

TOURIST SYSTEMS CO-CREATION EXCHANGES:
SERVICE RESEARCH AND SYSTEM THINKING INSIGHTS FOR DESTINATION COMPETITIVENESS

<value co-creation and changing role of suppliers and customers>

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Abstract

Purpose: The research focus is twofold: a theoretical and empirical analysis of the creation of value and the extent to which the diverse stakeholders involved contribute to the process.

Methodology Approach: A qualitative case study methodology is used.

Findings: The research compares different approaches, highlighting potential considerations in terms of scientific convergence. Furthermore, an investigation of specific tourism systems suggests new insights into governance models and value co-creation processes based upon Service Dominant logic, Service Science and the Viable Systems Approach.

Research limitations: Examining only two case studies limits the generalizing capacity of findings.

Practical Implication: The empirical research offers interesting stimuli with reference to innovative processes of territorial governance and destination management.

Originality/value: The paper attempts a parallel between theories that have to date, not been sufficiently analyzed in systems thinking terms; specifically Service Dominant logic, Service Science and the Viable Systems Approach.

Key words: Value co-creation, smart service systems, Viable Systems Approach, Destination Management, Case study.

1. Focus and methodology

Starting from a series of theoretical considerations that trace the cognitive path underpinning the basic trends of recent systems thinking and service science research, the paper attempts to blend and synthesize the constructs of the two disciplines into an international common interpretative approach framework that numerous scholars have been devising in recent years.

The research focus in our paper is twofold; a dual analysis (theoretical and empirical) on the creation of value and the multi-faceted contribution on the part of the diverse stakeholders involved in the process.

In this context, the foundations of three approaches have been examined: Service Dominant Logic (S-D logic), Service Science (SS or SSMD) and the Viable System Approach (VSA) in order to identify points in common and basic differences.

Empirical research has been carried out on two specific tourism systems to verify the considerations developed. In particular, the study has compared the clear cut features of interpretative convergence/divergence.

1.1 *Service Research and System Thinking insights*

S-D logic represents a cultural approach aimed at streaming interactively and conceptually, the supplier-customer relationship, not only in transactional terms but rather through constructive cooperation; in other words, behavioural logics that stimulate new strategies, giving a diverse and more innovative stimulus to decision making and policies in line with the dynamic trends of present day markets. Albeit prevalently market based, SDL approaches have tended to extend their range of action beyond the mere offering of a product or service. In this respect, the Authors of S-D Logic maintain that suppliers can only 'propose' value that really satisfies the client and that the product

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offer is the result of exploiting one's specific resources. The *Service Dominant Logic* (in the sense of embracing a culture of service, as the predominant element of any productive process) implies a new concept of "service" that identifies alternative paradigms declining value creation processes which are co-determined and multi-relational; in other words a shift in perspective in which goods no longer represent the only object of transaction, but rather, an element instrumental to supplying a service, considered the effective protagonist of inter-party relations and agreements: "it is the service underlying the goods that represents and increases the value of a product"; "i.e. in other words, it is the service that is effectively exchanged" (Vargo, Lusch, 2004a).

We live in a service age (Toivonem, Tuominen, 2007). Many factors, political action, business strategies, individual behavior, interpersonal relations, organizational perspectives and supply chains are all linked to service logic. With the growing importance of services in all business activities and considering the possible change of the dominant logic, service-oriented much more than before, firms seem to orient their core business on service, addressing particular attention to service culture. At the same time, competitiveness is based on improving service quality and service innovations. In literature, the concept of "servicescape" is defined as "the environment surrounding the service" (Bitner, Brown, 2006), considering not only the social environment as a framework, but also the role of the stakeholders (actors) that perform the activities and hold positions identified with the concept and logic of the service. All business activities can be linked to the service: from ICT, marketing policies and management, R&D, legal services, financial, accounting, etc. All these elements are related to each other, taking into account the direct relationships and traditional as well as indirect interactions within a continuously updated supra-systemic framework, denominated Service Age. Furthermore, matching firm capacity with client needs is uniquely the result of an "on-going" bi-univocal type of relation capable of creating client loyalty and competitive advantage of a lasting nature (Lusch, Vargo, O'Brien, 2007). The client is consequently no longer seen as a target for the product offering but rather as a vital resource which if enhanced, can offer the firm a lasting competitive advantage (Vargo, Lusch, 2004b). In short, the customer is no longer seen as a consumer or consumer of value but on the contrary, a participant in the productive process (prosumer) (Vargo, Lusch, 2006; 2008).

SSMED represents an emerging and significant study of the so-called service systems in terms of value-co-creation people, technology, value propositions linking internal and external service systems, and shared information (e.g. language, laws, measures, and methods; Spohrer, Maglio, Bailey, Gruhl, 2007). The strand of research aims for accreditation as a proper science in order to catalyze multidisciplinary research pathways addressed to the design, organization and governance of ever more complex, 'smart' service systems; what could be called a proper applied research field on services.

In the international scientific community, analyzing service considered as a complex phenomenon, has stimulated interest from an interdisciplinary perspective thus contaminating the traditional approaches to service research. In scientific terms, SSMED investigates the nature of service systems and how they evolve, the roles of the people involved, knowledge, shared information and technology, as well as the relevance of customers (i.e. demand) internal production processes (i.e. supply); as concerns Management, it investigates efficient evaluation and relational sustainability; in terms of Engineering it develops new technologies, adequate approaches to promote the monitoring, assessment and diffusion of information; finally, in terms of Design, it analyses architectural structures and techniques and implements studies to devise articulated value creating service systems. *Service Science* has developed in research terms centred on modern systems of service of a smart type (Spohrer, Anderson, Pass, Ager, 2008), stimulated in particular by the progress made on an international level in ICT.

The basic idea lies in the necessity to take into account organizations that are more capable of dealing with changing conditions of context, in a more, reactive, adaptive, proactive and dynamic manner (Spohrer, 2010).

VSA (Golinelli, 2000; Barile, 2008) is a suggested method which based on the General Systems Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1962) has devised a conceptual matrix which results in the gradual shift of perspective from observed reality with a focus on the parts, to a paradigm that declines interaction with a specific focus on the process. Although the concept of firm as a system is not new (von Bertalanffy, 1968) the innovative features of VSA lie in the circumstance that the comprehension of phenomena cannot be resolved exclusively by means of an analytical approach but only through a global perspective that combines both reductionism and holism. On the one hand, the interpretative structure-system paradigm enables the analyzing of the components (structure and relations from a static viewpoint) addressed to describing the phenomenon observed; on the other, it leads to comprehension of the whole characterized by dynamic interactions (systems and interaction viewpoint) which provides information on how the observed phenomenon works. Consequently, the structural dimension in its various shapes and forms (logical, physical, extended, specific) delineates the role of potentially active components; the systemic dimension (operative structure), emerging from the structure, clarifies how that role is carried out. In addition, the crucial condition of viability had to be taken into account (Beer, 1991): a system is viable if it is capable of constantly nurturing its capacity for survival by means of interaction with other systems that exalt processes of cooperation, collaboration and sharing aimed at the co-creation of value. In other words, VSA suggests how an organization or firm – is a viable system which owes its survival and its capacity for creating value to its potential for relations and interactions with other viable systems. This assumption is even more evident when an organization operates in extremely complex contexts. Hence it follows that firms can be conceived above all, as flexible systems. Flexibility, contemplated in the definition of extended structure, represents a potential relational capacity that facilitates the calibrating of the system with the dynamics of the context, thus guaranteeing the creation of value. In other words, the extended structure implies the capacity and potential of system dynamics to relate to external systemic entities. Such potential favors the gradual forming of relational skills thanks to which by improving interaction with the various entities, the variety emerging from the context can be controlled. In this perspective, the governing body has to favor a level of relations that is coherent with the context.

