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A Systems Approach to Local Territory as a Driver for Creative Tourism Development on the Amalfi Coast¹

Citarella, G.^{*}
Maglio, M.[†]
Università di Salerno (Italy)

ABSTRACT

In recent years creativity has become a resource not only in relation to artistic and cultural activities but also in terms of economic growth and development of tourism enterprises and geographical regions. This has determined the diffusion of creative tourism based on principles of sustainability. However, debate on the issue – above all in Italy – is still ongoing as concerns definitions in line with scientific literature. Our research attempts to show that the foundations for the success of this kind of tourism lies in the consolidating of the local economy based on creativity in a systems logic. To this aim a case study on the Amalfi Coast area (Salerno) is presented providing a framework of the characteristics and creative potential in terms of tourism in order to highlight both the dynamics in act and the most significant elements for the construction of a *creative ambience*. Our study concludes however, that such a model cannot be considered merely a solution for all ills, but on the contrary, can be exploited only by territories that enjoy a creative *humus*. In other words, strategies put in place should exalt what is rooted in the geographical, social and cultural reality, i.e. as the potential base for the affirming of this new niche of cultural tourism. Otherwise, any initiatives undertaken risk becoming useless and a waste of resources.

Keywords: Tourism, Culture, Creativity, Territorial System, Networks

* E-mail address: gcitarella@unisa.it

† E-mail address: mmaglio@unisa.it

Introduction

The creativity issue is currently of great interest and state of the art as evidenced by the numerous ongoing research studies underpinned by diverse theoretical approaches. Such studies have analyzed the factors capable of conferring competitive advantage on local territories. In this context, growing attention has been addressed to the creative economy and in particular to the cultural-creative industries (Bertacchini e Santagata, 2012), not to mention to the implementing of national and international policies supporting them (European Commission, 2012).

Taking into account that creativity and territoriality have emerged as new factors of local development (Montanari, 2011), numerous interdisciplinary studies have followed with the aim of mapping and classifying the cultural and creative sector. This process has generated a wide range of classifications, due to conceptual difficulties and limits imposed by statistical data detecting systems. The result has been that the transversal element with regard to the sector does not always emerge. Santagata (2009) for instance has isolated three sectors on which to focus attention in order to define opportune lines of (institutional) action capable of exploiting *spillover* effects in similar economic sectors: 1. historic and artistic heritage (cultural heritage, architecture, music and shows, contemporary art); 2. industry of content, information and communication (computers and software, publishing, TV and Radio, advertising, cinema); 3. material culture (fashion, industrial design and craftsmanship, industry of taste).

Tourism is a sector closely linked to culture and creativity in that it is a needs based industry (in terms of knowledge acquisition and leisure). The modalities of association between tourism and creativity has become a fertile field for studies on creative tourism, i.e. tourism that actively involves the user, offering opportunities for learning about local culture and for developing the creative potential through participation in courses and experiences characteristic of the tourist destination itself (Richards e Raymond, 2000, p. 18). Even UNESCO (2006), in its Report on the strategies for the development of creative tourism, has defined this kind of tourism as “travel directed toward an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place, and it provides a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture”.

This form of tourism responds precisely to the contingent demand of tourists to “enhance their abilities” in particular segments of the creative economy, participating actively in the learning experience (Wurzburger et Al., 2010). At the same time, it responds to the need on the part of some tourist destinations to diversify and revitalize the economy in order to deal with recurrent crises in a highly competitive market on the one hand and on the other, to protect and safeguard the environment and conditions of socio-economic wellbeing (Citarella and Maglio, 2013a).

The geographical distribution of creative tourism however does not depend exclusively on the density of some cultural and creative industries but also on the presence of networks of formal and informal relations between the diverse institutional and socio-economic stakeholders making up the local community repository of ancient traditions

and knowledge (Dematteis and Governa, 2009). A homogenous geographical area enjoying a coherent and integrated mix of activities, services and attractors can at the same time, enhance distinctive territory resources and local culture to the benefit of the tourists and render the destination competitive (Citarella and Maglio, 2013b). In this context, the systems paradigm, investigated by means of an interdisciplinary approach, enables the defining of the elements necessary to guarantee the territory the means of being qualified, operating and being acknowledged as a creative tourism system.

Based on these considerations, our study, illustrating the elements underpinning trends in tourism competitiveness (Section 1) and presenting in particular the characteristics of tourism in the Amalfi Coast area (Section 2), aims to verify whether the area has the necessary requisites for putting in place a model of tourism enhancement of creative territories. This would guarantee the originality and genuine factors of the territory and avoid the risk of participating in a circuit of reproduction in series of products or cultural attractors, rendering the tourist destinations involved banal and commercial (Richards and Wilson, 2006). The study – carried out by means of an on the ground analysis – is based on a geographical-interpretative approach in order to illustrate the creative tourism characteristics of the area (Section 3), to identify the most suitable kind of territorial organization to enhance (Section 4) and to define the necessary measures for *rediscovering* the Amalfi Coast as a creative tourism destination (Conclusions).

1. The territorial competitiveness of tourist areas

Tourism constitutes a vital component of our modern economy and, at the same time, a resource capable of responding in a concrete way to territory development needs. The challenges imposed by the process of globalization have over the years generated significant changes that do not only concern changing trends in demand but also the increase in supply by virtue of diversification. The inserting in the tourism circuits of destinations once unknown (i.e. Island Hianan-Cina) or too frequently visited (i.e. Romagna Riviera) becoming interesting areas to visit and explore in that they propose to the tourist a *total*, i.e. complex and diversified tourism leisure experience (Cracolici, 2006).

