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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COASTAL TOWNS IN SOUTHERN CAMPANIA REGION

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ABSTRACT

The planning and management of territory has undergone profound changes in recent decades, mainly due to the renewed focus on the component of "natural capital", which resulted in frequent legislative measures, including the establishment of new protected areas (both in ground and marine contexts), the evolution of the concept of sustainable development, up to the current approaches to territorial marketing and branding.

The main problem arising from the sum of many innovations is to avoid any possible conflict, between them, that can reduce or cancel the positive effects. In particular, methods and strategies for a possible development must be compatible with both the extreme delicacy and fragility of the ecosystem in which they operate than with the legislation on protection of the environment of the park authorities.

An emblematic example of this delicate balance can be found by the Cilento coast, the southern part of Campania region, included in the range that runs from *Punta Licosa* in *Punta Infreschi*, area that falls within the boundaries of the "Cilento and Vallo di Diano" National Park and between the two Marine Parks of *Costa Infreschi e Masseta* and *Santa Maria di Castellabate*.

This area, which features unique in many ways, was chosen to study not only the physical aspects (area's topography, geology, etc..), joined with flora and fauna, but also of the most exquisitely anthropic elements (the first permanent settlements - flowering already in pre Hellenistic age, historical development, urban planning and economic development of the territory itself) with the main intent to propose hypothesis for a possible socio-economic development aimed at promoting cultural, economic and social the territories administered for all the 9 municipalities (Ascea, Camerota, Casalvelino, Castellabate, Centola, Montecorice, Pisciotta, Pollica, San Mauro al Cilento) included in the area of study.

Keywords

Sustainable development, Mediterranean, coast, natural parks

1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between resident people and protected areas is always characterized by considerable difficulties, mainly related to the physiological perception of the special authority as carrier of further constraints and limitations endowment (Jannuzzi 1999) to the normal evolution of individual life. This perception, which binds naturally to feelings of mistrust and intolerance (Valdrè 1999), can lead the local community to hostile responses that can result in spontaneous rejection against initiative and institutions connected with the park. Moreover, the need to use economic resources which will divert to other activities for the benefit of the local community, in the general framework of public spending review, contributes to make the situation more complicated.

However, because the "success" of a park or a nature reserve can not ignore the contribution and cooperation of local communities, it is imperative to overcome the prejudice of the establishment of a protected area as an inhibitor of any type of initiative and activities in the area. To pursue this goal the recourse to appropriate communication forms can be useful, to highlight possible benefits and their preponderance with respect to limitations that are undoubtedly present. It becomes absolutely necessary, then, to put the right emphasis on the positive effects induced by the presence of a protected natural area in the specific ambit.

In order to highlight the positive elements it is necessary to analyze and evaluate the structural elements of the involved territory, and in that sense the first consideration is related to the evidence that links the establishment of a protected area with particular environmental conditions. These conditions normally can be found in the context of marginal lands that are often characterized by depressed economy, which is the reason why the establishment of a natural park may be the best basis for the revitalization of the local economy.

The park becomes, in fact, the optimal environment to recover and revive traditional activities, whether they are of small productive transformation, craft or operative based, characterized by specific local expertise, which would trigger a slow extinction as insufficiently rewarded by the global market that, missing adequate promotional formulas, is utterly unable to appreciate the high quality standards.

In fact, the experience gained from the management of national parks shows the promotion and revival of the economy of the surrounding area as a prime target for the institutions, at least as much, if not more, as the strategies of ecosystem management, just to be able to ensure the survival and success, as well as greater economic independence.

In the particular case of Italy, these parks are certainly the most suitable places for experimenting forms of sustainable development, because in them it is easier to get the right balance between the need for protection of natural ecosystems, which are of exceptional value, and expectations of local populations of adequate economic and social development.

This approach is conceptually innovative, combined with a proper use of the tools offered by technological innovation, makes possible to activate processes of development, respecting the appropriate balance between the economic, social and ecological components (Bertini, Palumbo 1999), could lead to obtain that improvement of the quality of life and durable well-being that represent the ultimate goal (Nijkamp, Fusco Girard, 1997).

In this perspective, it is extremely important that the legislator implemented the conceptual change in the interpretation of protected areas (Livigni A. 2006), reorganizing the specific regulations in the best suited way to the need to interpret the protected areas as natural resources with significant potential tourist attraction. In particular, it is greatly interesting the inclusion of experimental production activities in the list of eligible initiatives in a park, if they are compatible.