The latter, perceived and interpreted by the governing body of the firm from a subjective perspective, represents the relational context made up of various more or less systemic entities (i.e. suppliers, clients/consumers, financial institutions, public institutions, etc.) with which firms consider it convenient to relate. It emerges that the context, source of the resources upon which the system is nurtured, is characterized by a close network of interacting systemic entities the governance of which depends exclusively on the search for contextual consonance or in other words, the harmonious correspondence in terms of cognitive proximity and cultural compatibility, with the various systemic entities with which the firm creates relations. Consonance consequently, refers to the continual and constant search for compatibility and the propensity to establish channels of communications with the entities of the context (system of systems). With reference to specific contextual entities perceived as relevant (Golinelli, 2000, 2005), the governing body may consider it opportune to seek more marked levels of consonance in terms of integration and synergies. In this case, in order to create a system, the tendency is to pursue synergic resonance in the sense of creating value for all the parties involved.

In short, VSA implies a definition of enterprise as a relational system (Pellicano, 2004) that is nurtured above all by immaterial (intangible) resources (i.e. information, knowledge, trust) the systemic nature of which is characterized by the prevalently high content of (the) service. In such a perspective, unwritten rules the result of widespread, continuing relations between the firm and the various related entities, represent the basis of a process of sharing, joint responsibility and synergy in the context of processes of value creation. The relational vision refers to the factors of a cognitive type that prevail within the suppliers' market in which service elements linked to supplies become fundamental criteria for choice but at the same time, extend also to the outlet markets: the client/consumer (considered an effective partner) plays the positive dual role of contributing critical

resources and at the same time, responsibly participates in the customer satisfaction process which also depends on the firm's interactive capacity. In this respect, it emerges that vSA, in highlighting how the creation of value is the result of the interactive dynamics in play between systems, also underlines how components, activities and processes are relevant in providing services to others (i.e. consumers) in order to obtain mutual value (i.e. providers) (Golinelli *et al.* 2010).

The effective contribution from these three distinct approaches to scientific studies, research and experimentation, moves in the direction of a stimulus for identifying new systems of value creation as opposed to the well documented traditional models present in the literature.

In the light of the scientific reflections outlined above, there is the strong conviction that in every social system, contextual consonance and the search for resonance are firmly linked to the capacity to create value and consequently, to the capacity of creating competitive advantage. As a result, the co-evolving (Golinelli, 2011) of the system, favoring processes of harmonious development and reciprocal satisfaction, enhancement of long term relationships with (more or less relevant) supra-systems of references, cannot and should not be analyzed regardless of the potential of the context for competitiveness. Achieving and maintaining the status quo is the result of possessing distinctive, superior characteristics, quality and skills compared to competitors operating in the same context. From an economic analysis perspective, perceived in other words, in terms of an evaluation/assessment of firm competitiveness on the part of any organization interested in promoting its product offer or services.

In this sense, it can be underlined that a voluntary exchange of resources takes place if there is interest or availability on the part of the stakeholders involved. In other words, potentially critical resources for survival from interested parties (targets, suppliers, institutions, stakeholders) depend necessarily on the capacity to present a value proposal (value proposition – value potential) which only if accepted, privileged (or better, enjoyed - value in use) will really be judged of effective value. Consequently, the following theoretical assumptions can be posited:

1. “Greater odds for survival of the system depends on the firm's capacity to update value propositions in line with the contingent changes and needs of the context”;
2. “The capacity for value creation is closely linked to competitive capacity”.
3. “Modern service systems, regardless of value propositions, are inspired by structure and organization in systems thinking logics”;
4. “A link exists between the capacity for viability and the concept of ‘smart’, both are bound by the concept of system and characterized by the capacity for adaptation”.

2. Convergence on value creation and relationships

According to Service Dominant Logic (Vargo, Lusch, 2008) and Service Science (Maglio, Spohrer, 2008a; 2008b), emerging service systems studies show how and to what extent, any specific system can be “interpreted” above all, as respecting service logics. However, new reflections on value creation models in Service Systems, illustrate that their form or nature do not depend wholly on contributions from interest groups (such as participants, Alter, 2008) in value generation processes but highlight on the contrary, improved interaction in the relational dynamics of system elements and the relevance of resource allocation and collaborative advantages, not to mention the importance of alliances, roles, rules and cooperative strategies (Castells, 1996; Gulati, 1998).

As mentioned previously (see Section 1.1.) vSA underlines the systemic nature of value creation processes; the firm as an isolated entity totals little value taking into account it is a part of the value creation processes jointly and contextually with its specific interlocutors (Golinelli *et al.*, 2010). It follows that value has to be considered in its dynamic capacity as well as in its multidimensional (economic, social, competitive) form. The implication is a process of knowledge governance which takes into account the weight of and effective role played by each interested party with the firm. In terms of context, the governing body selects the entities by virtue of which and due to their effective relevance, it qualifies as a potential participant in the dynamics of value creation. In other words, as

co-creators co-responsible for satisfying mutual needs and expectations. Governance capacity consists, consequently in building together with said entities, close relations based on common programs, in a shared vision and shared value perspective. Value creation is linked therefore, to the capacity for collaboration rendering stable the encapsulating of critical resources (or better, basic capacities expressing the propensity to carry out particular tasks or deliver useful services) (Golinelli *et al.*, 2002) independent of negotiations or contracts, which evolve towards stable and trustworthy relations capable of creating mutual benefits (Barile *et al.*, 2006). This type of relation, in a partnership perspective, qualifies interaction characterized by the co-participating and co-defining of objectives by means of the coordinating, sharing and synergic use of respective resources. In short, interaction in the framework of a convergent perception of belonging to the system or to the network of creation of value. Management literature has emphasized that a key business competence lies in the firm's relational capacity (Dyer; Singh, 1998) specifically, the firm's ability to join its own resources with those of other firms through cooperation. The resources and competences proper to a specific firm benefit from the multiplication effect generated by relations which develop knowledge and learning thanks to mechanisms of interaction and contamination (Rullani, Bettiol, 2003).