Such transformations have inevitably provoked growing competition between geographical areas, founded not exclusively on specific aspects of the services provided but involving the destination as a whole², considered a core element in the tourism system (Buhalis, 2000) and, therefore, a competitive subject³ distinguished by specific peculiarities representing the basis of its competitive advantage compared to its competitors (Sainaghi, 2008). These are the main motivations that have pushed experts of international and national renown to analyze the factors that determine the competitive positioning of a place in order to comprehend what essential characteristics attract to a territory greater tourist demand.

The analysis of values and potential linked to a destination require an interdisciplinary interpretation by means of conceptual categories deriving from economic, sociological

and managerial studies, in order to grasp all the relevant dimensions. Clearly, the issue of competitive tourism⁴ is an area of growing interest both among scholars and policy and decision makers, despite the fact that starting from the 1990s, multi-sector literature has prospected various definitions and the conviction that a complex theoretical framework remains. Advanced research studies concern the contributions provided by Crouch and Ritchie (2003), who define competitiveness destinations endowed with an *appeal* capable of generating a tourism experience superior to that offered by other territories, satisfying the needs of demand and at the same time, consolidating the positioning of the destination on the market. The two researchers have observed that the success of a territory is characterized by two types of advantages. *Comparative advantages* concern resources that are not replicable (such as human resources, physical, cultural, historical etc.). In this case, fifty per cent can be considered attractors by virtue of the presence of endogenous factors that make the destination interesting in the tourist's eyes (Corigliano and Mottironi, 2012). On the contrary, *competitive advantages* are determined by the capacity to attract visitors, enhancing the destinations in terms of respect for the environment, the protection and safeguarding of cultural specifics and in improving the wellbeing of the residents. A geographical area with extremely banal resources but capable of governing them in a profitable manner, paradoxically, can be more competitive than another which despite being endowed with a distinctive heritage, is not able to use it effectively.

Crouch and Ritchie frame their paradigm, identifying two types of inter-dependent contexts, which impact on both material and immaterial factors determining the attraction of a destination: the macroeconomic and the microeconomic context. The former is characterized by a number of conditions that are not directly linked to the tourism sector but which are capable of impacting on it to a great extent. In other words, demographic, economic, political, technological, environmental, climatic and socio-cultural factors can reflect positively or negatively on the competitiveness of the destination. The latter concerns the series of actions and activities put in place by the players of a tourism system, i.e. the suppliers, intermediaries and consumers (Porter, 1985).

The researchers also define four essential components: *core resources and attractors*, i.e. fundamental characteristics underpinning the *appeal* of a destination guiding visitors in their choice of destination (climate, culture, history, mix of activities, special events, entertainment etc.); *support factors* (infrastructure, hospitality, entrepreneurship), representing the qualifying pre-requisites of a local integrated system; *destination management*, i.e. the set of strategic activities underpinning the responsible organization of territory resources (i.e. marketing, human resource coordination and development); *decisive factors for the competitiveness of a territory* (localization, security, loading capacity), that can result in a positive or negative cascading or spillover effect on destination image.

Subsequently the focus of debate has addressed new trends in *destination management*⁵, based on territorial marketing tools for sustaining integrated tourism development (Presenza, 2007). The need to enhance local resources, activities and

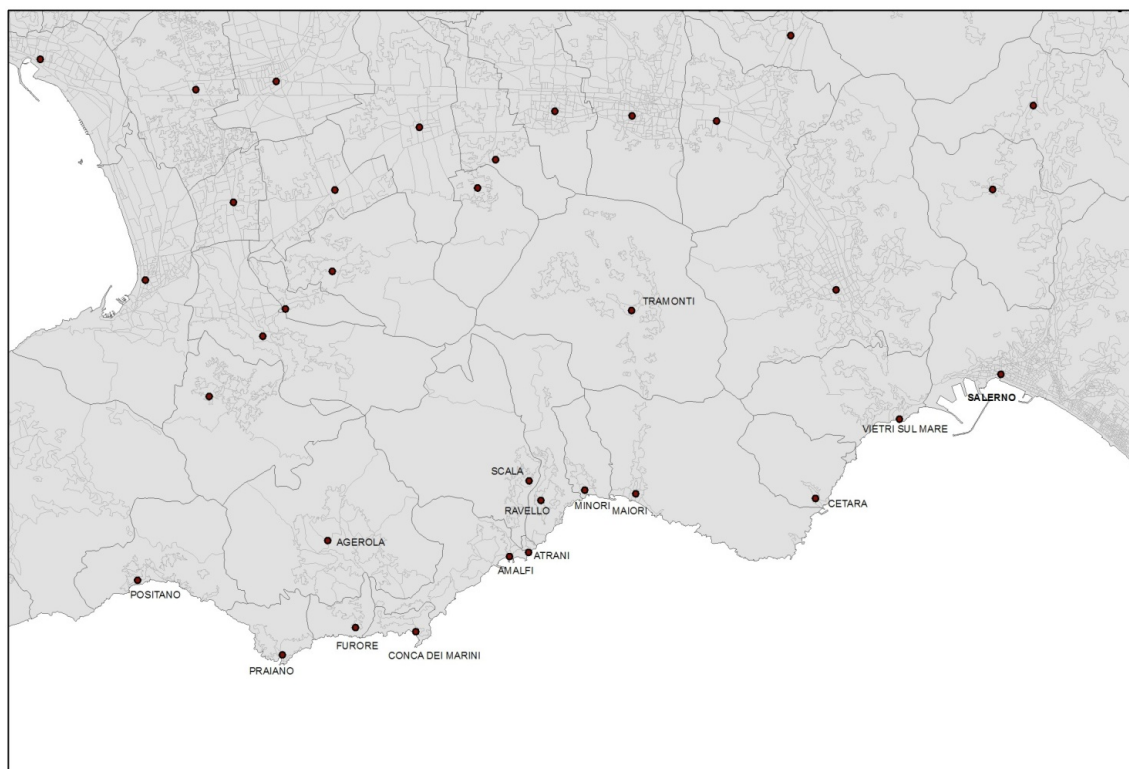
territory services on the part of local players has been emphasized, keeping in mind the differing expectations on the part of tourists.

