

Cultural landscape and sustainable tourism in rural areas. Case studies from the Puglia region in Southern Italy.

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Abstract

Over the last few years, Cultural Landscapes have become a hot topic in the field of World Heritage work and beyond. “They represent the combined works of man and nature. Moreover they are the places of peoples’ livelihoods, identities and belief systems all over the world”. This is a notion of landscape that encompasses aesthetic, ecological and cultural values: the result of the current sensitivity towards the environment, they are suggested by the European Landscape Convention and recommended by the latest EU policies. It is a selective notion that highlights certain elements or characteristics of the cultural landscape that are particularly appreciated or threatened by the transformations currently in progress: traditional agricultural settlements, ancient buildings and industrial archaeology constitute a legacy to be conserved and handed down to further generations. Among these is ‘nature’, in the form of parks and reserves, to be defended from human transformations but also considered as a valuable tool for building an eco-sustainable economy, which in addition to the traditional activities of rural populations entails new initiatives designed to create quality forms of agricultural production and compatible forms of tourism. The development of tourism in protected areas has been based on the twin concepts of protection and eco-compatible exploitation of resources. Both inside and outside the protected areas, the aim has been to conduct tourism in a way that respects the principles of environmental, cultural, social and economic sustainability. The Puglia region in southern Italy possesses a significant number

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of parks and protected areas that are rich in assets to be safeguarded and promoted while guaranteeing environmental safeguard and sustainable economic development. This paper analyses the activities of the Regional Natural Park known as “Dune Costiere [costal dunes] da Torre Canne e Torre S. Leonardo” near Ostuni in the province of Brindisi and the Regional Park known as “Terre di Gravine” in the province of Taranto. It considers the behaviours of those who live and work within the parks and the strategies for enhancing the cultural landscape and sustainable tourism in the area: conserving traditional land-use systems; developing new tools for economic viability; providing ecological services; and creating productive land-use systems in relation to cultural tourism.

Keywords: *Cultural landscape. Regional Natural Parks. Sustainable tourism. Puglia region*

Premise

The rediscovery of the cultural landscape is a rather recent phenomenon and involves the reassessment of the ecological, aesthetic and recreational value of the countryside. There is now a greater focus on the culture of environmentalism, seeking a model of sustainable development that is more respectful of natural resources and the need to safeguard and conserve them for the benefit of future generations (Woodruffe, 1998). It is not just the traditional values of the countryside that are appreciated but also the potential for recovering the cultural heritage that it embodies. In addition, the countryside meets the need for identity, a necessary antidote to the rapid changes driven by ‘global’ processes and a useful brake on the passage of time and history. The visual references provided by the landscape make it possible to recognise ourselves and one’s group, via the multiple imprints that are stratified within it. Faced with the rapid transformation of one’s region and its homogenisation with so many others, the physical and symbolic elements of the landscape become assets to be defended and the fixedness of the countryside is reassuring.

The political world is also adapting to the new approach to the concept of landscape, issuing directives and conventions and improving the regional, national and international legislation. The European Landscape Convention, signed on October 20th 2000 in Florence, declares the landscape to be a legacy for future generations, calling for a new model of regional development that ensures its safeguard and promotion.

The rural landscape is an emerging theme in national and EU policies (see for example the new rural measures included in the CAP and the L.E.A.D.E.R programme), which place greater emphasis on rural development, the correct management of natural resources, and the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and cultural landscapes.

Parks and protected areas now play a new role. They certainly have an environmental value but they also provide many economic opportunities, considered an important tool for constructing an eco-sustainable economy. Indeed, it is assumed that in order to achieve

success, an effective safeguard policy must be backed up by economic and infrastructural choices that respect the environment and the landscape.

