving a transformative and systemic social impact (Carazzone, 2021b). *This is not the case*: there is no business plan and roadmap to follow because having them would have collided with the principles of action research; also, acting within a limited time window does not pertain to this situation because of the fluidity, complexity of the situation concerning the shipyard within Acitrezza due to politics and bureaucracy. On the contrary, I have proceeded all by myself and only after collecting insights going around Acitrezza as I stated in Chapter 3. Conversely, I embraced new ideas and bottom-up initiatives; I set up constructive and collaborative protocols; in carrying on collaboration, I supported those who wanted, in their way, to act as

filmmakers to narrate stories trying to spotlight those aspects; I believed in the power of sharing and listening new perspectives by discovering hitherto unheard voices, according to the principles of the "idea-support" initiatives (*Promuovere il cambiamento sociale attraverso la cultura. L'esperienza, 2018*). Embracing this view means to avoiding making an immediate impact assessment because it will be very frustrating. In this way one cannot get ideas off the ground that need time to bear fruit. On these assumptions, the effects of the methodology implementation to create a change cannot be fully explored within a short timeframe. Therefore, within this framework, I must acknowledge that it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to attempt to measure long-term societal developments that may have been triggered by an attitudinal change or consciousness-raising effect caused by the PV methodology. So, postulate number three cannot be confirmed.

Concerning Case Study 2, most pictures from private and family archives inserted on the video timeline showed the shipyard throughout the time in the context of the Acitrezza and shipwrights at work. "The author as a fly in the soup" approach has aimed at incorporating local narratives, histories, memories, needs, meanings, and new readings of urban heritage, to be shown by commenting on the private pictures video. Through it, I had the chance to gather up Salvatore and Gianni's accounts. The involvement of the two shipwrights steamed from the need to embrace the local dimension to safeguarding the intimate interaction between the local people and their environment – the very source of their cultural identity. I think involving Salvatore and Gianni has been the most direct and honest way to have in-depth insight into heritage as an expression of identity and values shared by the people, like the two of them, settled onto a given territory for generations. For them, "plagued" by a series of unfortunate events, the experience of seeing the place where they live, or the practices they are attached to, I believe, could constructively bring about a profound change in their consciousness. Hence, I deduce that Case Study 2 empowered Salvatore and Gianni by letting them watch videos illustrating several pictures. In this context, the expression self-reflexivity is the keyword to understand the empowerment process at work. In her book *Participatory Video*, Shirley White states that letting people give emotive

feedback on specific visual content, like photos, within the "Fogo methodology", can foster a capacity for self-definition and self-awareness (Cain, 2009, p. 96). In this sense, self-reflexivity can lead the two shipwrights to undergo an inner transformative process culminating with acquiring a self-definition and -awareness through viewing their ancestors, familiar places, and friendly cultural practices in photos. Self-consciousness can be traced to the following Salvatore's statements, as a reaction to a photo showing the bay of Acitrezza: «it reminds me I was much younger. We worked as full-time shipwrights. Sweet memories! ». Furthermore, Gianni added: «in the 1960s my father had his activity. In his own…He was already doing big boats back then» (Appendix 2). According to Cain (2009), self-reflexivity can work on a broader scale; it can create a strong sense of community through an empowering process among people living in circumscribed areas with shared histories and problems. Based on these assumptions, the metavideo empowered shipwrights' minds: comments on something they are linked to can allow Salvatore and Gianni to enhance their self-awareness, self-confidence, self-image, and analytical ability. Therefore, the most critical attribute of self-reflexivity can be the one that would catalyse an empowering process in the viewer(s) at a very intimate level. In other words, the metavideo containing archival pictures led shipwrights to get meditative behaviours and engender multiple analyses and affirmations of personal feelings, they usually do not tell anyone (Yang, 2015, p. 455). Gianni commented on family pictures illustrating a boat built by Rodolicos by stating, «This boat's name was Iolanda, and she was made for Taormina. […] I still remember it because I worked on that. […] The Iolanda, by the family Trismark from Taormina for fishing purposes. We have done only fishing-aimed boats: swordfish and tuna. Because of our boats, swordfish boats experienced an improvement, specifically in these years. Before that, fishermen did not even have trawl to take this kind of fish». From this account, one can infer that swordfish and tuna fishing in Acitrezza was possible thanks to the Rodolico family. In other words, this industry, which is now fundamental to the town economy, would not have been possible without the Rodolicos. Gianni's account can be an example of giving a fresh perspective on the capacity of pictures to provide further information. He has added bits of "missing" information, lying outside and irrelevant to the

official narrative. Furthermore, the author as "a fly in the soup" approach guaranteed access to the digital knowledge-making process to those outside the elite world of official digital knowledge production, namely the two shipwrights. This inclusion was more feasible now than ever, in my opinion, due to the ever-increasing accessibility of "technologies of videos" and the ease through which they can be used to foster protocols of engagement and open up knowledge-making processes on an ever-increasing scale of alternative accounts, which did not previously have the proper recognition. Therefore, the self-reflexivity I triggered through the Case Study 2 let the subjective voice of the informant come out and contrast with the "objective truth". On these assumptions, Case Study 2, imbued with self-reflexivity principles and prompted through technologies of videos, can let those who do not ordinarily have the chance to directly speak catalyse their feelings and opinions, thus challenging official knowledge.