Starting from Richie and Crouch's analysis, two economists Dwyer and Kim (2003) have raised various issues, proposing an in depth analysis of the above mentioned factors: *resources and attractors*⁶, with regard to the reasons that make a destination potentially interesting; *destination management*, that enables the use of existing resources and their transformation into tourism products; *contingent conditions* that concern a number of exogenous factors; finally, *conditions underpinning demand*, that intercept traveler perceptions and preferences as indicators for planning travel experiences. The two researchers maintain that competitiveness derives from the capacity of the operators to transform the specifics of a place into tourism products that satisfy the target of demand and that contribute in a significant way to determining the lasting and sustainable development of the destination. This entails, according to the experts, the need to devise strategies adequate to the innovative trends in demand and structured on a diversified offer in a systems logic and in which all the local components concur in order to protect the interests of the territory. If careful attention is not addressed to the above, the destination could be jeopardized in terms of inability to express all its potential, resulting in serious damage for the stakeholders involved.

2. The Amalfi Coast: a mature tourism area

The increase in tourism competitiveness can also generate negative impacts: disrespectful attitudes on the part of visitors, profit oriented attitudes on the part of local players, limited involvement on the part of tourist operators and local representatives and a non-adequate adherence to the principles of sustainability can determine social disaggregation and negative impacts on the natural environment, thus damaging the image of the destination and provoking a loss both in attractor factors and tourist flows. This has happened in several places to the extent that experts of International fame such as Agarwal (1997) have begun to examine the life cycle of destinations, highlighting their cyclic character⁷ and examining in depth the six phases the Canadian geographer Butler (1980) has defined, each characterized by different trends in demand and supply: *exploration*, *involvement*, *consolidation*, *maturity*, *stagnation*, *decline*. From the analysis of the specifics of each phase determining change in the configuration of tourist areas, the Amalfi Coast (Fig. 1) can be defined as a *consolidated* tourist area tending towards *maturity*: number of arrivals and presences are on an upward trend albeit at a declining rate; in excess of its load capacity threshold which over time has resulted in generating compromise between environmental balance and limited satisfaction both on the part of the residents and on the part of the segment of demand desiring a tourism experience of quality and a traditional as opposed to an innovative tourism offer.

Fig. 1. The Amalfi Coast: boundaries and census areas.



Source: *Census ISTAT 2011.*

Despite numerous attractors both natural environment and anthropical, data on performance in terms of arrival flows and presences show how the Amalfi Coast has been characterized by fluctuating dynamics. In particular over the last five years, regardless of the prevalence of foreigners as opposed to national tourists, the Amalfi Coast has recorded oscillating numbers (Tab. 1). Such data however, cannot be applied to the entire area. Above all, taking into account centre/periphery dynamics (hospitality structures etc.), contrasting the congested coastal area of the resort to the hilly and mountainous part of the area. Out of 835 hospitality structures, distribution by Municipality evidences density (equal to 23%) in Positano, followed by Amalfi, Praiano and Ravello, compared to only 18 units situated in Atrani and 7 in Cetara⁸.

Tab. 1. Tourist movement in the Amalfi Coast / Source: Adapted from EPT data

Years	Italians		Foreigners		Total	
	Arrivals	Presences	Arrivals	Presences	Arrivals	Presences
2008	190,951	651,823	161,588	604,451	352,539	1,256,274
2010	200,996	661,203	186,861	673,470	387,857	1,334,673

2012	156,979	652,622	213,722	991,385	370,701	1,643,998
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Calculating the tourism indicators, useful to assess the quality of life for residents and tourists (Magliulo, 2012, p. 62), it emerges that tourism could become unsustainable (above all in terms of exceeding load capacity in certain periods of the year) even for the residents who rarely enjoy the benefits deriving from the attractors of their own local territory. The strong density pressure and congestion is confirmed by the low values of the rates of territorial tourism (0.023), measuring the degree of population density in specific periods (year or month), i.e. the ratio between resident population and tourist presences. Even the high tourist density rate ⁹ (15,243), the intense exploitation of the territory (37,98), not to mention the fact that arrivals are approximately 10 times more consistent than the number of residents, confirm the above hypothesis (Tab. 2).

Tab. 2. Tourism indicators in the Municipalities of the Amalfi Coast in 2012.

	Degree of Tourism	Tourist Density	Territory exploitation
Amalfi	0.014	60,901	167.02
Cetara	0.016	2,785	18.56
Conca dei Marini	0.019	34,900	81.53
Furore	0.033	13,321	44,.9
Maiori	0.022	15,152	25,.8
Minori	0.028	37,520	75.0
Praiano	0.008	96,.79	140.39
Positano	0.010	42,024	123.62
Ravello	0.016	18,400	54.36
Scala	0.076	1,59	3.30
Tramonti	0.353	465	3.40
Vietri sul Mare	0.121	6,996	27.22
Amalfi Coast	0.023	15,243	37.98

Source: Adapted from Istat data (2011) and EPT data (2012).