On the other hand, the Dynamic Capabilities Perspective (Teece *et al.*, 1997) inspiring, utilized by and integrated in *vSA*, evidences how dynamic capacity represent the firm's ability to integrate, construct, reshape and cross-fertilize its own competences with those held by other firms, so as to adapt rapidly to the contingent changes taking place in the context. Furthermore, current contexts, dominated by the knowledge economy, are characterized by the widespread diffusion of collaborative relationships and by *networks* which in representing sources of modular specialization, make their resources freely available. This means that each firm has permanent access to more advanced skills and competences in addition to those possessed in their own organization. Furthermore, the value of such networked resources lies in their highly exclusive nature and the fact they cannot be acquired from the market place. *vSA* in short, sums up this process in the concept of extended structure. As illustrated, (see 1.1) besides the internal resources, both vertical components and relations inherent to top down and bottom up partnerships in the chain and the horizontal components and relations relative to the other firms operating in the same phase of the chain, are contemplated. Within such inter-organizational contexts, a potential and gradual stabilizing of relations can be envisaged for the pursuing of common aims by - as previously stated - coordinating, sharing and synergizing respective resources.

The capacity for creating synergic and mutually satisfying relations is the pre-requisite for the firm obtaining consensus and legitimisation on the part of the stakeholders that sustain the firm's development (i.e. employees, suppliers, clients, banks, state or public sector institutions, etc). However at the same time, this capacity is closely linked to the regenerating of competitive advantage the expression of competitive capacity and capacity for consonance (Golinelli *et al.*, 2008). Compared to that of a firm's competitors, in obtaining calculated as opposed to fortuitous consensus, such differential is the pre-requisite by means of which the relevant supra-systems release the resources they hold; the latter, being permanently available to the firm, create the foundations for the constant regeneration of value creation. The propensity for survival in the market on the part of the firm is in other words, the result of obtaining calculated consensus inherent to the capacity for satisfying the expectations on the part of the supra-systemic parties better than the competitors who compete to obtain and control those critical resources themselves or, similarly, have relevant systemic entities in common. In this perspective, competitive dynamics can be contemplated as the expression of adequate processes of knowledge governance. On the one hand, by means of the constant enhancement of structural resources, the capacity to reach significant levels of advancement and/or distinction first of all as concerns the clients, is achieved; on the other, by means of a constant effort to interpret the dynamics of the context, the capacity to create collaborative and synergic relations with the relevant systemic guaranteed the stability of which, multiplies and nurtures the critical resources and removing them from the availability of competitors. However, at the same time, the capacity to grasp the signals deriving from the context

should not be underestimated, in order to predict expectations, needs, etc., in order to reach total consonance with the context thus legitimizing the role and existence of the firm itself.

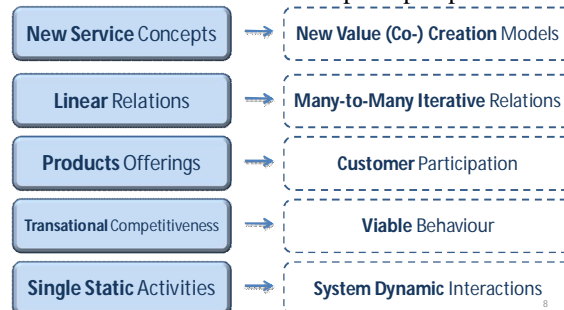
2.1 Reflections on matching

In line with the relational view (Gummeson, 1993; Prahalad, Ramanswamy, 2000) of business performance, network theories consider all the actors involved as dynamic, ‘operant’ and active resources that facilitate networked interaction (Lovelock, Gummeson, 2004; Achrol, Kotler, 2006), and organisations and their activities are enclosed in various relationships (Gummeson, 2008). In this perspective, system relationships drive business components, behaviour, strategies, policies, and organisations; these relationships are then consciously determined and finalised to mutual satisfaction (Womack, Jones, 2007; Lusch, Vargo, O'Brien, 2007).

As emphasized frequently in the research, in terms of vSA, system viability is strictly linked to the relational and cognitive skills that are capable of generating “calculated consensus” (differential) through interaction thus exalting processes of collaboration, cooperation and sharing aimed at the co-creation of value. In other words, favouring interaction between systems that share their own resources in a win-win relationship to manage component dynamics, especially with reference to the variation between internal “characteristics” and external “opportunities”. Emerging relationships are very much related to individuals who interpret and fulfil business missions, strategic actions, and management practices through their values and cultural identity (Golinelli, 2010). This kind of social relations can be defined as a “relational pattern that characterises each individual in a business scenario and involves personal, business and stakeholder relations” (Polese, 2009); in social relationships, consequently, consensus is favoured when systems are constituted by cohesive, interpersonal, fiduciary, long-term relationships based on values rather than rules.

In the close link between new service and system considerations and modern interpretations on the creation of value, the process, seen in the Service Logic and System Thinking perspective, in practice follows a pathway a) starting from the traditional value chain (Porter, 1980), b) arrives at real value constellations (Normann, Ramirez, 1995), where customers are no longer viewed as "destroyers" of the value proposed by the firm, but rather as core elements (Moeller, 2008). In terms of service science logics, customers (and the other stakeholders) deliver a crucial "surplus value" both as concerns the production (and co-creation) of value, translated in the sense of core to achieving and sustaining competitive advantage (Woodruff, 1997). The levers illustrating the shift in paradigm (see Figure 1) clearly indicate that the new models of value creation are closely related to the new concept of service precisely because of the co-creation mechanisms that all the stakeholders sharing in the process of value generation, inevitably set in motion.

Figure 1: The shift in the common conceptual perspective scheme/framework



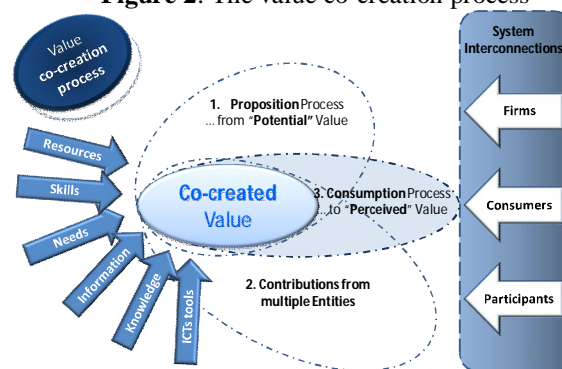
Source: Elaborated by Authors

Similarly, the value attributed to all the stakeholders involved has shifted attention to a new way of thinking, not simply linear or unidirectional, but also crosscutting, iterative, self-sustaining, of a many-to-many type. This means that the transaction on which the competitive strategy rested initially, has been replaced by adaptive, evolutionary, viable behavior characterized by dynamic systems interaction. From the value-centered perspective of innovative service, it is evident the

extent to which consumers are interested not only in the goods or services as such, but rather in terms of solutions to their needs (Zeithaml, 1988; Maglio, Spohrer, 2008b). Consequently, the consumer does not obtain value directly from the product itself, but from its use, processing or consumption (Lusch, Vargo, 2006).