5.4 Conclusion

Despite all the challenges community-based research usually may bring, the methodology of the Participatory Video here adopted has proved to be a tool to empower people by giving voice to them. I am quite pleased with the outcomes despite the biggest limitations of this study, consisting of the need for more space for reflection and more chances to frequently discuss with informants after implementing Case Study 1. More discussions and any other surveying moments after implementing the first collaborative framework would produce more information, best practices, and evidence of the methodology's effectiveness. The PV methodology has been carried out discontinuously during the year due to my non-academic task to pursue and the scarce availability of the informants chosen for joining Case-Study 1. Because of that, the project has been conducted intermittently, scheduling meetings months in advance to increase the odds of meeting the informants for Case Study 1. For example, I had to wait until Christmas to meet Domenico and Claudio. They would have been in Acitrezza only throughout that period since they lived in Milan for study and work purposes. Although they were appointed for the case-study number one in August, they filmed videos only at the beginning of January 2023. I had the same issues reaching Martina because of her busyness. Thus, all this has led to data downsizing resulting

from participants' reflections on the collaborative frameworks, which need to be expanded. The whole project would have benefitted from extra time and more space for manifesting one's sentiment. This limitation implies that my attention had to shift away from quantity to quality. Hence, evaluating the methodology's efficiency has not been based on the extent of the data but in terms of empowerment, bottom-up initiatives and collaboration, according to the principle of idea-based projects. Therefore, the whole methodology has concerned with the empowerment grade.

Nonetheless, the adopted methodology developed, I believe, a sense of community composed by the suffering protagonists of this story, the Rodolicos, and those who feel emotively attached to their quest for survival. This mutual attachment has led local people to take the initiative admirably for the cause through UGC videos. In creating this content, they wanted to be involved in the heritage identification and evaluation process to prevent a standardisation, simplification, abstraction, and naivety of digital knowledge. Informants made videos by themselves using their own devices, and this action showed a certain participation grade, constituting a further opportunity to develop connections between researchers and people. On a broader scale, this methodology led more inclusive, democratic and bottom-up solutions, I hope, in Acitrezza future heritage's policy and management to decolonise the AHD and give more credit to alternative stories of which the Rodolicos are brilliant manifestation.

5.5 Future development

I hope I have demonstrated, once again, that the PV methodology can open new opportunities for future researchers to use media as empowering tool. Also, I hope the readers would consider what I have discussed in the previous sections as guidelines to be followed by those who wish to initiate work on building up video-based protocols to foster inclusion and community involvement. However, the methodology implemented here is not perfect. It deserves to be improved for future implementation, indeed. For this reason, my task and responsibility as an aspiring anthropologist, ethnographer and social science researcher are to look for new methods (and improve existing ones) that can produce alternative stories and enable discordant voices. Among the solutions aimed at enhancing this methodology, it can be helpful to make the PV scalable and repeatable to be fully implemented in

other contexts, albeit I am aware that each situation is unique and have its peculiarities. With an eye to the main limitation of this thesis, it would be beneficial to improve the methodology to ensure an ever-increasing timeframe for gathering more data. More time available would enhance the community-based research approaches, thus contributing to obtaining a more significant amount of data.

As an ideas-based project supporter, it will be important to think long-term and invest in the development of the shipyard. Being fully aware of this has led Alice and me to support that place and its battle for survival. We have opted for a crowdfunding campaign called *Salviamo il Cantiere* (Gofundme, 2022). With this initiative, we want to involve people again, as it was during the implementation of the Participatory video methodology, reliving those moments when the whole community of Acitrezza, romantically, used to gather up around the shipyard to join the process of building up and launch a new boat (Gofundme, 2022). So, funds are needed to help Rodolico's shipyard to dream again. Specifically, money is required to equip the construction site with the structural and functional features necessary for it to be perceived not as a shelter but as a place to experience alternative heritage made up of tales and art, as well as share moments with the picturesque shipwrights. The vision behind crowdfunding is based on four pillars.

- *Preservation*. It is urgent to stop the structure from deteriorating, making it safe. These actions must be performed acting in harmony with the maritime environment and preserving the delicate balance of the local ecosystem.
- *Memory*. It is necessary to ensure that all the cultural heritage linked to the shipwrights' history and carpentry skills will be handed down through the testimonies of the protagonists and the exhibition of objects and images pertinent to the shipwrights' activity within the shipyard.
- *Traditions*. It is vital to nurture the connections between the shipyard and other aspects of local tradition, such as the decoration of wooden boats and the Sicilian cart, activating synergies with the cultural realities of the surrounding area and beyond made up of groups of people or single personalities.

- *Training.* It is fundamental to promote sustainable tourism, hosting workshops and artistic, musical, theatrical, and educational initiatives involving, most of all, children.

In order to pursue our vision, approximately 80,000 euros are required, which will be used for the following operations: pay off the instalments related to the fine of 20,000 € due to the alleged abuse of public property, as we mentioned in chapter two — inner pavements make-over, roof maintenance intervention to prevent water from getting inside, and sanitation adjustment (Gofundme, 2022). Next, the construction of a new electrical system, consisting of cutting-edge lighting for the working and exhibition activities within the place is needed; moreover, the creation of wooden furniture, where it will be possible to display and exhibit artefacts, working tools, documents, pictures, and the several boat models built by Salvatore Rodolico. Then, it is required to build benches and seats for outdoor activities, as well as multi-lingual audio/video guides that will be helpful during visits. Lastly, we aim to promote any study and research activities related to sustainable tourism since the place is located within a natural marine reserve. This a tough challenge that we are ready to accept to let the Rodolicos still keep on dreaming!