Data are even more significant if we compare them on the one hand with data reported in the Study carried out by the Centro Studi e Ricerche Civita (2007) in relation to various cities of art in Italy (i.e. Rome which reported indices of territorial exploitation of 91.68 or Venice of 76.44) Furthermore, they would be even more significant if the whole surface area of the Municipalities of the Amalfi Coast privileged by the tourists and coinciding with the Coast itself, could be isolated, taking into

account that the area is made up of a series of sub-parallel ridges separated by deep valleys or by marked precipices, which make up its prevalent characteristic (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. A stretch of the Amalfi Coast against the backdrop of Positano.



The Amalfi Coast boasts a dearth of plains and with few exceptions (Amalfi, Maiori), the mainland areas are set amid terraced land and zones less steep overlooking the beaches, where the so-called marinas have been formed, i.e. the offshoots of the hilly areas (with their fishing, marine, commercial and beach and sea interests), linked in part by the Metrò del Mare or by road transport (covering the only Main road linking the Amalfi Coast the SS 163, accessible by motorway A3 Napoli-Pompei-Salerno, Exit at Vietri sul Mare). If the above analysis can be read in the light of the extreme seasonality of tourist flows (with annual peaks constant in the summer months and quantified in five times the number of presences registered in the winter months) clearly, the area becomes unsustainable in certain periods of the year (Tab. 3).

Tab. 3. Seasonality of tourist presences in the Amalfi Coast area in 2012.

	Italians	Foreigners	Total
January	17,217	8,242	25,459
February	12,038	8,224	20,262
March	19,987	17,051	37,038
April	55,240	55,738	110,978
May	44,668	84,763	129,431
June	60,568	113,392	173,960
July	111,220	188,496	299,716
August	164,705	172,460	337,165
September	105,577	207,047	312,624
October	27,663	112,141	139,804
November	14,268	16,351	30,619
December	19,480	7,471	26,951

Source: Adapted from EPT data (2012).

Added to the configuration of the Amalfi Coast with its numerous attractors based essentially on beach and sea and cultural tourism¹⁰, and taking into account the fact that in 1997 Amalfi was awarded the status of UNESCO World Heritage Site, are the extraordinary architectural and landscape features testifying significant phases of the area's history and the successful interaction of man with the environment. On the other hand, furthermore, the promotional circuits of the area have often translated the historically rooted perception in the collective imagination into banal and far from real stereotypes to the extent of determining a not exactly generous selection of places and attractor resources, appreciated above all by the mass tourism circuits. In this context, from online research, it emerges that tourism promotion activities focus on the main monumental goods¹¹, neglecting the widespread immaterial heritage (such as the paper mill of Minori, medieval paintings, the murals of Furore) exalting craftsmanship and typical local goods as consumer products rather than as an expression of the local economy. Secondly the itineraries proposed promote visits to tourist sites external to the area¹² and recommend the location of the same as a departure point rather than highlighting the widespread potential of the territory and contributing to the perception that the Amalfi Coast is effectively a tourism system (founded on cooperation between Municipalities), endowed with its own exclusive identity distinct from that of the surrounding areas.

As Butler (1980) concluded in his study, if a destination fails to engage in re-launching the image of a location through innovative processes of enhancement of resources that

have been neglected meanwhile, the destination could undergo a process of decline and exit from the market definitively. The characteristics of the tourist industry in the Amalfi Coast area lead to the reflection that adequate territorial revitalizing strategies need to be adopted, shifting to a proactive approach in destination management, more suitable for facing the challenge of growing complexity and competitiveness on the global market.

3. Cultural heritage as a resource for creative tourism

In recent years creativity has become an extremely relevant issue in the context of the debate on culture as a driver for re-launching tourism even in popular tourist destinations. UNESCO in effect, as far back as 2003, following the Convention for the protection of intangible cultural heritage has continued promoting initiatives in favor of “... representation, expression, knowledge and knowhow – together with the instruments, tools, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated to the same – recognized by communities as an integral part of their cultural heritage ... awarding them a sense of identity and continuity and promoting respect for ... human creativity ... and the need ... for sustainable development. In order to guarantee protection, development and enhancement of a Country’s intangible territorial cultural heritage, the State should make every effort to put in place policies for exploiting the potential of such heritage, including its protection as an integral part of territory planning schemes ...”.

In Italy and on the international scene, the interest for intangible resources has grown by virtue of the creative economy and the capacity of its related industries to foster a broad-based, viable productive fabric. The objective is to attract foreign investment in highly profitable activities, conveying both territory image and that of local products at national and international scale; to involve other sectors such as transport, hospitality etc., and to promote the tourism sector. With regard to the state of the art, particular attention to the issue emerged in the late 1990s on the occasion of the publication of the Report on Creative Industries issued in England by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, in order to include in the political agenda activities expressing traditional-popular culture but having a low rate of visibility and impact on the variegated world of trade. Later, the European Union (2010), in its Green Paper on Cultural and Creative Industries, evidenced the need to create a Common European Space for Culture and to point in the direction of the experiential economy. As concerns Italy, a special Commission, set up under the aegis of the *Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali* drew up its own White Paper on Creativity (Santagata, 2009).