After a brief analysis of the concept of landscape and its new implications for planning and associated policies, this paper considers the recent strategies activated by Puglia Regional Administration for the safeguard and promotion of the landscape and park areas with reference to European structural funds. Specifically, it considers two case studies. The first is the Regional Park known as “Dune Costiere da Torre Canne e Torre S. Leonardo” near Ostuni in the province of Brindisi, which has already had much success. The second is the Regional Park known as “Terre delle Gravine” in the province of Taranto, for which a strategic safeguard and development plan has recently been activated that seeks to implement the best practices adopted by the Park in the province of Brindisi. In both cases it offers an analysis of the existing situation, considering the planning aspects and the specificity of the places being investigated, in order to show that the promotion of these areas is consistent with Italian and European principles and norms regarding traditional rural heritage.

Landscape and public policy in Italy

Interest in the landscape has grown considerably in the last fifty years, passing from a simple description of its visible and tangible features to today’s combination of culture, history and nature (Trono, 2010). Appreciated for its historic and testimonial value, with which it is possible to read the signs left by human beings over the course of time, the landscape is understood to be «a relative and dynamic entity where, since ancient times, nature and society, panorama and environment, have been in constant interaction» (Milani, 2001, p. 42).

It is held to have a significant implications for heritage, making it both a source of information and a public asset, a legacy inherited from the past to be safeguarded and promoted in terms of its aesthetic, morphological, historic, ecological and cultural values, to be handed down to future generations (Antrop, 2000; 2005; Zerbi, Scazzosi, 2005). The concept of landscape takes on a strong cultural element that is expressed by means of a double connection. Indeed, it assumes on one hand the interpretation of human beings in the reading of places, and on the other it implies the intervention of human beings in its transformation, by means of technical and technological knowledge.

Landscapes are the result of human activities on nature over the course of time, and they are as worthy of consideration as any other human endeavour. «The idea of conserving something specific and aesthetically pleasing that lay behind the initial attempts at safeguard has evolved over time into the issuance of laws aimed at making safeguard no

longer just a defensive measure, but something active and participatory» (Breda, Bernardi, 1999, p. 37). In this regard, the European Landscape Convention welcomes the evolution of the concept of landscape and considers the entire territory “as perceived by the population”, stressing the need for governments to take care of all landscapes, not just those of particular interest, but also those perceived as ordinary and degraded. The first objective is to improve the quality of all living spaces, distinguishing between the various types of landscape that characterise them, by maintaining and enhancing the historic, cultural, artistic and natural features that are distinctive of each place. The Convention marked the start of a new phase of landscape planning that envisages a change in the behaviours of the public administration, which must be the expression of a vision that involves innovative processes and tools, and is founded on a multidisciplinary, holistic approach. In a horizontal dimension, this criterion includes sectorial policies that have effects on the landscape, while in vertical terms it is characterised by the principle of subsidiarity, transversally working to intercept new actors, potential and energies that are often latent.

The crisis of traditional conceptions of how to safeguard the landscape, which were founded mainly on drawing up a list of values, together with the rise in their place of an interest in its overall quality, has modified the aims and instruments by which the landscape is assessed and planned. Such planning is now understood as a technical operation that analyses, assesses and promotes the various types of landscape, applying the most suitable policies for each of them. These policies, designed by technocrats, have often been unable to take account of social sensitivities, on which, at least at a local level, the fate of the landscape depends. From this springs the need for greater involvement of all interested parties in the landscape, supplying them with a ‘project’ that arises from the sharing of decisions, methods and means that serve to guarantee or restore dignity to the landscape (Zerbi, 1994; Ronzi, Mautone, 2010). In the construction of the project, as well as the actions of ‘experts’, what counts above all is the mobilisation of the community, whose involvement can provide an increasingly inhabitable space and “lasting” development. This is linked to the evolution of human society, which must be able to make choices that are consistent with the construction of a long-term future thanks to the safeguard of the heritage and environment that hosts it (Tinacci Mossello, 2014, p.273).

The involvement of the public in the landscape is crucial. The participation of stakeholders – and the public in general – is routinely recommended in a rhetorical way. However, it is also called for by national and international organisations working for the conservation of the landscape, as an essential ingredient in regional planning and management. The project dimension of the landscape thus becomes a potential place for integrating policies designed to achieve sustainability that are in line with the regional system of governance.