Abstract

In the Sicilian maritime town of Acitrezza, the tangible cultural and intangible heritage in the Rodolico's shipyard has been unrecognised over the past years and rarely promoted as part of cultural or economic-oriented activities of the area. For a long time, approaches to cultural heritage in Acitrezza have only celebrated the Verga's greatest masterpiece, I Malavoglia, and the local protected marine area, characterised by the presence of the Faraglioni basaltic rocks. The protracted indifference of the local authority toward the shipyard combined with internal family dynamics seems to condemn this genius loci to oblivion. People believe this misrecognition leads to ignoring a sense of local identity made up of "marine carpentry affairs" and centuries-old tangible and intangible heritage practices that might be meaningful to the local community. This thesis employs a collaborative methodology called Participatory Video (PV) *to investigate an alternative past for the town of Acitrezza, possibly incorporating the shipyard and shipwrights into a new local heritage policy and strategy. Two different approaches, underpinning two cases studies, characterise this methodology: the* postcolonial author *approach, which consists of an equal and peer-to-peer relationship between researchers and informants to create videos about tangible and intangible heritage, and the* author as "a fly in the soup" *approach, which enables informants to create their own personal and community narrative-commentary about private photographs of Acitrezza (and more!). Through the collaborative video-creation process, the thesis demonstrates that the PV methodology can be suitable for collaboration with people when dealing with local issues.*

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RISERVA NATURALE INTEGRALE ISOLA LACHEA E FARAGLIONI DEI CICLOPI 13 MAGGIO 2019 GIORNATA DI STUDIO A CURA DELL'ISTITUTO NAZIONALE DI GEOFISICA E VULCANOLOGIA E DELL'UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI

CATANIA INTERVENTO DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CENTRO STUDI ACITREZZA ANTONIO CASTORINA ACITREZZA NELLA STORIA. (n.d.). http://www.cutgana.unict.it/sites/cutgana.unict.it/files/files/Castorina.pdf

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Appendix 1: List of transcriptions in case study 1

Translations from Italian for subtitling video of case study 1: user-generated videos, tangible and intangible heritage, provided by me, is shown below.

1. THE HISTORY:

Claudio: what kind of dog is that?

Gianni: he's a Siberian Husky! Follow me, guys.

Gianni: there's no place like this here, in the area!

Claudio: you're unique!

Gianni: I am the fifth generation of shipwrights, me, and my brother. So, it is a serious matter! 212 years of history.

Gianni: the journalist who wrote this article for the centenary of Verga's death came to and told us 'You're the most reliable source of information on this topic…who else?! Inside Verga's masterpiece, *I Malavoglia,* you can find *Mastro Zuppiddu* and *Bastianazzo*; these characters were members of Rodolico's family of shipwrights. So, they are our ancestors.

Claudio: were there shipwrights in Catania at the same time?

Gianni: Yes, there were! My father knew them. Now their heirs…

Claudio: they quit the job!

Gianni: they're all gone!

Claudio: you're the only survivors.

Gianni: in Acitrezza, only the Rodolicos remain…as shipwrights.

Gianni: we used to build 6 boats per year for fishing swordfish and tuna. (Boats) were made of a unique structure and supports, since fishermen had to face sea state 8 -9, when they used to go fishing, so these boats had to have a solid, strong, and safe structure! For God's sake, nothing bad ever happened…in Rodolico's shipyard!

2. THE KNOW-HOW:

Gianni: Here's the boat, the *Agatino the first.* For every boat built, he made measurements.

Claudio: is this a preparatory sketch?

Gianni: Yes, it is! Every boat has a proper sketch and specific measurements with proper length and width; we call it (the sketch *ed.*), the 'computer'. I always use this expression during the school visits. I always tell kids this is our computer. They burst out laughing and they reply to me "Really?"

Gianni: My father…used to build 6 boats per year. Look up there! Isn't mastery, is it? Handiworks created using clubs and nails. These are the clubs, guys…as you can see. All day long, nailing 14cm spikes…

Claudio: How much for the boat over there?

Gianni: they cost 100-150-180 million, depending on boats' dimensions.

Gianni: Once people agree the price, as far as remember as child, the deal was based on a simple handshake between my father and the buyer. We usually said, 'in 5 years we'll start building your boat', since there was a waiting list, because of the workload. So, there was a 5-years delay to address before building up new boats.

Gianni: These ones are 5cm thick curved boards placed in the stern.

Giuseppe: How did you curve them?

Gianni: with fire and water.

Giuseppe: with fire and water?

Gianni: Yes!

Giuseppe: how precisely?

Gianni: there are two systems to curve boards! Using fire and water or using a tube to boil water as it was a pot (for pasta cooking); and then we curved the boards with the water…all day long following this procedure. When we make the boards smoother, we curved them! It was a difficult process since we were dealing with 5-cm thick boards.

Claudio: After I task you with building a boat, which are the steps to cover? You start the process from sketching, am I wrong?

Gianni: first, you ask me…

Claudio: …I need a boat…

Gianni: …you need a 5 meters boat…So we show you a model of reference, ready-to-serve. And you are like "I want one like that". So, we have the reference, and we start. The width must be 1/3 of length. Having a model of reference gives you an

advantage! We have just to make measurements and then you start. First, the bow, then the stern; lastly, the frame.

Claudio: where does this job take place? Physically, I mean.

Gianni: here! We used to start the process here, me and my father, when we had wide gates and big boats could pass through them. Now, since the doors are closed, we cannot perform those actions here anymore. So, we have moved there…

Claudio: so, the only operation performed here were…cut and trim operation, right?

Gianni: cutting operations or shaving, while building operations outside. Follow me!

Claudio: so, from sketch to this area…building operations take place here?

Gianni: yes, indeed! Here or under the roof, and the giant boats in the courtyard.