Ranging from design to top quality eno-gastronomy, from fashion to the historic-cultural heritage, from live shows to editorial, cinema and radio-television production, from cultural-creative services and industries to craftsmanship, such resources, undergoing continual expansion and transformation, becoming ever more competitive and incorporating the cultural identity of Italy, are attracting a significant number of tourist flows thus increasing the demand for *made in Italy* (Maglio, 2013). This has also impacted sharply on tourist demand. Tourists desire “experiences which are unique,

authentic, addressed to discovering what is new, outside the traditional and mass circuits” (Cerquetti, 2007, p. 428). They wish to share interests with the residents and participate in the use of resources in a context of intercultural dialogue (Bizzari, 2013, p. 472). In this context, traditional forms, i.e. sea and beach tourism and visiting art cities, become inadequate for grasping the breadth and value of such tourist demand, requiring tourism that is changing shape in terms of an experiential product¹³ and relational product, thanks to which the traveler, wishing to match the holiday to expectations, plays an ever more proactive role and privileges interpersonal relations. Given the above, some tourist destinations albeit no longer competitive or of a traditional kind, have chosen to aim for culture re-visited in the spectra of gastronomy, perfumes, ceramics, art dance, architecture etc., as a source of visitor attraction with their visitors contributing to the putting in place of new ways of leisure. This is defined as *creative tourism*, which sees in authentic and non replicable culture an inimitable and innovative factor of attraction, “shifting from tangible heritage towards more intangible culture and greater involvement with the everyday life of the destination” (Richards, 2011, p. 1225). The numerous adhesions of cities and Regions to the Creative Tourism Network, set up in 2010, evidence the interest on the part of territories – independently from their position on the international tourist market – to satisfy the expectations of tourists wishing to experience creative atmospheres, to absorb the authentic uniqueness of the place. In this context for example, Edinburgh in Scotland is ranked as the city of literature; Ibiza in Spain for gastronomy, music and Beaux Arts; Porto Alegre in Brazil for its folklore *Gaucho*; Paris-France for its fashion and design; the Austrian Regions for its industry of taste; Provence in France for its craftsmanship-artistic pathways and the creation and production of perfumes. Thus, tourism effectively becomes representative of the host population’s traditions, discarding techniques of spectacularizing with their underlying risk of standardization and of underestimating the wide range of values of a particular territory, defying reproduction in series of products or cultural attractions (Richards e Wilson, 2006), which have often rendered tourist destinations banal and commercial (as for example mega-events or spectacular monuments etc., the result being a spectacular *show-case effect*).

Creativity consequently, becomes the emblematic concept upon which demand and supply of this kind of tourism meet current trends: the desire to acquire personal experiences of informal learning and the sensitive awareness of resources closely linked to the cultural heritage of the host community, intangible (history, art, traditions, trades etc.) and territorialized (i.e. linked to the geographical processes and context generating them).

Hence the challenge facing the Amalfi Coast to develop this new form of cultural tourism could represent an opportunity for diversifying and reviving the economy in a perspective of sustainability thus avoiding the risk of reaching the declining phase in the tourist destination life cycle (Citarella e Maglio, 2013a; 2013b).

On the Amalfi Coast, industrial activities and services are carried out prevalently by single ownership, small artisan type enterprise based on craftsmanship and expertise. In particular, about 10.5% of small enterprise is represented by the cultural/creative sector which accounts for 13% of industrial employment in the area, not to mention

4.5% of total employment. The importance of the contribution of culture and creativity to the global economy on the Amalfi Coast is effectively on the increase considering that national trends in terms of the weighting of cultural productive systems in 2010 was equal to 5.7% on the total of persons employed (Unioncamere, 2011).

An excellent example in this respect is fabric production in Positano involving more than thirty firms some of which belong to the *Consortium Positano è di Moda*, representing the main creative industry of the resort (Fig. 3) and positioning Positano favorably in terms of corporate competitiveness. The local tourist market represents the main source of relations, even though the ongoing recession is depleting the local economy to a great extent and indicating evident signs of the delocalizing process. As concerns Vietri sul Mare, the ceramics industry, (over fifty firms and art studios enrolled as associated members of the Consortium Ente Ceramica Vietrese) boasts a total number of operators (350) and an annual turnover in excess of ten million Euro, thanks to the ability of the industry to insert the product within the tourist supply circuit (Fig. 4). Throughout the Amalfi Coast area, the industry of taste is well distributed. In particular, the production of the *limoncello* liqueur (Fig. 5) and Amalfi's gastronomical tradition which dates back to Roman times (over 2000 years ago) are characteristic. During its history, the area has witnessed religious festivals in abundance, each being the backdrop against which local specialties emerged. This tradition linked to the wealth of anthropological elements, and the art of local cuisine have strongly characterized the area. In addition, the classical concerts and artistic representations of Ravello (Fig. 6), an ancient medieval town, renowned all over the world for its history, its fine monuments, its magic, enchanting landscapes, its walks and the dwellings which originally belonged to the nobility. However, Ravello is renowned above all for its music epitomized by the Ravello Annual Festival with its extensive artistic Agenda involving the town, its inhabitants, visitors, music lovers and tourists.



Fig. 3. Products of the Fashion Industry



Fig. 4. Ceramics



Fig. 5. Production of “sfusati” lemons



Fig. 6. Venue of live concerts and shows.