2. TERRITORIAL AMBIT

The area under study is located on the coastline of the Cilento (sub-region of the province of Salerno) and includes 9 municipalities within the territory of the National Park of *Cilento, Vallo di Diano e Alburni*. They are: Castellabate, Montecorice, San Mauro Cilento Pollica, Casal Velino, Ascea, Pisciotta, Centola, Camerota.

The distinctiveness of Cilento is definitely the merging of seemingly conflicting aspects (Patrizio 2009) ranging from mountain to hill, until the coast. The territorial issue, in itself interesting from a naturalistic point of view (so much so that the Cilento National Park was declared a World Heritage Site), is also vital to its economy.

Considering the nature of the territory, one of the main resources of this area is agriculture, and the breeding of livestock found in the lush hills an excellent habitat to develop. The livelihood in the "primary" also comes from the sea, which naturally occupies a prominent role in the activities of the place, despite the recent establishment of two Marine Protected Areas overlooking the coast and the towns of Castellabate and Camerota-San Giovanni a Piro. Fishing is still a major source of income for many villages situated along the coast.

In recent years, due to the contribution of meaningful investments, which fortunately have so far protected the environment, tourism has also been increased, especially with regard to the agritourism sector.

2.1 A brief history

The historical scope of this territory can be started from the Paleolithic era, due to some findings of bones and tools of the era at Marina di Camerota. During next centuries the territory was strongly affected by proto Etruscans settlements of the late ninth century BC, followed by the arrival of the Greeks between the seventh and sixth centuries BC. Then there was the Samnite penetration and conquest of the region by the Romans, around the third century BC, who gave their name to the region ("cis-Alentum" that is "beyond Alento").

The Romans, unfortunately, had no great honor in the Government of the coastal area that soon turned into a depressed and marshy area, from which the inhabitants emigrated en masse during the subsequent centuries, but were certainly the Gothic -Byzantine War (535-553) and the subsequent settlement of the Lombards which caused the total abandonment of the territory. Only in the next century the first signs of a slight recovery can be detected, with the immigration of Greek monks, to whom we owe the birth of a new civilization.

In inland areas, protected by the Lombard dukes who saw in their presence the only concrete evidence to bring forward their program of clearing and cultivating the land, along the coast and protected from the ever watchful Byzantine fleet, the Greek monks were able to determine the actual rebirth of economic activities in the area. The growth of these units prospered until the mid-ninth century when in Licosa and Agropoli conquered the Saracens settled; the animosity and belligerence of these people forced coastal populations to move inland, with burdensome trips, in order to avoid violence.

The fall of the Lombard princes of Salerno (second half of the eleventh century) gave way to new masters: the Normans, followed by the domination of the Swabians, Angevins and the Aragonese. At the beginning of the sixteenth century (1515), another disaster struck the southern coast: the Barbary pirates, leaving from their bases on the African coast, periodically swooped on Cilento plundering and taking slaves.

In 1537 all the old defense towers were reactivated and some new were planned to stem the problem, so that, in case of danger, the inhabitants could be alerted to escape. The defensive plan was completed only in the second half of the sixteenth century. Between the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth the Cilento Coast was endowed by 57 towers.

After the Barbary came the Turks pirates, who tormented Cilento for over a century: the many towers that were supposed useful to defend the coast, therefore, was not sufficient to carry out the task for which they were made, because they were never really efficient.

Various historical events then followed, until 1805, when it was officially recognized the membership of the territories of the Kingdom of Naples, in which the Cilento fell, to French. After the restoration of "Vienna" in 1815, the throne of Naples returned to the Borbone family. The plebiscite held on 1860 marked then the Unification of Italy.

Emigration was the worse problem at the beginning of the twentieth century reaching the threshold of 60% of the population: this phenomenon generated the serious economic instability that gave a meaningful advantage to fascism that, in fact, carried out the remediation of both the Cilento area and the plain of Sele river. However, the wheat battle for autarky production failed to improve methods of cultivation practiced in the Cilento, damaging indeed the fragile economic systems, causing discord and rebellion.