In Italy, landscape planning has become routine practice for all local and regional administrations, complying with the Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code (national law 42 of 2004). This considers the landscape not just as a homogeneous piece of territory whose features derive from nature, human history and their interrelations, but also as an important factor in individual and social well-being, which contributes to regional identity. The Code sees it as a strategic resource, which, properly promoted, provides a foundation on which to base economic development.

The lines of intervention adopted cover a wide range of initiatives that seek to apply the indications of the European Landscape Convention and the measures arising from the recent revision of the Common Agricultural Policy. Indeed, the CAP has been transformed from a sectorial strategy providing support for producers to an integrated plan, attentive to the environment, rural development and the promotion of the landscape. Particular attention is paid to the aesthetic and landscape function, as well as to the maintenance of ecological equilibria and biodiversity, taking account of social, economic and educational aspects and the need to safeguard cultural heritage.

National and regional administrations intervene directly in the management of the natural environment and the rural landscape, seeking to remedy the many cases of blight and ruin caused by long-standing neglect and/or contempt for their environmental and cultural assets. Among the various measures adopted, worthy of particular mention is the creation, management and promotion of parks, natural reserves and protected areas.

Policies for the sustainable management of rural areas and parks in Puglia

The landscapes of Puglia, produced over time by the history of the “living peoples” that inhabited and continue to inhabit the region, constitute the primary heritage item (environmental, regional, urban, social and cultural) and the main element attesting to the identity of the places.

Strategies for the safeguard and promotion of the landscape are seen in the Rural Development Plan (in which an important role is played by the LEADER initiative managed by the Local Action Groups) and in the management of parks and protected areas. This has been the objective since the passing of Regional Law 19 of 24.07.1997 (“Norms for the institution and management of protected natural areas in the Puglia Region”), which established the basis for the conservation of some of the most significant natural environments in Puglia.

More recently, Puglia Regional Administration passed the long-awaited Regional Landscape Plan (PPTR), enacted in Deliberation 1435 of 02.08.2013 and adopted by the Regional Government on 16.02.2015 in Deliberation 176. The PPTR aims to ensure the

safeguard and conservation of environmental assets and social and cultural identity. This entails the promotion and implementation of forms of sustainable regional development in compliance with the Cultural Heritage Code and the principles expressed in article 9 of the Italian Constitution, as well as the European Landscape Convention and article 2 of the Regional Statute.

The Plan may be seen as a cultural event that involves many actors. As well as being set out in numerous administrative regulations, it unfolds by means of a learning process involving administrations and technicians and a multitude of institutional, social, economic and cultural players, both public and private, individual and collective, which support, provide and debate knowledge, objectives, visions, strategies and projects designed to raise the quality and usability of the landscapes of Puglia (Barbanente, 2013; 2014; 2015).

The Regional Landscape Plan sees the landscape as a heritage item and asset on which to base the future prospects of a new approach to regional development. The new model focuses on the ability to grasp the opportunities provided by the policies of safeguard and protection of the environment and the landscape. It also focuses on tourism, which it aims to relaunch in a form centred on the safeguard of the environment and the promotion of Mediterranean cultural heritage. In this planning perspective, the region and the landscape are at the centre of development policy, deploying cultural heritage, themes of social interest and local skills in terms of initiative and self-organisation, without losing sight of the legacy values and maintaining respect for the individual characteristics of the natural and cultural resources.

Indeed, the value of the Regional Landscape Plan lies in the notion of the region itself as heritage (physical, social and cultural, constructed over a long period) and as a collective asset at the service of development and growth that are not only sustainable but also ethical. The political innovation inherent in the Plan lies in its containment of the role of “decision makers” concerning regional development and lawmaking, and the active involvement in drawing up the Plan of local communities and organisations. Of particular interest is the recovery of the “consciousness of the place”, the loss of which is responsible for the progressive detachment of the local community from the places and the consequent contempt, neglect and indifference towards the quality of the landscape. The PPTR thus insists on the “social construction of the plan”, which lays the ground for the “social construction of the landscape” in a more aware manner, attentive to and respectful of the value of history and the environment. A considerable range of instruments has been activated to this end, including the monitoring via internet of the quality of the landscape (“The landscape seen by the inhabitants”), as well as promotion measures shared (in a “Manifesto”) with the main “landscape producers” (Puglia Region, 2013). The strategic dimension of the Plan is composed of a range of objectives generally regarding regional