This brief description of the intangible cultural heritage of the Amalfi Coast highlights the new itineraries of tourist development of evidently experiential scenarios glimpsed in these creative sectors where priorities are both the active participation of the tourists in the enjoyment process and in their interaction with the local host community. In this context, the two above mentioned resorts have in particular launched initiatives which fall into the category of creative tourism. Ravello for example with its *Heartstrings Festival of Ravello*, promotes walks to search for and discover the links between places in the area and the traditions and customs of the community in a hands-on experience involving the area's most characterizing elements of the cultural landscape. Here, man during his attempts to modify and safeguard the territory has transformed steep precipices and cliff faces into extensive terraces suitable for crop cultivation. Workshops have been organized to teach the art of maintaining and repairing the *macere* (protective stone walls for soil containment) or the techniques of building and fortification. This time immemorial expertise that today would be called *natural environment engineering*, testifies the knowhow and ability of the area's inhabitants. Another initiative concerns residential Courses held to teach basic pottery modeling techniques used by the craftsmen of Vietri sul Mare. Tourists are taught all the phases of the production cycle, including the final stage, i.e. completed objects for souvenirs, bearing the signature of the relevant Ceramica Vietrese artist. Thus tourists do not enjoy their holidays in a passive manner but are part and parcel of a hands-on learning process of cultural dynamics achieved through direct contact with the host community and a full immersion experience in the cultural and environmental context, to the extent that the tourists themselves become co-authors and co-creators of inimitable experiences (Richards, 2011).

The enhancement of creative tourist activities in terms of potential for competitiveness of an area would result in the presence of more tourists and the mapping and positioning of the destination in mindsets at national and international scale and at the same time, would mean benefits in economic and employment terms. The increase in the current contribution of the tourist industry and contingent sectors to the global economy would be manifold (33% of the number of active firms with more than 29% workers), as would local production. For instance the contribution that creative tourism could offer would be immense relative to the specific strategies defined in 2007 by the Tourism Sustainability Group, such as staggering periods of tourism, improving the potential of local development through re-launching the economy of a place. The same would apply from the enhancement of territorial capital (social, cultural and natural), the involvement of the endogenous population, including females and young people, training and updating the workers of the area.

It goes without saying that even if enterprise is connoted by *niche* status, it can still favor sustainability dynamics by taking into account three principles: *endogeneity*, i.e. based on local products, capacities and knowhow that cannot be replicated, avoiding the risk of production in series; *safeguarding* to guarantee the conservation of

resources upon which the productive process depends with particular reference to environmental and cultural resources and *integration*, the plurality of the economic-social activity involved. In any event, so that tourism can effectively function as an innovative strategic driver for the re-launching of such creative territories, the challenge to face is the strengthening of area identity in systemic terms.

4. Towards a systems interpretation of tourist-creative vocational territories

Having illustrated the tourist-creative characteristics relative to the Amalfi Coast, it would be useful to define, the most suitable type of territorial organization for enhancing the development of creative tourism, then to identify the obstacles to its diffusion and the most adequate strategies for resolving problematic issues. Generally, the tourism offer in this geographical area is perceived by the tourist as a global product, rather than in terms of each specific resort or destination. This is because the image of the area goes beyond the borders and confines of the various villages or towns. Consequently, the capacity of individual resorts to protect and enhance its attractors is not taken into account.

Assuming that creative tourism is the prerogative of tourists desiring to travel to areas of authentic art and culture, unique to a specific place to enjoy personal learning experiences that enrich their own knowledge capital and capacity in places classified as cultural/creative, demand becomes even more composite with respect to that of other forms of tourism and is shaped necessarily, with the contribution of multiple subjects in the endogenous community. As a result, the kind of organization necessary is that of a district-system. In other words, cultural-creative enterprise together with tourism enterprise within the area of reference while in competition with one another as concerns specific segments of demand, concur in forming the global tourism offer of the destination. The resorts or areas of the Amalfi Coast besides possessing characterizing elements both as concerns tourism (offer) and creativity (enterprise) have to be governed in a cooperative and collaborative manner at local and regional scale by virtue of coherent, common policies involving all the stakeholders.

The multidisciplinary interpretation in terms of an organizational systems approach to tourist destinations is extensive, due to the range of study perspectives envisaged (geographers, sociologists, economists, business economists). While some focus attention on the composition of services offered or supplied, others concentrate on identifying the territorial borders of the area involved or on its organizational-structural peculiarities in order to define the criteria for formulating and underpinning a territorial system. A variety of definitions has stemmed from the numerous strands of research: *global tourism* (Brunetti, 1999); *local tourism system* (Della Corte, 2000; Tamma, 2012); *tourism system* (Pollice, 2002; Lozato-Jotart, 2009); *tourism district* (Pencarelli, 2001; Dallari, 2007); *viable tourism system* (Pencarelli e Forlani, 2002).

Despite the limits of transferring to the tourism sector managerial or geographical approaches intended for enterprise or for territories *tout court*, two common denominators emerge clearly from the literature relative to viable systems strategies for tourist destinations. The territorial context has to be characterized *in primis*, by the

presence of tourism companies, attractors, local resources, networking between public and private sector actors so that value generated globally exceeds any value generated individually. An integrated offer is deemed essential in order to guarantee the natural environment and anthropological attractors of the areas and accessibility (physical, economic and informative) to tourist demand and hospitality.

The Amalfi Coast, in the above respect offers the tourist a well structured and diversified package by virtue of the area's enviable tangible and intangible heritage – with its potential for attractor capacity- linked to the various motivations for the trip, represents the basis for generating creative tourism.