At the end of World War II iconoclastic spirit seemed to turn into resignation and the Cilento response to the referendum for the Republic was unequivocal: the monarchy. From 1950 until today the History of the Cilento has not made much progress. Only in the nineties, with the establishment of the National Park of Cilento, has been given to these lands a new and important opportunity for socio-economic development.

2.2 Cilento, Vallo di Diano e Alburni National Park

Article 2 of the Law of 6 December 1991, no. 394 (known as the Framework Law on Protected Areas) reports:

“The national parks are made up of land, river, lake or sea that contain one or more ecosystems intact or partially altered by human intervention, one or more physical geological, geomorphologic, biological, of international or national importance for natural values, scientific, aesthetic, cultural, educational and recreational facilities such as to require the intervention of the State in order to preserve them for present and future generations”.

In the same Law, Article 34 sanctioned the creation of the National Park of Cilento and Vallo di Diano (which will later be added to the name *Alburni*) based on that definition and considering the special characteristics of flora and fauna, joined with landscape and nature of the territory of Cilento.

The Cilento, Vallo di Diano e Alburni National Park, registered in the World Heritage List of UNESCO, is entirely contained within the boundaries of the Province of Salerno, and then of the Campania Region. It is the most important Mediterranean park due to the type of environment that

characterizes it. The size of the park is 3,196 square kilometers, includes in its perimeter up to 80 municipalities and its territory goes from sea level to a maximum altitude of 1,899 m.

2.3 Marine Protected Areas adjacent to the coastal settlements of Castellabate and Camerota

Marine Protected Areas called *Costa degli Infreschi and Masseta* and *Santa Maria di Castellabate*, both overlooking the coast of Cilento, born in April 2010, after a long and difficult bureaucratic process. As evidence of this (Patrizio 2010) note that the Decree establishing the MPA called "Costa Infreschi and Masseta" was published in the Official Journal of April 8th 2010, while the Decree on the MPA "Santa Maria di Castellabate" was released the subsequent day.

Marine Protected Areas are divided internally to ensure the fullest protection of the environment, with the strict application of the constraints established by law, in the areas of greatest environmental impact, defined as zone A, while B and C areas you want to ensure a gradual flexibility of protection in implementing these constraints, in order to combine the preservation of environmental values with the enjoyment and sustainable use of the marine environment.

The perimeter of the Park of Costa Infreschi and Masseta starts from Punta Zancale, in the municipality of Camerota (SA), ending at Punta Spinosa, in the municipality of San Giovanni a Piro (SA). In turn, this marine area is divided into three different types, which are:

- Zone A (*total reserve*) goes from Punta Levante Cala Bianca to Santa Maria Grotto;
- Zone B (*general reserve*) from Punta Zancale to Punta dell'Omo;
- Zone C (*partial reserve*) includes the remaining part of the sea within the perimeter of the marine protected area.

The perimeter of the Marine Park Santa Maria di Castellabate includes the stretch of sea adjacent to the coast of the town of Castellabate between Punta Tresino and Punta dell'Ogliastro.

- Zone A (*total reserve*) goes from Punta Tresino to Punta del Pagliarolo;
- Zone B (*general reserve*) includes the stretch of sea surrounding the area A and the stretch of sea facing the coast between Punta Torricella and Punta dell'Ogliastro with a sub-area subjected to a higher regime of environmental protection, given the particular natural interest;
- Zone C (*partial reserve*) includes the remaining part of the sea within the perimeter of the marine protected area.

As the coastline of these two marine areas, as mentioned, falls within the territory of the Cilento, Vallo di Diano e Alburni National Park, its management was entrusted to the latter because Park Authority is closely synergistic with the management of the territories of common Castellabate, Camerota and San Giovanni a Piro. The Coast Guards are entrusted with the functions of close supervision.

3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

As mentioned in the introduction, the success of the establishment of a National Park or Protected Area is closely related to the involvement and cooperation of the local population, which is best achieved by placing the development of operational plans and projects aimed at improving the quality of life and social well-being.

The initiatives of socio-economic development of the area, combined with a proper urban evolution, managed in a compatible way with the peculiarities arising from the necessary protection of natural ecosystems, are certainly key elements for achieving the goals.

The proposals aimed at socio-economic development of the territory must connect naturally with the skills and abilities that are traditionally present on the territory, increasing their skills with appropriate promotional activities related to the presence of protected areas, in addition to promoting organization forms more competitive through the use of innovative technologies available.