Claudio: outside?

Gianni: only outside!

Gianni: with our know-how, we tight up the frame to create one single wooden block. A weld joint by nails, and then the whole structure arises. Half and half because the space was not enough.

Claudio: how the unrefined wood resisted to atmospheric agents?

Gianni: we use a top-class wood; a wood that can resist to humidity.

Claudio: because of its inner properties or does it need to be refined?

Gianni: at the end, we refine it with gripping and then colours the owner wants…light blue…white.

Claudio: is wood unrefined during construction, right?

Gianni: during building operations we put only lead, the gripping made of lead on this layer. At the end…the painter is those who decides how to decorate, along the owner of the boat. We do what the owner wants. When the boat is ready, we give it with the invoice attached. We give it to the owner. From this action to the priest…the baptism…the inauguration with the banquet and then we go out and launch it.

Claudio: how long to complete the process?

Gianni: it takes two months…and two shipwrights, assuming we already have the refined woods because it takes time to refine woods. Then, we start! Thanks to this process, we are sure that one boat can last forever. You have to remember: if you

don't have care of wooden boats, better to switch to glass-resin boats. Big boats require 2 quality control, annually, during which we check everything: the bulk, the caulk, to avoid the water gets into. Everything has to be checked. You can still admire 100-years old boats.

Claudio: so, this skeleton had to be covered…

Gianni: yes, it did. This is the first layer of plywood. Two-three rows of plywood, and then, over the part exposed to water, namely the bulk, we put a layer of pitch pine, a very strong type of wood…perfect for these constructions. This wood has been always used with good results. While the plank is made of ash, which is tough, flexible but very expensive.

3. THE ARTWORK

Gianni: we need to loosen the blade after work before the night when the temperature drops. If we don't loosen it, the blade stretches itself to the extent that it may break; so, when we finish working, we loosen the blade. Thus, it doesn't meet resistance, even though there is a friction during the night. As result, the lame remains untouched. This belongs to the know-how pertinent to shipwrights. These are rules to follow to prevent blade damage. This board belongs to a boat berth. This board is made of marine plywood: top-class wood for sea carpentry. So, I am about to build this berth with its constituent parts: the base and small doors. Everything this berth needs. Now it's time to use the electric saw.

Gianni: this a typical *trezzota*[32] boat model. The real ones are 5 - 4.9 - 5.10 meters longer. My father, brother and I have made these 40 – 70 cm boat models. Our tools are useless to create models smaller than 40 cm because our tools have been designed for bigger boats. Therefore, no tiny boats allowed because it is dangerous. So, this is a typical boat built by Acitrezza's shipwright; a double-tip boat which need to be sand down by shaving the surface.

---

[32] Trezzota means people/ things from Acitrezza.

Gianni: in these small boats we follow the same procedure of bigger boats. We have the bulk…the "first"…the bow, the stern and, comparing to the length, the width has to be 1/3 of length. Thus, what happen next? If you start with the central frame, heading towards the bow and stern, the width of the boats gradually shrinks until the boat takes a semi-final form, ready to be modelled. And then we start to build up the filling of the rib. Lastly, they are painted by Alice Valenti who is going to decorate them. As a result, they will be different, turning out to be wonderful.

Giuseppe: like that one? The final model might be that one, right?

Gianni: Yes, indeed. Although the boat lacks the decoration, it is important to decorate them, but first painting them with gripping and colours, and then Alice Valenti, the artist from Catania, do the rest: the decoration, drawings which belong to the boat figurative tradition!

4. THE PAINTER:

Gianni: One meter! So, it is 1.80 meter long.

Alice: from this point?

Gianni: Yes, it is. The total length is 1.95 meter!

Alice: In total? Ok, let's write down 1.80 meter.

Gianni: deal!

Alice. These decorations belong to the old-fashioned *carretto*[33] painting tradition. They are called *cartocci*, namely the typical canes of the Renaissance. You can find them in little old carts. They are so rare on the boats because they are so difficult to paint along boats surface. You can find simpler since boats have to face a fast deterioration.

Alice: this boat has been restored by me and Rodolicos in 2016. It stayed here for 1 year and while the boat had been restored by Rodolicos, I decorated it. I was torn between decorating the boat in a traditional way or using for this boat all the inputs

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[33] Alice Valenti is an artist from Catania. She's a painter and decorator of Sicilian carts. Also, she is known for being the only student of the master craftsman, Domenico Di Mauro, one of the last holders of the Sicilian art of decorating carts.

I have received here, and this is what happened at the end. On the sides, shipwrights are depicted at work. There are decorations borrowed from the Greek iconography.

Alice: There was moment when Rodolicos were experiencing a crisis. Consequently, we didn't know if the shipyard would survive, or it would disappear forever. As a result, we experienced very rough months.

Alice: So, this name, we hope, will bring us good luck and it is working.

Appendix 2: List of transcriptions in case study 2

Transcription and translation of the audio commentary by Salvatore and Gianni Rodolico used for subtitling on *case study 2: video-voice technique on private photographs*.

00:10 – 00:28

The Visconti's movie in Acitrezza, *La terra trema*. All the actors came from Acitrezza. The first is the main character. The second is my grandfather who was repairing a boat.

00:28 – 00:43

Here I am, I was 10 years old. This was the time after WWII. We experience hunger back then. They gave me a small compensation to buy something to eat.

00:43 – 1:01

Gianni: "what does this pic reminds you?"

Salvatore: it reminds me I was much younger. We worked as full-time shipwrights. Sweet memories!

Gianni: in 1960s my father had his own activity. In his own…He was already doing big boats back then.