environmental quality and the safeguard, improvement and promotion of the landscape, with a view to recovering its heritage in terms of identity, culture and settlement patterns. Amongst other ways, this to be accomplished by means of pilot projects (see the eco-museum systems in the Salento, the Valle d'Itria and Valle del Carapelle in Capitanata). Of great importance is the extension of the norms safeguarding landscape items to "other landscape contexts", in practice blocking new construction in areas of landscape interest that have already been the victim of widespread and long-standing overbuilding. Further instruments for the implementation of integrated regional strategies for the better exploitation of Puglia's natural, cultural and tourism resources and the development of best practices in the management of the landscape include the Rules for the conversion to productive use and management of Environmental and Cultural Systems in the Puglia Region – SAC (with reference to the ERDF Operational Plan for 2007-2013) and the management plans of the parks, reserves and other natural protected areas in Puglia.

Case studies: the "Dune Costiere" and "Terre delle Gravine" Regional Parks

The protected natural areas of Puglia have a total area of 268,292.73 hectares, of which 69.3% is accounted for by national parks (the Gargano and Murgia national parks).

Among the many successful experiences with parks in Puglia are two exemplary cases: one acknowledged to be successful, the "Dune Costiere da Torre Canne e Torre S. Leonardo ad Ostuni" Regional Park in the province of Brindisi, and the "Terre delle Gravine" Regional Park in the province of Taranto, which was set up more recently (see Fig. 1).

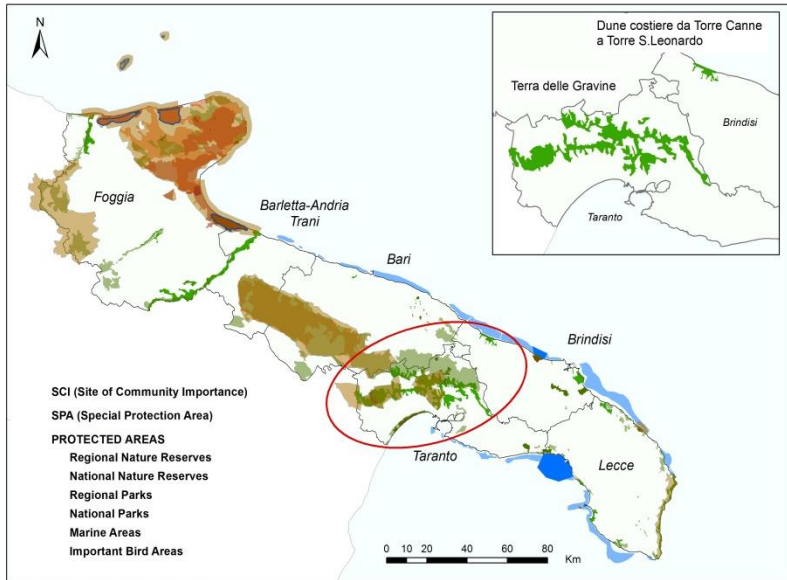


Figure 1: Parks and Protected Areas in Puglia.

Source: Regione Puglia. Assessorato all'Ecologia. Ufficio Parchi e tutela della biodiversità. Our presentation..

The “Dune Costiere da Torre Canne e Torre S. Leonardo” Regional Park excels in terms of a series of measures aimed at the recovery of nature, the safeguard of biodiversity and the correct use of the park’s dunal system. Set up in 2006 and operational since 2010, the Dune Costiere Park has road-tested an interesting model of sustainable tourism designed to reduce the anthropic impacts on sites in the Natura 2000 network, involving the local community at all levels (tourists, residents, associations, businesses).