Secondly the stakeholders themselves have to contribute to the creation of the intangibles that favor creative tourism. If value is attributed to knowledge and competence and to the propensity for experimenting, the socio-cultural vivacity of the area naturally becomes an endogenous property of the territorial system, enhancing its creative atmosphere (Bertacchini e Santagata, 2012). According to the SLoT model, the process – which guarantees success in local development initiatives – depends on the degree of territoriality, intended as the capacity for aggregation that represents a prerequisite for building a territorial system in which to strengthen ties and to create efficacious structured networks for devising best policies and constructive action (Dematteis, 2003). Area competitiveness is determined both by the type of relations in act and by *governance* - intended from a geographic-economic perspective – for example the process of formulating managerial decisions, transformation of the territory in terms of established objectives, attributing responsibility with respect to decision making relative to development and guaranteeing broad-based participation in the decision making process (Gemmiti e Conti Puorger, 2009, p. 16). In other words, the greater:

- i) the awareness on the part of the actors of representing a functional component of the system contributing to the preparation of a global tourism package;
- ii) the degree of trust on the part of the stakeholders;
- iii) the propensity of the stakeholders to collaborate;
- iv) the willingness to attribute the role of strategic governance to a leader, capable of influencing the behavior of others;

the more a tourism system will acquire a clear cut identity. According to the viable systems approach (Golinelli, 2002), an organ of governance needs to identify with the planning, putting in place, controlling and reviewing strategies and guidelines for the tourist area for its survival and competitive enhancement.

The Amalfi Coast is a territorial entity counting on a series of pre-conditions (pre-dispositions, past experience, etc.) essential for delineating a territorial system. In actual fact, from the analysis of the territorial aggregations producing initiatives for local development, the geographical range, local planning and design highlight density in terms of collective action in the Municipalities of Amalfi, Cetara, Cava dei Tirreni, Conca dei Marini, Atrani, Furore, Maiori, Minori, Positano, Praiano, Ravello, Scala, Vietri sul Mare. We need only think of the *Piano Integrato Territoriale Penisola Sorrentina-Amalfitana*, the *Sistema Costiero Penisola Amalfitana in the Piano Territoriale Regionale*, the *Patto Territoriale Verde Monti Lattari*, the *Patto Territoriale*

Costa d'Amalfi, the *Gruppo di Azione Locale Costiera Amalfitana Monti Lattari*, the *Progetto Integrato Rurale Costiera Amalfitana Monti Lattari*, the *Parco Regionale Monti Lattari*, the *Comunità Montana Monti Lattari*, and the attributing by UNESCO of the status denomination World Heritage Site to the Amalfi Coast and its candidature as Biosphere Reserve.

However, despite involving public and private sector operators, the joint initiatives, aiming at providing a specific and distinctive integrated system of hospitality by means of enhancing the local resources and culture of the area have often been disaggregated, lacking in synergic strategies and not always based on joint decision making and as a result have consequently not effectively succeeded in achieving the hoped for results. The Amalfi Coast was included in the Regional Planning Scheme POR FESR 2007-2013 to promote an integrated network system. However, to date, it would appear that the result is merely that of a simply more or less contiguous inter territory alliance, as from the point of view of existing territorial relations, a modest degree of awareness, trust and cooperation emerges, pinpointing the absence of an organ of government with the remit of transmitting joint strategic guidelines to the series of constituent elements in the system.

Such considerations are endorsed also by virtue of the research put in place by Botti, Vesci, & Al. (2012) on the propensity on the part of the tourist operators on the Amalfi Coast to create cooperative relations and the extent of their recognition (acceptance) of the government body. The lack of trust on the part both of entrepreneurs and the network of Tourism Promoters towards the local Authorities (Region, Province and Municipality) not to mention negative assessment of their action in terms of efficacy, renders the creating of feasible relational networks extremely arduous and the taking off of the Amalfi Coast as a tourism system almost a *chimera*.

Even though it is evident that efforts to diversify tourism activities on the Amalfi Coast in an attempt to overcome the restrictions of a resort based on sea and beach tourism fully exploited only in summer, have not achieved success. In this perspective, critiques range from the disjointed structure of tourism based on available natural resources rather than on an in-depth analysis on the effective potential of the area. Furthermore, the absence of a strong link with the territory and with the historical, cultural and environmental context merely provokes the rendering banal of motivations and attractors and results in confusion created by duplicated or non-coordinated initiatives. Furthermore, the lack of integrated strategies obliges each resort to provide a little of everything rather than focus efforts on their own effectively valuable specific uniqueness and excellence. As a result, the signs of a viable systems approach - which have emerged from the analysis of the initiatives put in place over the last two decades - appear to be indicative of institutional sensitivity rather than indicative of a growing awareness among the local operators, a condition which on the contrary, is of the essence if an effectively integrated viable tourism system underpinning the development of creative tourism, is to be created.

Conclusion

From the perspective of demand, it appears that over the last few years, a new form of cultural tourism characterized by experiential motivations in specific creative sectors and denominated creative tourism, has become widespread. From the perspective of supply, it emerges that in the face of new challenges imposed by globalization, some international tourist destinations have made great efforts to retain their competitive advantage by concentrating on two elements: 1. product diversification; 2. interaction between public and private sector stakeholders in order to put on the market an integrated whole *factors of attractors*, managed by means of the aggregation and coordination of the various participants involved.

Taking into account that the Amalfi Coast in some cases can be considered in a consolidation phase while as concerns its other characteristics has reached the peak of its life cycle maturity in terms of tourist destinations as theorized by Butler (1980), it should be pointed out that in our study it has been highlighted that the area has to put in place intervention aimed at re-launching and enhancing local resources. In particular, it emerges that the area is an ideal candidate for developing creative tourism by virtue of its strong *local identity value*, specifics and excellence and given that it boasts a distinctive heritage that guarantees the original (unique) status of the destination. This characteristic clearly eliminates the risk of reproduction in series of the area's products and the rendering banal of the resort. As concerns the latter, the Amalfi Coast does not benefit from an adequate territorial organization for enhancing its potential in order to promote creative tourism. This particular geographical area has proved its capacity for aggregation, self representation and self design however the resort lacks the elements necessary for qualifying, operating and being fully recognized as a viable tourism system, based on scientific-interdisciplinary paradigms. In actual fact, the lack of a single governing body in common impedes the Amalfi Coast from evolving "as a whole and gaining competitive advantages to guarantee the system greater possibilities of survival, thus incrementing its degree of viability" (Golinelli, 2002, p. 213).