1:01 – 1:23

Gianni: this picture shows my grandpa and my uncle Mario. They were working on a *lancia*[34]. Often my grandfather used to tell us, my brother and me, "I will make a lancia for you as gift". When a possible buyer approached my grandpa, he sold it to him. Every time we were so disappointed because of this "lancia thing", year after year. "If you help me, this boat will be yours". And then he sold it.

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[34] A wooden-hulled boat with a generally square stern, used for transporting people.

1:23 – 1:43

Gianni: this is…mmm…a *gozzo*[35], dad!

Salvatore: This is a gozzo with coralere…

Gianni: called *buliscricani* in Sicilian dialect. Also, *bulescici*.

Giuseppe: what's bulescici?

Gianni: the term bulescici indicates fishing nets.

1:43 – 1:55

Gianni: (My grandpa *ed.*) is doing caulking for the boat. He's putting a tarry patch among boards and cracks to avoid water gets inside and it is called caulking.

1:55 – 2:31

Gianni: here's my grandpa's house and we're celebrating his birthday. From shooting point of view, all of us, namely nephews. I have very good memories of my grandpa. When I was 7 years old, I was with him. While he was putting the hull's frames, I stared at and helped him, passing him the tools and nails. I was a child, and I was always with him. He usually tasked me to buy cigarettes, the *nazionali senza filtro*[36]. These cigarettes were well famous back then. Sweet memories! Every Sunday, he brought us to the cinema in Acitrezza. For Saint Sebastian, he brought us to Acireale.

2:31 – 2:41

Gianni: the picture is set here.

Giuseppe: is the current shipyard's location, isn't?

Gianni: Yes, indeed!

Giuseppe: when did you move here exactly?

Gianni: 50 years ago!

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[35] Boat with the bow equal to the stern, rowed, sometimes single-masted with a small sail. Used for transporting goods; and it is also used in fishing.

[36] Cigarettes without filter like the MS were the rule and not the exception in the past. National ones were made from domestic tobacco, in domestic factories. The state owns both the crops and the factories. The price of "National" cigarettes was very low compared to others. But the quality was mediocre. They called them unfiltered because you could taste the full flavour of tobacco (quora.it)

2:41 – 2:51

Gianni: Luisa Corna…Luisa Corna came to us when the tube, aimed at absorbing the dust and clean boards was on! And then she decided to make a reportage with beautiful pictures about my dog as well – I had that dog back then. She spent half day here!

2.51 – 3:17

Gianni: he is my dad. This picture was used by Alice Valenti, the artist from Catania, as model to decorate *Speranza.* So, one side hosts my father drawing; the other side, my grandpa!

3:17 – 3:52

Gianni: first, boats were moved to the water from the seaside. During the night, my parents woke me at 2-3 am because no traffic jam. One by one, boats were moved using trucks. So, from the seaside where the shipyard was, boats usually passed through the town, heading to the *chiosco*[37]. Once arrived there, we relied on cranes to get boats down to the water and then launch them officially. Such a tough challenge.

3:52 – 4:05

Gianni: he's my father and my uncle. My father already wore a black strip on his harm because of the death of my grandma Italia.

4:05 – 4:19

Giuseppe: someone's building something here, isn't?
Gianni: a cabin cruiser.
Salvatore: yes, a cabin cruiser.
Giuseppe: does that boat have motor inside?

---

[37] It is a very important place in Sicily: a lot of people usually gather around the chiosco to get a drink and/or an Italian espresso.

Gianni: yes! First motorboats.

4:19 – 4:41

Gianni: this place is Riposto where my father had another shipyard. Here we run boats aground and we built bigger boats because the seabed was deeper. So, it was possible to build up bigger boats. Those little two, on the bow, are me and my brother.

4:41 – 5:08

Gianni: this is a boat as you can see. Those are the beams and then we put the upper deck. And where the holes are, you insert bulwark stanchion for topside.

5:08 – 5: 25

Gianni: this is the bigger boat I mentioned built in Riposto since the seabed was deeper.

Giuseppe: what's her name?

Gianni: *Giovanni delle Bande Nere*, as you can see.

Giuseppe: why this name?

Gianni: Giovanni delle Bande Nere was chosen by the owners, the name is not up to us.

5:25 – 5:50

Gianni: This is a picture of my grandpa used for a calendar

Giuseppe: do you remember the name of the calendar?

Gianni: No, I don't because I was not there. My mother saw the calendar by chance. She asked the seller to buy it because "he is my father-in-law", and now we have it. The scene is still set on the seaside, where the previous shipyard was located 50 years ago.

5:50 – 6:32

Gianni: this boat's name was Iolanda and she was made for Taormina.

Giuseppe: when did you built it?

Gianni: in 1970s. Yes, in 1970s. I still remember it because I worked on that.

Giuseppe: who tasked the construction of this boat?

Gianni: The Iolanda, by the family Trismark from Taormina for fishing purposes. We have done only fishing-aimed boats. Swordfish and tuna. Because of our boats, swordfish boats experienced an improvement, specifically in these years. Before that, fishermen did not even have trawl to take this kind of fish.

6:32 – 6:56

Gianni: this is a sailboat my father did in Riposto, and that man is his cousin; and the boat is called snoopy. My father usually did not build sailboats, but he made an exception for his cousin, so he did a favor to him by building it, after his cousin insisted a lot; and my father said "ok, let's do it". To be honest, my father could build even those kinds of boat easily, because he has been a great craftsman and still, he is.