If it is true to say that the value of a product consequently, derives from the benefits that underlie the service (Venkatesh, Peñaloza, Firat, 2006) and seeing as companies have no option but to formulate their product offerings to satisfy the market, then it is evident that value is not created in the production process or reflected in the selling price, but follows a more sophisticated process of co-creation (Prahalad, Ramanswamy, 2004, Ballantyne, Varey, 2006; Mele, 2007). Value in other words, is derived from a complex process of co-production, co-design, co-marketing involving different entities (not least end users, Vargo, Maglio, Akaka, 2008); by sharing information, resources, skills, needs and risks (Möller, 2006) in conformity with the network theories and the systems approach to corporate governance (Gummesson, 2007a; Barile, Mastroberardino, 2003). As concerns the end user, value is created by means of a personal "consumption" process, stemming from the constant interaction with other parties in the relevant service system (Spohrer, Vargo, Maglio, Caswell, 2008). In this perspective, perceived value, (i.e. the potential value proposition) becomes concretized (i.e. effectively co-created through the process of customer satisfaction) and the firm is seen as integrator (and manager) of the resources necessary (Polese, Carrubbo, 2008) in a prospect of mutual satisfaction, blending the value co-created with the comparative appreciation of a mutual service "(Lusch, Vargo, O'Brien, 2007).

Figure 2: The value co-creation process



Source: Elaborated by Authors

3. Tourism seen from the perspective of the three approaches

As stressed above, in systems thinking the capacity for evolving and adapting on the part of any social system to changes in internal and external conditions is the prerequisite for competing, earning and defending market positioning. Furthermore, the growth and expansion of the service economy has led to more complex processes of interaction, favouring the development of relations of a networking kind. In specific contexts and sectors this is particularly relevant and the development in modern terms, of the scientific concept of service and advances relative to the systems thinking approach has favoured the emerging of various service oriented systems (economic, managerial, organizational or informational - ICT). At the same time, the constant accrediting of logics linked to service and the systems perspective has led to a revisiting of the concepts of co-creation of value, networks and innovation.

As concerns the tourist industry, for firms operating within a specific geographical area, this means basically, the necessity to work within and become part of an established network, in order to benefit from sharing complementary resources and consequently, to offer a much better service as a whole. The growing attention addressed to collaborative strategies and client participation in the creation of value processes and not least, the common objective of raising the average level of quality produced (by suppliers) and that perceived (by the end users) with respect to specific

tourism resorts, has evidenced a strong vocation oriented towards service, stimulating the enhancement of the propositions provided by Service Science in terms of tourism.

Tourism has always involved a variety of stakeholders linked (or otherwise) to a territory capable of interpreting needs, dynamics and relations on the basis of which to offer a consolidated global tourist product. The outcome is more aggregation in terms of supply and new philosophies of enjoyment as concerns demand. In recent years, tourism has undergone radical changes: with regard to demand, tourists prefer customized planning schedules and extremely flexible holiday packages. At the same time, consumers do not privilege organizing their holidays completely independently but prefer flexible packages which enhance and exploit their holiday schedule. Tourists nowadays can choose from numerous options, responding to innovative trends (fitness and wellbeing, adventure tourism, eco-sustainable tourism, sports tourism, great events, etc.) all of which flank more traditional forms of tourism (cultural tourism, religious tourism, beach and natural environment tourism, conventions and congresses, etc.). Furthermore, the same holidays that in the past were enjoyed once a year, are now organized and enjoyed independently in a more critical manner by optimizing timescales, bookings, distances, transport and transfers from one location to another. In short, the option finally chosen by the tourist is based on the subjective, emotional and cognitive choice (Rispoli, Tamma, 1995). It is evident that on the supply side, tourism as a whole, has passed from a dimension of natural development to systematic and systemic management. For instance, greater emphasis on mechanisms of marketing, design, planning and services to increase tourist appeal, essential for the success of any destination. (Laws, 1995) characterizes the former phase. In the latter case, on the contrary, we are witnessing the development of innovative tourism products achieved thanks to the contribution of a growing number of both public and private sector stakeholders (i.e. hotels, tour operators, travel agencies, public sector tourism promotion agencies).

From an analysis of the territorial systems linked up in this way and by controlling the systemic complexity deriving from their organization, the measuring of the potential of the territory in tourism terms can be put in place. Studies on tourist destinations start from a commonly accepted reference to the overall tourism product, the focus being not on an individual product or service but on a series of elements. Destination is considered in its own right as a complex tourist product both from the point of view of demand – where the dimension of the offer of services prevails in the perspective of tourist needs and experiences – and from that of the offer where the focus is on the relations between the various economic players/stakeholders of the tourist industry chain. The interdependence existing between tourism appeal, attractions, transport, information, promotion and integrated services evidences the need to create collaborative relationships: in other words, to be efficient, a destination has to operate as an integrated system, characterized by a shared vision and by the same long term objectives. This type of synergic *coopetition* (Della Corte, 2000) triggers innovative environments and favours the active participation of all the parties involved in the enjoyment of an experience (Pine, Gilmore, 2000). The capacity to manage in an integrated manner underpinned by a network and relational logic, the various components of the supply system, presupposes the need to enhance local contexts in both economic and social terms (Ejarque, 2003) to confer on them a specific identity. In short, the harmonizing of local needs and the exploiting of complementary interests consequently, have to take into account the potential for aggregations of a complex and networking nature (Polese, Minguzzi, 2009) in order to enhance the effective and potential features of a territory.

In this context, the basic tangible and intangible components of the tourism offer characterizing a destination and in terms of points of reference for the tourist, can be classified as follows:

- natural resources relative to the landscape heritage together with artistic-cultural resources. In representing the specific appeal of a destination, these factors are not reproducible and as such should be protected and preserved lest they undergo deterioration and consequently, detract appeal from the area;

- general system of services and facilities relative to access and enjoyment. Both crucially affect choices made by tourists in that they influence the overall quality of the stay. By services we mean: accommodation, catering and refreshments, social events (fairs, shows and exhibitions, festivals, concerts etc.), intermediation services etc. Facilities on the contrary, refer to transport, healthcare, signage;
- destination image. The destination chosen by tourists for their trip is in effect, represented by their perceptions of the place (Mussner, Pechlaner, Schönhuber, 1999). Successful tourist destinations are able to offer the visitor something perceived as unique as they create a sense of specific place identity compared to other tourist resorts (Godfrey, Clarke, 2002).