Creative tourism, albeit representing a valid option for enhancing territories with particular characteristics, if it aims to contribute to reviving the area, has to bank on a creative *humus* to the extent that the strategies devised exalt what is already rooted in the geographical, social and cultural reality. On the contrary, any initiative of this kind would result in an unprofitable dispersion of resources. Consequently, in order to foster the spread of creative tourism in the area of the Amalfi Coast, local actors (belonging to the tourism as well as the creative sector) have to commit themselves to translating endogenous potential into economic value and to trigger virtuous mechanisms to exploit the *regenerating power of culture*, by means of effective viable system integration. In particular, they have to develop the awareness of: (i) constituting a component of complex territorial organization; (ii) the capacity for incrementing trust in the system; (iii) contributing to the creation of knowledgeable

relational structures; (iv) their effective willingness to cooperate with other operators and the local community; (v) the need to overcome logics of cooperation driven by economic convenience and competitiveness between partners. Ultimately, they have to identify a subject to strategically govern the system, to guide and put in place processes for re-launching tourism that exploit the potential of creativity as a driver for excellence. Only the presence of a such an *acknowledged leader* - carrying out functions of planning, putting in place, monitoring, control and reviewing the strategic vision both of this -regional territory and of its component parts – can guarantee the accomplishing and management of convergent activity in order to eliminate the tendency for spontaneous action, fragmentation and the overlapping of initiatives typical of the area. Only in this way, can the Amalfi Coast emerge not simply in an individual sense but also in the perceptions of the collectivity as a viable creative tourism system.

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¹ Sections 1, 2 and Conclusion are the work of Citarella G., while Introduction and Sections 3 and 4 are the work of Maglio M. However, the present study can be considered the synthesis of a common scientific research pathway.

² Corresponding to territories distinguished by landscape and cultural characteristics such as to render them unique tourist products. The definition does not enable the identifying on the basis of objective criteria, the typical geographical extension of the destination which according to some of the literature, coincides with "a small destination, a village or a town, a district or a region, an island, a nation or a continent" (Burkat e Medlik, 1974, p. 70), provided it is endowed with a specific identity and independence.

³ Consequently, the tourist destination does not represent only the context in which enterprises make their decisions but is the decisive element for elaborating the tourism supply system. In other words, all the stakeholders involved have to concur in defining the conditions that underpin the competitive advantage of the destination.

⁴ A distinction should be made between the concepts of attractor and competitiveness. The former concerns the capacity of a territory to attract exogenous resources, offering investors advantageous local conditions. The latter refers to the series of immaterial and immaterial resources a territory is endowed with and its attitude towards conserving and enhancing such resources over time. The literature is unanimous in maintaining that some competitive factors can also be considered attractor elements but not all attractors can impact on competitiveness. In this sense, marketing serves as a tool for controlling and selecting exogenous investments, favoring only those capable of capturing resources that can activate a process of endogenous development.

⁵ In particular, it includes all the strategic, organizational and operative decisions that guide the process of promoting and marketing a destination in order to generate tourists' flows that are balanced,

sustainable and sufficient to satisfy the economic needs of local players operating in the area of reference (Martini, 2002).

⁶ These, according to the researchers, can be divided into: *endowed resources* including the assets that determine the physical structure of the environment in which the traveler spends his/her holidays (e.g. flora, fauna, panorama, landscapes); *created resources* including all those functions designed by man (tourism infrastructure, entertainment, shopping, special events, recreation-sportive-leisure activities); and *supporting resources* that comprise accessibility and quality of the services offered.

⁷ Other interpretations have been offered by Berenson (1967), according to whom the life cycle is structured in six different phases (introduction, growth, maturity, saturation, decline and abandon); and by Polli and Cook (1969), for whom the *maturity* phase is split into two alternative periods *sustained activity maturity* characterized by a “weak increase in tourism” and *atrophic maturity* by “a weak reduction in tourism”.

⁸ Reference is a survey carried out in December 2012, to verify data detected from telematic research.

⁹ Tourist density is given by the ratio between number of presences and territory surface and indicates the number of tourists per kmq. The index of territory exploitation is given by the ratio between arrivals per kmq + residents per kmq/100 and measures the sustainability of surface impact of residents and tourists.

¹⁰ Despite the Amalfi Coast being acknowledged as a privileged destination for its landscape and beach and sea tourism (Becheri and Maggiore, 2011, pp. 266-275), there is scarce propensity for safeguarding the environment, given the elevated risk of decay by virtue of the cementing of the Coast area, unregulated and the numerous stretches of polluted waters part of the hundred beaches of the Amalfi Peninsula. See the Deliberation of the Giunta Regionale della Campania no. 772 dated 21.12.2012 “Classification of the quality of sea water for bathing and identification of polluted waters for the year 2013”.

¹¹ Reference is the most renowned attractors such as the Duomo of Amalfi, Villa Cimbrone, Villa Rufolo Gardens and the Duomo of Ravello.

¹² E.g. Pompei, Capri, Sorrento, Ercolano and Paestum.

¹³ The expression highlights “the dimensions that go beyond the strictly functional use of the particular goods, rendering the tool capable of soliciting positive perceptions on the part of the consumer” (Brunetti, 2004, p. 23).