6:56 – 7:16

Gianni: we are in Acitrezza, and the boat is called Leonardo da Vinci. In that moment we were doing the same process: from the seaside to the water, and that man with the white t-shirt is my dad; and the kids with blue shirts are me and my brother.

Giuseppe: how big was the boat?

Gianni: 20 meters.

Salvatore: maybe more!

Gianni: 22-23 meters.

7:16 – 7:42

Gianni: this boat's name is Graziella. She was built here, and my father is depicted while he was using anti-vegetative products. And this boat was modified by us: the stern went from being rounded to squared. Now she is in Malta. I know that because people from Malta came here and they showed it to us. They told us literally "the boat is like iron".

7:42 – 8:04

Gianni: this picture shows boats ready to be launched here in Acitrezza. All the boats are ready to be launched. We used to run 40 boats aground. Luckily, we had the crane called "mamma" because it prevented any back injury. From that moment on, our backs were safe!

8:04 – 8:18

Gianni: there she is! We were in the shipyard and this boat is called *Europa*.

Giuseppe: the famous Europa.

Gianni: we were depicted while we were building it. We were building up the frame. Look the squared stern, rather than rounded!

8:18 – 8:51

Gianni: I was in the front page when as shipwrights we had problems with the local authority. They wrote an article about this situation within *La Sicilia*[38] newspaper. And in the main page they wrote "the last shipwright that law wants to force out". From this moment our war has begun! But, with the help of our friends I was put in the main page. This thing was so fast. So, these friends helped me a lot. And I won't forget it.

8:51 – 9:13

Gianni: well, this picture depicts me, my brother, and my father. It is a testament of 50-years of activity here, together. And we wish we will stay active longer and keep on doing this job even if it will mean building only small boats. We just want to survive, but, above all, we want to pass down the culture of shipwrights which is important for Acitrezza's community.

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[38] La Sicilia is the most important newspaper in the region.

Appendix 3: the image release form

LIBERATORIA/AUTORIZZAZIONE PER LA PUBBLICAZIONE DI FOTO E VIDEO

Il/La sottoscritto/a _____

Cognome _____ Nome _____

Nato/a a _____ Prov. _____ Il _____

Residente a _____ Prov. _____ Via _____ n° ___

C.F. _____

Con riferimento alle immagini (foto e video) scattate e/o riprese dal/la Signor/a _____ (*nome società o nome fotografo / video operatore*), il giorno __/__/____ presso _____ in occasione _____

con la presente:

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Luogo e Data: _____

In fede _____

Informativa per la pubblicazione dei dati

Informativa ai sensi dell'art. 13 del D. Lgs. n. 196/2003. Si informa che il trattamento dei dati personali, informa che i dati personali conferiti con la presente liberatoria saranno trattati con modalità cartacee e telematiche nel rispetto della vigente normativa e dei principi di correttezza, liceità, trasparenza e riservatezza; in tale ottica i dati forniti, ivi incluso il ritratto contenuto nelle fotografie suindicate, verranno utilizzati per le finalità strettamente connesse e strumentali alle attività come indicate nella su estesa liberatoria. Il conferimento del consenso al trattamento dei dati personali è facoltativo. In qualsiasi momento è possibile esercitare tutti i diritti indicati dall'articolo 7 del D. Lgs. n. 196/2003, in particolare la cancellazione, la rettifica o l'integrazione dei dati. Tali diritti potranno essere esercitati inviando comunicazione scritta.

☐ presto il consenso ☐ nego il consenso

Luogo e Data: _____

Firma (leggibile) _____

Appendix 4: List of videos submitted

Video	Date	Length	File Location	Description
Case study 1 video	2023	00:16:10	https://youtu.be/XBYzbaLAyHg	This video depicts intangible heritage, history, and traditional practices in Acitrezza. Participatory Video methods produced it.
Case study 2 video	2023	00:09:18	https://youtu.be/jPLZoWZm0do	This video consists of shipwrights reflecting on a video made of private photographs of Acitrezza (and more!). It was created through Participatory Video methods.
Shipwrights	2022	00:16:36	https://youtu.be/69SaWwzAMxo	This video is the documentary made by me and Roberto Maiolino about the Rodolicos shipwrights and their shipyard in 2021.
Microsoft's channel, "the Rodolico experience"	2023		https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3aU91HflwQP8oc11n0z-DvQeQx1c4HHvC7glZeJprWUa81%40thread.tacv2/conversations?groupId=86c00887-3bc0-406f-9446-f4d589cff9bd&tenantId=ca2a7f76-dbd7-4ec0-9108-6b3d524fb7c8	Clicking the link will be possible to get inside the channel created by the author of this thesis on Microsoft Team where all the videos collecting through the framework underpinning Case Study 1 have been stored as well as the edited video. Also, it will be possible to find the archival pictures I got from the Rodolico's house.

Appendix 5: Salvatore Rodolico's letter to the mayor[39]

In your hands.

Dear Mr Mayor,

I am Salvatore Rodolico, holder of the historical shipyard of Acitrezza. As Rodolicos, we have been doing this business for four generations: my grandfather, my father, me and my two sons, Sebastiano and Giovanni. I have been in this profession for 80 years, since I was 14. In my yard, I have built, hauled, and launched boats of any size over the years. I have manufactured vessels sold everywhere: Sicily, Liguria, Campania and beyond! I collaborated with carpenters and apprentices; no incident ever occurred in the shipyard. I still have an invoice dated back to 1908 from my grandfather attesting to the construction of a boat commissioned by the University of Catania and used to transport people on Lachea Island. Also, I have a certification released by the Ministero della Marina Mercantile, in 1986, recognising my value and mastery in my job. Finally, I am part of the hall of fame of Italian shipwrights.