It follows that the vocation of an area represented by its supply of structural components (natural, artistic, cultural, infrastructural, etc.) and systemic (economic stakeholders of the tourist industry, social organizations etc.) imply value only at a potential level, effective value, concretized in terms of a series of appeal attractions for enjoyment in order to find correspondence in the marketplace has to possess a distinctive identity and a positioning that is perceived and appreciated. The extent to which this can be translated in terms of value for the territory hosting the destination will depend on the degree of cohesion between public and private sector stakeholders, capable (the latter) of stimulating systems logics of development. In other words, the increase in the odds of survival of a destination can be effectively achieved only where governance which albeit composite, taking into account that it is characterized by diverse components holding different roles, is capable of triggering trends (co-evolutionary processes) on the basis of shared aims on the part of the stakeholders making up the system (Golinelli, 2002, Golinelli *et al*, 2006). Hence it is clear that the creation of value does not take into account exclusively the client dimension despite the fact of the clients being the relevant supra-systems component and integral part of the product delivery system, but expands to include that of the territory in terms of enhancing the structural and systemic components. Accordingly, the creation of value implies the sustainable and balanced development of the territory wherein the destination gravitates, with the aim of enhancing constantly and harmoniously, the structural and systemic elements. Hence, the capacity to attract resources (tourist flows, external capital etc.), a basic precondition for the continuous regenerating of value, constitutes the prerogative not only of the single components of a territorial area but of cohesive tourism systems. Envisaging the territory in terms of destination implies the analysis of the role destination plays in orienting the various components coherently with the vocation of an area and with the building of a harmonious image. In this perspective, vSA identifies a composite governing body by identifying three logical categories (Golinelli, 2002; Petruzzellis, Trunfio, 2006 Barile, Golinelli, 2008) to which is linked the definition of categories of decision making. The “Institutional Body” responsible for how a destination is defined in terms of territory development pathways and lines of action that direct, coordinate and integrate the diverse decision making levels in the development of the tourist system. On this decisional level a logical structure is present representing the available territorial components for enhancement. This role in Italy is carried out by the Regions in conformity with the Tourist Reform Law no.135/2001. The “Coordinator” responsible coordinates, controls and enhances territorial components, activating specific planning initiatives in coherence with top down indications and guidelines. In particular, the main contexts of intervention consist in: the definition of a plan of tourism development coherent with the tourism potential and the goals of the operators involved; the promotion and integration of forms of Association between tourism operators and local Authorities; the creation and diffusion of an image of the tourism system coherent with the vocation of the territory; continual improvement of the product offer. At this level of decision making the extended structure is present. The coordinating functions can be carried out by a Destination Management Company, in the capacity of structure for the governance and marketing of the destination. The “Proposers”, in that they hold distinctive competence (businesses, category organizations, non profit organizations, etc.) can put in place projects that are envisaged in the recommended top down development policies. The “Proposers” facilitate the process of creating a specific structure from the extended structure. The presence of a

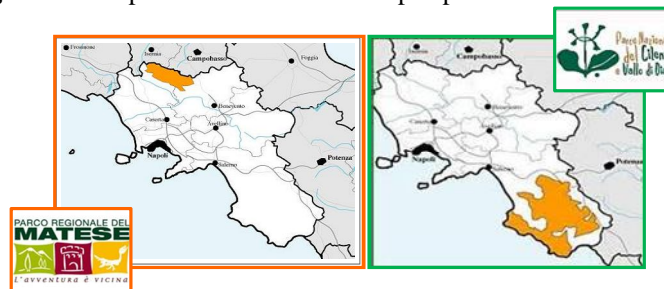
composite governing body and at the same time, the integration and coordination of decision making are fundamental elements for enhancing the tourism potential of a specific area and to give viability to an integrated tourism system (Golinelli, 2004). In this sense, successful governance requires negotiations in which diverging interests are reconciled with many expectations on the part of the supra-systems, favouring a shared vision and nurturing the sense of belonging to the system. In other words, the converging of bottom-up (as concerns the needs and expectations of the stakeholders) and top down (the expression of tourism development strategies) processes. Not only is there a need for strategic planning, but it is necessary that the projects are shared and improve the appeal and standard of service of the destination, favouring the setting up of a series of relations characterized by logics of co-production and collaboration between the stakeholders who in various ways, are involved in the destination. The interactions which emerge from the operative structure thus enable the nurturing of trust, consensus, mutual commitment, development of competences, sense of belonging. Only in this way can the shift from haphazard tourism systems characterized by spontaneous self-organizing processes but lacking in incoherent and common strategy of value creation for the territory to tourism systems that are in an ongoing phase of development. In this case, the coordinating of actions in the light of the pursuit of ongoing goals identified on the basis of shared aims, tends to favour the integration of competences and the development of synergies within the system, thus nurturing the creation of consensus and sense of belonging to the same territorial context, fundamental aspects in generating synergic processes of value creation.

4. Case study research

4.1 Choice of territorial areas

From the official classification of Italian tourist areas assessed by official statistics (ISTAT, 2009) the Campania Region was chosen as case study to examine given its extremely diverse and well organised tourist destinations and by virtue of the importance of the tourist flows concerned (in line with the national average). The Region, characterized by a strong tourist identity boasts a multi-vocational territory capable of attracting different types of tourism (Golinelli, Simoni, 2005). In particular, the Cilento area (and its National Park) together with Matese (and its Regional Park) have been analyzed in terms of destination and compared.

Figure 3: Comparison from a territorial perspective of the destinations



Source: Adapted by the Authors from maps on www.parks.it, 2009

Based on a non-probabilistic technique – a technique used in case studies (Neuman, 2000) - and opting for a purposive case (i.e. the presence of particular elements and content information - Saunders *et al.*, 2003) the two specific cases was chosen on the basis of the following criteria:

- They are in the some Campania Region
 - o situated in the same geographical area: the Campania Region
 - o regulated by the same norms of reference
 - o characterized by similar characteristics of access, similar cultural specifics and comparable advantages
- They are protected area tourism systems with;
 - o comparable internal regulations
 - o similar environmental, organizational and decisional limits

- common growth and development opportunities and territory protection mechanisms.
- The Regulator is identified in the Region Campania
 - It should be noted that in the context of an integrated territorial approach, the Region Campania has classified the Parks as one of the dimensions of growth and development to be enhanced and active protagonists of integrated development in environmental tourism, agricultural and cultural terms.

4.2. Description of territory vocation and the system as a recognized entity

4.2.1. The Regional Park of Matese

The Regional Park of Matese is a natural protected area in Campania regulated by the Regional Law no. 33/1993 – Campania Regional Council Regulation no. 1407 dated 12 April 2002. In terms of territory, the area extends over 33,326 hectares through the mountainous zone of Matese across the Provinces of Benevento and Caserta. The area is made up of 20 municipalities – subdivided into three territorial *clusters* all with similar characteristics.

The territory, prevalently mountainous, rich in natural resources, is ecologically and environmentally unique as concerns the area’s fauna and landscape. The environmental quality and integrity of the latter offers both opportunities and attractions such as sports, excursions and alternative itineraries. The many villages with their prestigious historic-cultural and architectural heritage also offer a patrimony of agri-food products (e.g. olive oil, wine) and arts and handicrafts. Traditions, folklore and events linked to religious festivals add to the attraction of the territory.