Therefore, local production and small processing have to benefit for the maximum support, because directly linked to local production and craft activities, especially when they are related to the production and processing of local products, which are at the same time elements readily available and the most simple way to involve local communities.

The other fundamental aspect in the relationship between citizens and park is represented by the urban management of the territory, in which an approach compatible with the protection must not conflict with the natural evolutionary dynamics of local populations.

Encouraging and giving preference to recovery from the creation of new buildings, which will instead be significantly limited, both in private and in the public environment, including infrastructures, is the most appropriate way to provide adequate dynamic that guarantees effects of reduced impact. In addition, the use of bioengineering techniques, where possible, also associated with reduction plans of "socially useless" buildings would provide further boost to the redevelopment of the area.

Fortunately the legislative approach has been addressed in this direction, as is easy to verify in the Statute of the Park approved by the Ministry of the Environment in January 2013, the majority of points set does not refer to guidelines on absolutist protection of the territory, but indicates strategies for an harmonious and eco-compatible development of Local Communities.

Although the purpose of the institution of the Marine Parks have been substantially altered, as well as the primary function of environmental protection and conservation, there are effective tools for the development of new economic activities which may be of cultural, social, urban, scientific, educational and on protection of natural heritage.

4. EXCELLENCE OF THE TERRITORY

The identification of excellence elements seems to be the most complex duty for those who live in the area, since it is certainly difficult to consider worthy an element that is part of a normal daily life. The collaboration of foreign observers, with good attention, can be extremely useful in identifying particular elements not found in other contexts.

The first element of excellence of a local context such as this one is definitely the same territory, or those unique elements that motivated the establishment of three protected areas that insist on a fairly limited geographical area. The benevolence of Mother Nature, in fact, is evidenced by the presence, in an extraordinary *unique*, of interesting and suggestive the geomorphologic characteristics of the territory, with rare plant and animal species, placed between a blue sea, still largely untouched, and green hills interspersed with ancient olive and incomparable villages rich in precious archaeological, historical and cultural evidences.

The Mediterranean thicket extends along the coastal area with olive and evergreen forests. In the higher altitudes of internal areas rise oak, maple, linden, elm, ash and chestnut trees, while, at greater altitudes, the beech forests cover the mountains. In particular, among the plant species we must mention the presence of Palinuro Primrose (*Primula palinuri Petagna*), a plant belonging to the Primulaceae family, which is endemic in some parts of the Tyrrhenian limestone coast of Lucania and Calabria, which is present in large colonies on cliffs limestone in coastal areas. Although not exclusive element of this field, was chosen as the logo of the Park because present in amounts not found in any other context (pic. 1).

Other types of vegetation with special features are also present, such as the *olive tree*, the *vine* and the *fig tree*, which allowed the acknowledgment of DOP, DOC (Protected and Controlled Designation of Origin) and IGP (Geographical Protected Indication) marks for the quality and uniqueness of the productions related to them.



Pic. 1: The Palinuro primrose (*Primula palinuri Petagna*)

The great variety of morphology and flora, inside a so particular area, is accompanied by an equally specific fauna, among which emerge the Salamander with Glasses (pic. 2) (*Salamandrina terdigitata*) and the Otter. In the mountain areas are observable the Golden Eagle, the Apennine Hare and Partridge, representing the Apennines forms of native animals now extinct in many parts of the territory, while among the pastures there are wolves, foxes and martens.



Pic. 2: The Salamander with Glasses (*Salamandrina terdigitata*)

The coastal strip, however, contributes to the list of territorial emergencies with fish production, improved and enhanced by the compliance with Park protocol, and the proper management of seaside tourism that allowed many beaches, within the study area, for several consecutive years to bear the recognition of the "Blue Flag". Between the elements of particular environmental value there is also an important archaeological context: the site of *Elea Velia*.



Pic. 3: Velia Archaeological Park - The Greek theater

The Velia Archaeological Park (pic. 3), UNESCO World Heritage, is located in the municipality of Ascea. Velia is the name the Romans gave to the Greek colony of Elea. The area in which arose the city is characterized by a promontory jutting out of the sea in ancient times, and was built where the first traces of the Bronze Age have been identified. A few decades after the founding, the city had among its most illustrious citizens philosophers Parmenides and Zeno, who are credited with the establishment of a school of thought in the development of medical sciences and mathematics.