I do not understand why the local administration of Acicastello is currently penalising me with a considerable fee even though I have been spending so much money on putting pending administrative disputes in order. Once we had completed our work, we inspected the docks where we used to haul the boats and steel cables. They made me buy one purifier and paid approximately 10.000 € because the water I used to wash boats had to be filtered before it flowed into the seawater; for this purpose, I bought collectors for polluted water. At the very end, the local administration forced me to throw the purifier and collectors away because they stated I could not drain even the filtered water anywhere. For sixty years, I have hauled the boats ashore at the end of the season. Back in the day, to do this operation, you did not have to pay any fee for hauling the boats because the

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[39] I translated the letter, written by Salvatore Rodolico in English.

pertinent area was Italian Maritime State property. Then, everything changed since the area (only the area for moving boats!) turned out to be Acicastello municipality's property. So, I have decided to regularise the situation with the office by paying the IMU for using the hauling area. And after doing so, it turned out that I should have paid IMU for the whole space occupied by the shipyard. But in the meantime, I hauled five boats ashore before acknowledging that. Because of the lack of communication, I had to pay 14.000 € for breaking the law. After having paid fines and regulated my administrative situation to avoid any further unfortunate events, the local administration told me that it would not ever be possible to haul anymore because the shipyard area turned out to be part of the protected marine area. Why was I not told earlier? If I had been promptly informed, I would have avoided debt. How will I pay all these debts since there are not enough well-paid jobs? We had to mortgage my son Giovanni's house to repay the debts. You know, when it rains, it pours. In addition to what had been already paid, my family had to spend several lawyers to deal with the Harbour Office, which obliged us to deliver a new fee. Also, we were forced by the local administration to throw wooden sleepers and other shipyard property away; and all this cost us a lot of money. To be precise, I had to pay 34,000 € to dump slipways, potting, steel cables and the cleaner. When the Acicastello's municipality decided to enlarge the marina of Acitrezza, they assured me nothing would happen to the shipyard throughout the project realisation. Not only was I forced to shut down any activity inside the shipyard, but I also had to move all the carpentry machinery and dismantle part of the electrical system. Also, they messed up the roof, and I paid 50.000 € to fix it. How? I covered it with metal, wood and partly with reeds. They also broke the pavement, so setting it cost me 15.000 €.

Recently, I was recognised by the Ministry of Culture of Sicily as a *Living Human Treasure*, thus entering the Register of Intangible Heritage. On this occasion, an archive was discovered containing a guy named Antonino Rodolico from Riposto, an ancestor of ours. On this occasion, the mayor came to my shipyard and gave me a recognition plaque. Thus, I took advantage of this to ask the reason for his fury against us. He replied that he had to intervene because the so-called *Centro Studi Acitrezza* (CSA) raised an objection to the regularity of the shipyard's activity. But

the CSA denied it. One of the local administration's duties is to investigate if something is wrong; at the same time, he should have appointed someone appropriate. Someone checked and confirmed I did everything by the book. I believe someone planned every inch of this thing in advance: destroying the historical Rodolico's shipyard of Acitrezza, whose honest activity has given prestige over the years. If such a protest, under the form of this letter, falls on deaf ears, there will be one last thing left to do: chaining me up and holding a sign in front of Town Hall. Isn't it paradoxical to have a mayor who simultaneously rewards and tries to bring you down? Is it not hypocritical? I am 81 years old by the time of this letter, and I will not survive if they take away my shipyard. I appeal to you, Mr Mayor since I am scared and disparate. I hope you will help me. Thank you!

Appendix 6: List of transcriptions in *Shipwrights* documentary

Gianni: we made this boat twenty-five years ago. So, obviously, we redid the superstructure, the plywood on the inside and these lap seats, and so we're changing them. And then the painting will be done and that's another customer that will be ready.

Salvatore: this is called *nassarola*, because they used to catch shrimp with these…This one is called *nassa* (creel), but they were bigger. This one is called *sardara* because it went to the Gulf of Catania to catch anchovies and sardines.

Salvatore: enough, enough, bravo (to Blasco *ed.*)

Gianni: come here Blasco! Bravo. Hunk! All good? Okay, let's go on. Good, good, good! Good, good, good, good, good…give me a kiss!

Salvatore: What do you want? Gianni is here, Gianni is here!

Gianni: I'm here, I'm here! I'm here, my joy! What do you want? I am here!

Gianni: I am the fifth generation of shipwrights. The Rodolicos have all been shipwrights, from my father to my grandfather, my great-grandfather, my brother, me, relatives and uncles. All the Rodolicos have chosen this path, they have done this job as shipwrights. At the beginning of the village, where the posts are, there is a street that is closed to traffic. It is the Rodolico Street. It bears our surname because my father and grandfather used to make boats in a small courtyard there and fifty years ago, we moved here. The change then came when from boats of eight or nine meters, my father had the strength and intelligence to create boats of thirty or thirty-five meters.

Gianni: this is the "computer" of the boats we used to make. This boat was called Agatino. Can you see? It's written there. These are the lengths of the kneel, 14.50 m, and overall, 23 m. Then there are all the widths, the frames, the shaft line. With all these models that we made, which we called small computer, the whole was built. My father made the motorboat fleet in Acitrezza. He did it, not my grandfather, not my ancestors, because at the time there wasn't even the possibility. He made one, two, three, four boats until he built a fleet and the town of Aci Trezza

also benefited a lot from that because they worked, they earned money and every fisherman in Acitrezza made a name for himself. He then made boats for Naples, for Liguria, for the islands, for the whole coast near here: Riposto, Santa Maria La scala, Santa Tecla. He always made boats, six a year, without a moment's respite. We had a bit of a breather in the 1990s when they stopped licenses and so boat building stopped at that time.