Nonetheless, tourism as concerns the Regional Park of Matese is not exactly widespread; it has a mainly seasonal character and is concentrated prevalently in the summer months in the wake of the numerous events organized by the local Administration, the local Tourist Office and Cultural Associations. These events and manifestations are closely linked to the local history, culture and traditions in which the territory of Matese is particularly rich. Winter tourism flourishes thanks to the presence of two ski resorts (Bocca della Selva and Campitello Matese) while an extremely specialist form of tourism consists in excursions to explore the grottoes and the canyons of the Park. Prevalently, tourism in the Matese region can be defined as “homecoming” tourism, in other words, made up of people who have emigrated returning to their home town during holiday periods and the summer. This however, does not imply an increase in number of tourists in the local hospitality structures in that they usually stay in their own homes. From an analysis of official data (Statistical Reports from the relative local Provincial Tourism Office and analyses of ISTAT 2009 data) the specific characteristics of the destination have been mapped to highlight their level of recognisability.

Table 1 Recognisability of the Matese Tourism System

RECOGNISABILITY	Low	Medium-low	Medium	Medium-high	High
The relevance and renown of the artistic, environmental, cultural, historic heritage					
Quality of the productive fabric and entrepreneurial dynamism					
Level of innovation in service supplies, transport facilities and communication					
Level of mainstream education, training system and job market					
Territory planning					

- **Source:** Adapted by the Authors from statistic sources 2009

Although the territory is characterized by an elevated environmental and socio-cultural heritage (from the paleontological finds of significant value to the presence of marvellous lake and mountain areas) notwithstanding, the destination is little known both on a national and international scale.

The mainly agricultural vocation of the territory, is not accompanied by specialist skills. The industrial sector of scarce importance, is made up mainly of micro enterprises of an artisan nature

and with a limited productive capacity. Traditional artisan production is on the wane almost to the point of extinction. This can probably be explained both by the widespread difficulty encountered in terms of access to credit and the lack of wide-ranging entrepreneurial initiatives. Innovation is not widespread, in terms of information (the Internet) and communication (the Intranet). At the same time, transport services emerge as poorly integrated and badly managed.

The level of education offered characterizing the area is in the average category given the presence of two well known universities (the Sannio and the SUN) and the widespread scholastic system even in the mountain area. However, the area is characterized by high rates of unemployment mainly affecting the younger categories of the population, with little or no propensity for remaining in the mountains.

The Integrated Territory Plans and those relative to urban planning have resulted in the allocation of many funds. Nonetheless, results have not always been satisfactory above all as concerns returns in terms of territory image.

4.2.2. The National Park of Cilento

The National Park of Cilento and Vallo di Diano was inaugurated in 1991. Initially, the area corresponded to 36.000 hectares in the Province of Salerno. To date, the area extends to cover c.181.048 hectares. Situated in the southern part of the Province, the Park extends to the Sele Plains to the North, the Basilicata Region to the East and to the South and the Tyrrhenian Sea to the West. The areas comprising the Park consist entirely or in part, the territories of 8 consortia of municipalities in the mountain area and 80 municipalities. From 1998 the Park has been awarded Unesco National Heritage status (with its archaeological sites of Paestum and Velia and the Certosa (Charterhouse of Padula) and since 1997 it has been a Biosphere Reserve.

The variety of its scenery (mountainous, rural, coastal, archaeological) means that the territory is in a position to offer an area product with particular appeal, favouring diverse types of tourism and reducing seasonal limits. In the Cilento area in fact, diverse forms of tourism are already in place and constant efforts are being made to preserve the environment and at the same time, to stimulate new and more significant tourist flows. Interesting tourist itineraries have also been planned in an attempt to facilitate the proliferation of adequate local allied industries. Integration on an inter-sector scale has been successfully achieved with respect to the local handicrafts industry, where products have a significant tourist value and the eno-gastronomy sector, despite the fact that production pays the price for the limited capacity for independent production (raw materials are often not from the region) and on account of the incapacity for trading the products on a supra-local basis. Efforts of a public and private nature to promote the territory have been extremely generous.

The analysis of data from official sources: Provincial Tourism Board (EPT) Reports of Statistics on the Area and analyses of past data from The Italian Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) 2009) has enabled the mapping of the specific features of the destination, highlighting its level of recognisability.

Table 2 Recognisability of the Cilento Tourism System (As is)

RECOGNISABILITY	Low	Medium-low	Medium	Medium-high	High
The relevance and renown of the artistic, environmental, cultural, historic heritage					
Quality of the productive fabric and entrepreneurial dynamism					
Level of innovation in service supplies, transport facilities and communication					
Level of mainstream education, training system and job market					
Territory planning					

- **Source:** Adapted by the Authors from statistic sources 2009

The territory is characterised by the elevated environmental and socio-cultural heritage of its many historic centres (Acciaroli, Castellabate, Stella Cilento, etc.) and renowned archaeological finds (Paestum, Velia) which represent cultural attractions that are recognised worldwide. Furthermore, the resources of the coastal areas contribute greatly to increasing territory appeal.

The productive fabric evidences the effective overcoming of conservative logics to the advantage of a strong spirit of enterprise in particular as concerns territory promotion, in many phases of the tourism chain. Innovation in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is widespread both as concerns public institutions and advanced technology platforms available for tourists (the gps tablet for visiting the National Park).

The largest university campus in Italy and the well distributed institutions of primary and secondary education in the territory contribute to raising the quality and level of education. Furthermore, widespread enterprise has to a certain extent, mitigated the traditional exodus of young people, the number of which has been reduced considerably in recent years.

Territorial planning represents the vital sap of any initiative, and the projects put in place by the "Ente Parco" - institutional "Coordinator"- (hereafter called "Park Board") for the support and development of the local handicrafts industry have been extremely numerous together with the initiatives for the enhancement of the high level of professionalism of skilled workers widespread in the Cilento territory. Included among the most prominent initiatives, are the projects "Marchi d'area", "Borsa Verde dei Territori Rurali Europei", "Banca del germoplasma", "Integrated Tourism in Rural Areas valorising Culture and Environment" (I-TRACE), "Centro di eccellenza sulla biodiversità del Mediterraneo", "Osservatorio della Biodiversità", "Cilentani nel Mondo", "Linea Parco", "Carta dei Sentieri".

In order to put in place efficacious integrated projects, various pilot projects have been started to create a functional, collaborative network involving enterprise in an attempt to promote throughout the Park territory, innovative initiatives such as country houses, vide holidays, etc.

4.3. Research objectives and methodology

Having describe the tourism vocation characterising the two territories and having highlighted their different levels of recognisability, our empirical research attempts to verify which elements are at the basis of value creation processes and how capable they are of rendering more competitive the tourism systems analyzed. In other words, besides the appeal factors in the territory which are capable to a greater or lesser degree of attracting demand in terms of tourist flows. The research attempts to ascertain the relational dynamics and the mechanisms of coordination existing between the stakeholders.

To this aim, the research questions concern:

- how the available resources are enhanced for the benefit of the territory as a whole;
- the extent of visibility of the relations (both formal and informal) that render the system an open one and that are capable of boosting the equilibrium of the system through the acquiring, sharing and exchange of resources.