Lying within the municipal territory of Ostuni and Fasano, it covers approximately 1,100 acres along 8 kilometres of coastline and extends inland up to the agricultural areas occupied by centuries-old olive groves and ancient farms. The boundary follows the course of the lame furrows caused by erosion that are typical of the countryside in Puglia – for a total of 55 kilometres. The Park is included in the List of Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) in Italy (SCI) as “Litorale Brindisino” and belongs to the “Natura 2000” network, which aims to preserve natural habitats and plant and animal species in danger of extinction.

The Park includes numerous natural habitats, extensive arable land where organic farming is practised, ancient olive groves, a stretch of the Via Traiana, archaeological and historical sites with cultural significance, ancient “masseria” farmhouses and underground oil-mills,

lame and rock-cut dwellings. There are also accommodation facilities and manufacturing companies using the Park as a brand. This is clearly a rich territory with many assets to promote, as well as posing challenges in terms of its safeguard. The Dune Costiere Regional Park is one of the most interesting in Southern Italy, playing a key role in environmental protection and sustainable tourism and economic development.

The Park is characterised by a high diversity of environments. Proceeding from the sea inland there are the beaches, the dunes, the wetland areas behind the dunes, fossil dunes and ancient olive groves. In the protected area there are several natural habitats, some of which are disappearing from the territory of the EU and require special attention.

The Dune Costiere Park enables visitors to discover agricultural history and natural biodiversity and is an example of how to safeguard natural and rural areas with traditional systems and organic agriculture. Tourists can travel in the area by bike to reach the most interesting places and meet local farmers, artisans, and producers, who look forward to the pleasure of sharing their world with their guests. It is possible to visit farmhouses, underground oil mills, old aquaculture systems and olive groves with centuries-old olive trees. Visitors can follow nature trails and walk along the ancient Via Traiana, with facilities for disabled persons and signposting. These activities have strengthened cohesiveness and cooperation between the various businesses in the area, who are increasingly involved in “slow tourism” projects (Ciola, 2007; 2009; Ciola, Tanzarella, 2010).



Figure 2: “Dune Costiere da Torre Canne a Torre San Leonardo” Regional Park. Photograph by Anna Trono

The Dune Costiere Regional Park is a partner in the project known as “Nat.Pro. – Piani strategici per il ripristino e la tutela di siti Natura 2000 devastati da calamità naturali e la promozione dell’eco-turismo” (Strategic plans for the recovery and safeguard of Natura 2000 sites devastated by natural disasters and the promotion of eco-tourism), financed by the European Territorial Co-operation Programme (Greece-Italy) 2007/2013. It has been the object of various studies and initiatives, from the safeguard, recovery and improvement of biodiversity to measures for the prevention of fire risk, based on a strategic plan for sustainable tourism which includes the creation of paths and information panels. It was also involved in a pilot project entitled “Vivi il parco con la testa, ama il parco con il cuore”, aimed at reducing the anthropic impact resulting from indiscriminate access to the coast. This entailed rationalising the points of access to the sea, eliminating car parks in sensitive areas behind the dunes and promoting slow forms of transport, including bus-bicycle links, as an alternative to the car. In addition, pilot measures were initiated to recover stretches of coastline within the Park that were blighted as a result of an irrational access system, increasingly invasive and unsustainable for the sensitive habitats present there. The entire process benefited from the use of GIS (Geographical Information System) technology and DSSs (Decision-making Support Systems) (Ciola, Tanzarella, 2015, p. 96). (see fig. 3)