Gianni: Now, I let my father make model boats because he can't stand doing nothing. So, I have to try to get him to spend his time because otherwise he gets bored. My father is 83 now. So, I keep him in training with these little boats. Outside, the municipality has taken an area where all wooden boats can park. Outside, the municipality has taken an area where all wooden boats can park. You pay a monthly fee, a minimum. So, in this area I can do my painting, caulking, wood repair, construction work. Anything to keep a boatyard afloat, a story, and at the same time we're happy when people come. It's a great pleasure for us. Many times, we even stop working to account for the people who drop by.

Nuccio: in the end it's all good, all positive. The only regret my family and I had was that the old municipal administration attacked us heavily because they wanted us out of here to make room for other things. The DIGOS[40] came and we were treated very, very badly. This was the worst moment of my life. Of our life. Because I was about to close the business. At that point, when you can't do anything, they even fined me twenty-four thousand euro, unfairly. They wanted to take us away! But our strength, the love of the shipyard, of the work, of what we could say to people or could explain to children was so strong that we never gave up for a moment.

Signora Pina: Martino, turn the pasta, please.
Gianni: don't mess up Martino, don't mess up and don't steal!

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[40] General Investigations and Special Operations Division.

The Parmesan? I don't know whether to put some on or not! Only with fish maybe not, but I put it some on with surf and turf. There's Blasco who looks like Scarface. Like Al Pacino, he looks like Scarface. He looks like Al Pacino; he looks like Scarface.

Salvatore: then, two people came. They weren't from here; they were from northern Italy. They said to me, "are you the shipwright? Congratulations, you have a beautiful dog! I am sorry, that's not a dog! Probably, we're the dogs! Fair enough!" they said.

Salvatore: My wife and I have been married sixty-three years and maybe more. And my wife is my treasure. Of course, it's a treasure to have a person, a wife, after so many years together, sixty-three years. Sixty-three years that I can remember, but maybe longer. And I love her always! I love her and I love her! Come on! Come on!

Martino: When I was a child, whenever there was a summer holiday – we're talking about primary school – I always spent the summer at the shipyard. Either I painted the famous *puntelli*, as they are commonly called, which are the structures where the fishing boats rested once out of water, or my favorite time was fishing.

Martino: it's an ancient craft, a fine craft. The point is that, unfortunately, or fortunately, times change, materials and technologies change, and once upon a time, boats were mainly made of wood, but now they are mainly made of resin. They're polluting, so you'd have to change everything, and I don't think it's even possible to do something like that because of the current location of the shipyard. And so, it is a job that is being lost because of that.

Martino: we had thought about creating a museum and this is an interesting idea because, even if something is no longer done, it is important to pass it on. We learn from history; history teaches us, and we are what we are thanks to history. So, I think it's important to be able to pass on some things for the sake of beauty, the beauty of seeing, of knowing how it used to be. For me this is very important thing. I've been on a few…they call them, tours. Groups that come, and my dad and grandad explain the whole industry, how it used to be, from the early years to how things are done now. And I've been on these visits and just for the beauty of

knowing what it was like us worth it. It's fascinating to see and understand what this type of work was like. Even more if there will be a museum.

Gianni: I want to build a museum in my shipyard. We want to do something to make children, young people, what we used to do. Through videos, explaining it to them, showing them through videos, explaining it to them, showing them and doing some simulations inside the shipyard. It's something that shouldn't be lost, that should be passed on, even if big boats aren't made anymore. It's important to pass on this work, these crafts, which many people, especially young people today, may not know. It's important to understand the value of a historic shipyard turned into a museum in explaining what was done there, how people worked.

Gianni: Guys, anyone want coffee?

Guys: No thanks, we already had some.

Puleo: me, please

Gianni: he always wants it.

Gianni: there are small jobs that used to be done. Not the construction, but the repairs.

Frezer Fetene: is the hull still yours?

Gianni: yes, the hull is ours.

Gianni: are you afraid of Siberian huskies? Is anybody scared?

Guys: no!

Guys: how beautiful he is!

Chiara: he has just introduced himself! Honey, so was he calling us?

Gianni: come on, have you seen them now? Curious!

Chiara: I am Chiara

Cristina: I am Cristina

Frezer: I am Frezer and this is Ciccio.

Chiara: we are here because we wanted to make a documentary about Acitrezza. So, this is our first day so we can get acclimated with it a little bit.

Frezer: someone should try to find out more about how boats were made, in this case, by hand. Nowadays, machinery does it!

Cristina: a lot of traditional things are being lost because of machinery.

Chiara: in fact, it was nice when he told us about the future project of the museum. And how we in our small way can cooperate. First, by putting our passions into action. And then we saw that they are also happy with what we can do. And it was nice. Then, he (Gianni *ed.*) mentioned that before Covid the situation was totally different and for example the presence of children gives us hope that kind of interest is here.

Frezer: and besided the museum there will be a recreational part, where they will teach something for free.

Gianni: then I will show you even if you cannot see it very well.

Alessandra: hi! We are preparing a boat. We want to make it a bit more colorful so that it looks like more attractive. We are preparing a base which will be our sea and which will be home to some fantastic, colorful little fish.

Alessandra: this is a magical place. So these traditions must be passed down, or rather respected because we are in a very special land. If we let these opportunities slip by, we will be the same as the others. And we're not the others, Look where are we!