To this end, the research was developed using a qualitative approach and a case study methodology (Yin, 1994, 2003; Fayolle, 2004). The fieldwork approach, as suggested in the literature (Adams, 2002) has the dual aim of "grasping in detail the main characteristics of phenomena being studied" and understanding the dynamics of a given process (Ryan et al., 2002).

4.3.1. Data collection and Data analysis

In line with Eisenhardt's (1989), suggestions, we combined different methods of data collection, in that 'triangulation made possible by multiple data collection methods provides stronger substantiation of constructs and hypotheses' not only in hypothesis testing but also in theory-building research (Yin, 2003).

The survey was carried out by means of *semi-structured interviews* addressed to various stakeholders (both public and private sector) involved in the two destinations. With the aim of

obtaining significant results, the sample was defined on the basis of the relevance of each category of participants (Alter, 2008) involved in the process of value creation. In particular, the field of reference comprised various categories of stakeholders (public sector/private) linked to the various decisional and operative levels of the tourist chain (see Table 3). On average in the public sector, four persons per category interviewed were reached while in the private sector, at least six persons per category interviewed were reached with peaks detected above all in reference to small enterprise businessmen. The number of interviews totaled 112. For each category specific elements were analysed relative to: profile of institution or firm; type of relations inside the chain (in terms of characteristics, motivation and intensity); degree of formalisation of the strategies of organisation, communication, promotion. In short, we focused on the intrinsic value of the tangible and intangible assets and the deployment of the tourist system relational dynamics.

Table 3: Categories interviewed

Categories	References	Tipologies	
Assessor Member to Tourism municipality	Territory Municipalities	Public Entity	
Mayors of Municipalities interested in GAL			
Assessor Member to provincial Tourism	Province		
Assessor Member to transports and provincial infrastructures	Park Entity		
Park Entity President			
Organizative entourage Member of Park Entity			
EPT Director	Recognized Associations		
Representative of National Association of Travel and Tourism Agencies			
World Bank and UNESCO Consultant			
Coordinator of European University Centre for cultural Heritage			
Oversee exponent of archaeological Heritage	Region		
National Museum Manager	Local TO		Private Company
TO Manager			
Incoming Agency Manager	Recognized Agencies		
Info-point/local ticket office operator			
Professor, SISTUR Council member			
Responsible of private Agency for territorial statistic surveys			
Professionalist famous promoter of local eco-friendly tourism	Privates		
Exponent for cruising Companies			
Accommodation operator			
Conferences expert and Congress venue owner			

The responses were collected in function of the research objectives and were attributed a score on a scale from 1 to 5 (low; medium-low; medium; medium-high; high). The coding was carried out separately by two researchers (Silverman, 2001). Subsequently, a comparative analysis was carried out confronting the results.

As concerns the analysis of the competitiveness factor of the two tourism systems reference was made to numerical indicators identifying tourism flows and the effective exploitation of the hospitality potential available in the two systems observed. By means of secondary sources (ISTAT, 2009, EUROSTAT, 2009, Campania Regione Report 2008, etc.). some indicators of synthesis were devised:

- Appeal factor/Attractiveness, the ratio of foreigners (and non-residents) compared to the total number of residents;
- Hospitality, the ratio between number of beds and territory surface;
- Average stay, ratio index of presences and arrivals, calculated on the average number of consecutive stays;
- Quality of hospitality structures: the number equal or superior to 3-star establishments compared to the total number of structures;
- Beds used, considering presences registered during the period 2003-2008 compared to the maximum potential of the territory.

The above indicators enabled the verifying of the extent to which the elements of a systems thinking vision and the effective creation of value recorded empirically can be translated in terms of the greater or lesser competitiveness of the destinations investigated.

4.4. Findings

The Regional Park of Matese

Relative to the enhancement of resources/assets (tangible and intangible) in the area, the Tables below evidence findings (in terms of average value) as concerns the target sample interviewed.

Table 4 Structural Components (Matese)

Reference		Private Sector (tourism firms)				
		1	2	3	4	5
Assets	Infrastructure and access to the territory					
	Potential for hospitality					
Tangible	Integrated services, tourist packages					
	Local area advantages, specifics of the tourism offer					
Assets	Networking, service networks					
	Marketing of the area, promotional and enhancement tools for the territory					
Intangible	Service culture					

Reference		Public Sector				
		1	2	3	4	5
Assets	Infrastructure and access to the territory					
	Potential for hospitality					
Tangible	Integrated services, tourist packages					
	Local area advantages, specifics of the tourism offer					
Assets	Networking, service networks					
	Marketing of the area, promotional and enhancement tools for the territory					
Intangible	Service culture					

Source: Adapted by the Authors from empirical data

With reference to the private sector, an element of fundamental importance lies in the enhancement of the assets linked to the territory and as a result, its natural vocation. In particular, the firms complain about the shortcomings relative to the main infrastructure of accessibility due to the heavy going bureaucratic procedures that prolong and/or prevent the completion of public works. They complain furthermore, about the lack of belvedere areas and structures enable greater enjoyment of the place's natural heritage. The result is that the potential for hospitality is penalized considerably. Small and medium size tourism firms (farm hospitality, hotels, restaurants) present in the territory are incapable of guaranteeing a tourism product offer that is sufficiently organized to satisfy demand to the full. This leads to the "see and flee" type of tourism; day trippers and/or concentrated at weekends and linked mainly to the few most well known areas, traditional tourism destinations, popular even before the introduction of legally denominated protected areas. As concerns the intangibles, there is an evident need for tools of a territorial marketing kind for promoting and enhancing the "Made in Matese" brand. However, it emerges that the firms concentrate mainly on a partial kind of relational marketing in which attention is addressed to managing in the best possible way, the product-service and the personal relationship with the consumer but the right importance is not dedicated to the other levers of marketing above all, with reference to the all the other stakeholders inside and outside the firm. As a consequence, a low sense of service prevails: the absence of integrated solutions, widespread disinformation and the isolation of the firms evidence a scenario which obviously needs improving. Finally, worthy of note is the low level of importance attributed to forms of networking, confirming once again the elevated degree of individualism characterizing the operators.

As concerns the public sector, the perceptions relative to territorial assets on average recorded limited accessibility (except for the motorway A1 which is only tangential to the area, main roads are lacking and often existing roads are in extremely bad repair) which makes public transport inefficient and eventual road widening extremely costly.

The potential for hospitality results exploited only in part or at least, the tourist flows registered by the private sector do not always correspond to the use/request for integrated packages (such as for instance, the Welcome Card Matese, mostly unknown to date).

Albeit the value and the beauty of the area are assets to defend, the perception of advantage relative to local area most probably suffers from the distance of the area to the coast and to large urban centres, not to mention from an excessively traditional cultural offer not readily appreciated by mass tourism. The public sector indicates peer to peer (horizontal) willingness to collaborate in terms of insufficiently integrated services. At the same time, they show remarkable (vertical) awareness towards citizen and tourist needs even though they have to reckon with the scarcity of funding available that characterizes the scenario in which they operate.