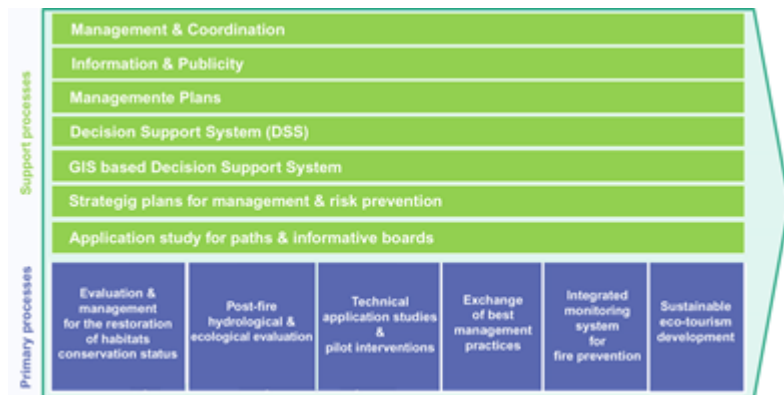


Figure 3: Portfolio of Nat.Pro. Project activities. Our presentation

Among the project’s most important activities, worthy of mention are the initiatives to inform and raise awareness among the local community, including businesses, users, associations and residents, illustrating the need to safeguard biodiversity and encourage and consolidate forms of tourism that are more compatible with the environment, with all the associated benefits in environmental, landscape and economic terms.

Indeed, there has been a succession of initiatives, in addition to what was envisaged by the project, undertaken by private persons and aimed at the recovery of nature and raising

awareness among residents and tourists of the correct way to enjoy the Park. This mobilisation of civil society in order to safeguard the sensitive areas of the coastal strip was accompanied by intense activism by the relevant associations, which on its own initiative sought to inform and raise awareness regarding the correct management and use of the beaches and how to reduce impact on the natural system. There was thus a “multiplier” effect, which continues today, more than a year after the Nat.Pro project concluded, with ideas, projects, initiatives and a great deal of enthusiasm from the local communities.

Specifically, the residents of the tourist resorts lying within the Park conducted measures at their own expense to improve stretches of coastline occupied by dunes, Mediterranean maquis and junipers. To date, such measures have been applied to two of the eight kilometres of the coastline within the Park, easily beating the recovery initially envisaged by the Nat.Pro project.

The sustainable and strategic development of the Dune Costiere Park was immediately recognised as an example of best practices to be replicated, with the necessary adaptations, in other rural contexts in Puglia affected by poor management.

In contrast, still in its early stages is an experience in the province of Taranto, which it is hoped can eventually replicate the example of the Dune Costiere Park. This is “Upark! Strategie di rete per il Parco Terra delle Gravine”, a project started on 28.04.2016 by means of the Bando Ambiente 2015, promoted and financed by the Fondazione con il Sud. The varied composition of the partnership bodes well for its success. The participants include WWF Trulli e Gravine, the Casa Circondariale (prison) of Taranto, CNR – Institute for the Coastal Marine Environment, Taranto Provincial Administration, Club UNESCO Taranto, the Speleological Federation of Puglia and other associations on the Ionian coast.

The Terra delle Gravine Park, set up on 20.12.2005 by Regional Law 18, involves institutional and private partners in the promotion and safeguard of an area of extraordinary importance lying within the territory of 13 municipalities in the province of Taranto (Ginosa, Laterza, Castellaneta, Mottola, Massafra, Palagiano, Palagianello, Statte, Crispiano, Martina Franca, Montemesola, Grottaglie, San Marzano) and one municipality in the province of Brindisi (Villa Castelli), with a total area of about 28,000 hectares. The area has a high concentration of rock-cut settlements and archaeological sites, natural wealth and significant karst phenomena, as well as an inestimable heritage in terms of biodiversity, unique in western Europe. The Regional Administration has declared the rock-cut structures and trulli (Tholos) in the area of the Gravine and the Murgia to be the expression of a unique cultural and anthropological civilisation. It follows that the institution of the Terra delle Gravine Regional Park intends to seek their recognition as UNESCO World Heritage, like nearby Matera and Alberobello.



**Figure 4: Terra delle Gravine Park – “Gravina of Riggio”.
Photograph by Valentina Castonuovo**

As well as including a Site of Community Importance-Special Protection Area represented by the Gravine (ravines), the epicentre of the Terra delle Gravine Park is an area considered to be at “high environmental risk”, as per the Deliberation of the Council of Ministers of 30.11.1990, due to its proximity to highly polluting industrial and military sites. The objective is therefore complex and ambitious but nevertheless possible. It intends to: preserve the biodiversity of the site in terms of species, communities and landscape; encourage the adoption of eco-sustainable development policies via the preparation and implementation by the municipalities involved of specific sectorial plans designed to reduce sources of atmospheric, water-borne, acoustic, electromagnetic and waste-borne pollution; monitor and prevent environmental crimes via the active participation of the local communities; monitor pollutant loads and the influence of nearby industrial areas by assessing the impact on the soil using indigenous mosses; develop innovative and sustainable measures via the involvement of subjects affected by social exclusion (such as the female inmates of Carmelo Magli prison); raise awareness among the population in order to strengthen the sense of belonging to the places; and favour the sustainable enjoyment of protected areas.