The amount of wealth that form the basic equipment of the territory is then further increased by those related to human presence, hence to the traditional activities operating in the specific geographical area. The basic elements are, of course, related to the entire spectrum of the primary sector as involving agricultural production, livestock and fisheries.

The activities related to the primary sector generates an induced activity of small transformation (Cattaneo, Giudici 2006), which can be characterized either as domestic or as small industrial enterprise, able to determine a range of professional backgrounds ranging from artisan level to worker level with very specific skills.

The set of production and small agro-food transformation generated significant excellences and gave particular glamour to the territory, because they are considered the cornerstones of the local culinary traditions today commonly identified as the "Mediterranean diet" and classified as Intangible Heritage of UNESCO. In this sector definitely worth annotate the oil, buffalo mozzarella and dairy production in general, the wine, the dried figs of Cilento and the famous *salted anchovies in oil* of Pisciotta.

5. INITIATIVES AND POTENTIALITIES

The urban and territorial aspects are of primary importance as much as economic ones for the man/park relationship, because the economic growth associated with normal human evolution can enable the achievement of that well-being status necessary to ensure the success of initiatives to protect the environment. It becomes, therefore, extremely important to encourage the ability to operate favoring the concept of transformation and recovery instead of an increase in construction and improving the economic capacity of the available goods.

In this context it is necessary to facilitate the transformation of the sector enterprises toward companies specialized in the recovery, reuse and renovation of the existing possibly using modern eco-friendly techniques and/or engineering nature, if considering the residential aspect rather than infrastructure or the restoration of the territory. The goal, of course, would greatly benefit if supported by adequate and specific targeted interventions on training and communication.

Regarding the possible initiatives for economic growth, the list of excellence expressed by the territory allows us to understand how the adjective “countless” is just enough. For example, using the most obvious case, all kinds of tourist activities must be able to take advantage of the positive aspects offered by protected areas.

The evolution from traditional, perhaps actually even obsolete, beach tourism can easily evolve integrating the elements of cultural, gastronomic and agricultural products that obtained important achievements especially in recent years. Initiatives of agri-tourism, as well as the creation of packages for ecological, cultural or gastronomic purposes can be greatly facilitated by the presence of the Park.

The use of the sea resource in a different way, yet highly innovative, with hiking initiatives, including snorkeling or diving activities, in the most interesting bio-morphological areas, or with the involvement in professional activities related to the world of traditional fishing offers considerable potential, as well such as initiatives related to recreational boating yet sparsely spread in the southern Italian regions.

Starting from these basic elements it is allowed to create an exceptional amount of combinations that can intercept a large portion of the demand for tourism services that now requires more detailed and targeted products, and that is also prepared to deal with costs significantly above the average to obtain a product that exactly meets its needs.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The proper balance between conservation and development, embodied in the concept of sustainability, which has been rightly placed by the legislature as an essential element of sector regulations, must be the central reference in the activities of local authorities. Land management and urban planning must therefore be understood not as a coercive absolute constraint but rather as a further opportunity to both economic growth and quality of the territory.

In any case, however, we must pay close attention to the remarkable and continuous anthropogenic pressure on the coastal strip, sometimes chaotic and without a well-defined Plan (which are not exempt even the coasts of the Marine Parks). This is necessary to effectively combine a sustainable economic and social development, privileging and promoting, in particular, the so-called "sustainable activities", i.e. all those activities that do not involve damage or loss of natural resources and thus take place in full respect of the environment.

These potentialities represent a great added value for local people to be, with appropriate and targeted initiatives, flywheel for true socio-economic development. Therefore, all the institutions involved have to play not only a mere work of environmental protection and awareness of environmental consciousness among citizens, vacationers and boaters, but they must be able to bet on enhancement and eco-friendly use of all the extraordinary resources that Cilento owns, from sea to natural, from historical and artistic treasures to architectural ones, from the scenery to the food and wine and so on.

In conclusion, even Parks and Marine Protected Areas may not be synonymous with lock of land and sea development and other economic activities - condition that imply the economic decline of the territories until the return to a level of real depression - but a control and inhibition tool to an indiscriminate development of these activities, to avoid that they can consume the resource on which they are based. The protected area wants to be, therefore, a valuable tool for the careful management of marine and coastal resources for the preservation of the common good, the survival of which is indissolubly connected with the economic and social growth of the local, regional and national levels.

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