In addition, the project seeks to highlight the concept of the unity of the territory, while recognising its distinct features, bringing them under the coordination of a single regional structure. After many years of inactivity linked to incoherent and unstable management policies, the Terre delle Gravine Regional Park could now come alive with the Uppark! Project, which aims to be the first form of experimental and effective management of the site. It offers a model of development that makes use of the most significant matrices of participatory planning.

Conclusions

The “Dune Costiere da Torre Canne a Torre San Leonardo” and “Terre delle Gravine” Regional Parks have activated a new, effective management of regional resources, developing the economic activities present in the areas of interest and involving local communities and tourists. Many initiatives have been spontaneously launched by private subjects and others, aimed at the recovery of nature and the correct enjoyment of the rural areas involved. This process has presumably been accelerated by the provision of environmental and cultural goods and services by certain players, which is clearly modifying the scale of social values in certain communities, in terms of the perceived “systemic” quality and “social-collective” character of a given item (Bariletti & Causi, 1998). Benefits are perceived in the existence of the item itself, or in its conservation and wholeness in a state that is at least equal, if not better than the status quo.

Recognising the value of environmental and cultural heritage for the promotion of a democratic and cohesive society means not only “Recognising the need to put people and human values at the centre of an enlarged and cross-disciplinary concept of cultural heritage” (Consiglio d’Europa, 2005, p. 1) but also activating public policies that respect and promote the right to take part in cultural life. Indeed, the fulfilment of the potential of cultural heritage, i.e. its relationship with a “value-based community” that recognises it and identifies with it, depends on the degree to which its value is known and shared by the greatest number of people.

The value of cultural heritage and its public importance for the development of society are part of the definitions formulated by UNESCO and the Council of Europe. In the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) the definitions of “natural heritage” and “cultural heritage” (article 1) are accompanied by recognition of shared responsibility for their protection, as “the duty of the international community as a whole” (art.6). If the expression of the value of cultural heritage for society depends on the promotion of the right to take part in cultural life and on public policies aimed at achieving this aim, the shared dimension takes on a special importance. Both case studies, the “Dune Costiere da Torre Canne a Torre San Leonardo” and “Terre delle Gravine” Regional Parks, seek to promote a positive reading of the territory, an education in beauty provided to the local communities and developed together with them.

Summary

The development of tourism in rural areas represents one of the most widely debated themes of the last few decades regarding regional development policies. Forms of organisation such as Parks and Protected Areas seek to favour regional development that is

compatible with social equity and with ecosystems and takes account of the interaction of socio-cultural, economic and environmental factors. It also considers the results, which must be feasible, equitable, sustainable and liveable. Puglia, in the South of Italy, is without doubt a region with considerable tourism potential thanks to its historic, architectural and cultural heritage and its variety of natural, environmental and landscape resources. This paper analyses the activities developed inside the Dune Costiere da Torre Canne a Torre San Leonardo Park near Ostuni in the province of Brindisi and the Terre delle Gravine Regional Park in the province of Taranto. Observing the behaviours of those who live and work inside the areas in question, it is seen that the traditional systems for using an area to be preserved have become obsolete, replaced by the activation of new tools for the sustainable management of the assets. Correct governance of the places can happen only by involving, informing and inspiring the local communities, tourists and all operators directly and indirectly affected. The recourse to participation has set off, inside the two parks analysed, a virtuous circle that will ensure the long-term safeguard and correct use of the habitats. This process has also brought about a new way of looking at regional resources, stirring interest in their correct safeguard and management and creating the foundations of a sustainable regional policy, a horizon of awareness and an inversion of previous economic, environmental and cultural tendencies.

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