Territorial promotion is founded on a series of normative instruments (Integrated Projects for the Territory - PIT, Integrated Projects for Rural Protected Areas - P.I.R.A.P., Regional Operative Program – POR, Regional Projects for Parks - P.P.R.) which however, do not always lead to satisfying results. The reason for this lies in the fact that the initiatives are both sporadic and lack coordination as concerns the stakeholders as a whole. The “Park Board” is appointed to carry out functions of leadership and coordination, to define policies for tourism in the territory, communication, promotion and training local stakeholders in relation to programmes of economic, social and cultural development. However, in terms of level of destination, the marketing strategies in place can be summed up mainly in communicational and promotional levers put in place by the “Park Board”, there being no direct or coordinated involvement on the part of the stakeholders locally.

The service culture appears deep rooted by virtue of the desire and efforts made by all the public sector stakeholders with the aim of improving relations with the public. At the same time, given the results achieved to date in systems thinking terms, this would still appear terms, this value would still appear to be expressed in latent terms as opposed to manifest.

With reference to the systemic components of the Matese territory, based on the parameters underpinning the interviews, an extremely weak scenario emerged in which the average values reported are in many cases, extremely low both as concerns the private and public sector (Table 5).

Table 5 Systemic Component (Matese)

Reference	Private Sector (tourism firms)	1	2	3	4	5
Visibility and depth of relations	Modalities and diffusion of information					
	Mutual trust					
	Commitment towards ongoing relations					
	Risk sarin					
Concertation/agreement Between stakeholders	Presence of Governing Body					
	Agreement on plans and objective strategies					
	Legitimacy and acknowledgement of roles					
	Regulation procedures of decision making processes					

Reference	Public Sector	1	2	3	4	5
Visibility and depth of relations	Modalities and diffusion of information					
	Mutual trust					
	Commitment towards ongoing relations					
	Risk sarin					
Concertation/agreement Between stakeholders	Presence of Governing Body					
	Agreement on plans and objective strategies					
	Legitimacy and acknowledgement of roles					
	Regulation procedures of decision making processes					

Source: Adapted by the Authors from empirical data

The low level of importance attributed by the firms to networking processes finds confirmation in the sporadic forms of affiliation in place among the firms in the territory, characterized mainly by informal aggregations. A scarce propensity for creating bonds and links is reported as well as an incapacity to work on logics of aggregation and value chains the only ones able to render the system more competitive and to favor scale economies. The commitment addressed to consolidating relations, is a measure of the critical nature of the product/service underpinning the relations with a specific stakeholder (either internal or external) linked to a firm's core business. As a result, the extent of resource sharing (considered in theory complementary) represents for the analysis of relations, an almost negligible element. Risks, which present a significant factor relative to the propensity for collaboration can be traced in essence, to fears of unethical behaviour, the diffusion of confidential information, the loss of core competence and to forms of entrepreneurial shortsightedness. Firms recognize the fundamental role of the public sector for tourism development and in particular, of a collective stakeholder capable of guiding and coordinating the integration of the tourism offer in terms of system, however, such acknowledgement is merely formal in that no substantial legitimacy of the same is in place. The degree of corporate confidence in the institutions is practically inexistent. In actual fact, the latter are considered incapable of dealing with the problematic issues involving businesses. This is confirmed by the scarce knowledge shown by the interviewees relative to the most significant projects in place in terms of development of the tourism offer system.

As concerns the public sector, there appears to be more willingness to collaborate given the greater awareness of the difficulties the territory faces and consequently, a greater interest more stakeholder synergies. At the same time, however, often such willingness remains latent: albeit manifesting the awareness of being part of a system, the sector does not evidence the right capacities for acting as a driver of the system. In other words, there is no interaction in terms of common territory development. Direction and coordination of programs for the development, promotion and enhancement of the territory are scarce as a result of the pursuit of non linear, differentiated strategies on the part of the stakeholders of the territory (municipalities) with the relative dispersion of resources and overlapping of intervention con. Furthermore, inadequate involvement on the part of private sector operators is evidenced. They hardly participate in functional decision making for the development of the tourism sector. This is confirmed by the lack of knowledge on the part of firms relative to the programs and projects put in place by the local authorities. In short, there is no shared joint planning capacity evidenced nor the will to create both a single system destination offer and as a result in a perspective of destination management, a global tourist product.

With reference to destination competitiveness, Table 6 reports the total number of arrivals and tourist stays in the Matese area based on accommodation facilities and structures (beds available).

Table 6 Statistics (Matese) 2003 – 2008

year	Domestic Tourists		Foreign Tourists		Totals	
	Arrivals	Tourist Stay	Arrivals	Tourist Stay	Arrivals	Tourist Stay
2003	365	1.230	1.136	5.133	1.501	6.363
2008	412	1.375	1.235	5.434	1.647	6.809

year	Hotels		Other Accomodations		Totals	
	N° hotels	N° sleeps	N° accomodations	N° sleeps	N° Structure	N° sleeps
2003	7	870	19	922	26	1.792
2008	15	1.720	26	1.044	41	2.764

Source: Adapted by the Authors from statistical data 2009

The table evidences an extensive presence of structures, although not sufficiently widespread to adequately manage the potential supply. As regards tourist accommodation, the system does not appear very well developed compared to the regional averages for other areas

within the same scenario (the total number of hospitality structures in this area (67 units), corresponds to about 6.8% of the total capacity. However, with reference to hospitality in non-hotel accommodation, this is less pronounced. Regarding the quality of hotel accommodation, the relative synthetic index results quite high, with an average value of area equal to 3.15%, also the provision of catering facilities is particularly significant (566 catering businesses) and quite competitive. With reference to the economic sectors relative to the various tourist supply chains operating in the area, the predominant weight of the natural environment tourism chain - the importance of which is not limited just to the “rural” component - is highlighted (i.e. the number of farms in the area). Above all green tourism denotes a high number of employees in the botanical gardens, zoos and nature reserves (105 in total equal to 45%). The area also offers opportunities for the development of congress tourism. Table 7 shows the indicators representing trends during the period 2003-2008.

Table 7 Synthetic Indexes (Matese), 2003 – 2008

year	Tourist Attractiveness	Index value
2003	$\frac{6.363}{1.230}$	= 5,17
2008	$\frac{6.809}{1.375}$	= 4,95

year	Density Accomodation	Index value
2003	$\frac{1.792}{33.326}$	= 5,38%
2008	$\frac{2.764}{33.326}$	= 8,29%

year	Length of stay	Index value
2003	$\frac{6.363}{1.501}$	= 4,24
2008	$\frac{6.809}{1.647}$	= 4,13

year	Use of the beds	Index value
2003	$\frac{6.363}{1.792}$	= 3,55
2008	$\frac{6.809}{2.764}$	= 2,46

year	Receptive service quality	Index value
2003	$\frac{170}{700}$	= 24,29%
2008	$\frac{220}{1.500}$	= 14,67%

Source: Adapted by the Authors from statistical data 2009

Given that the daily number of arrivals is low (reaching on average, 5,000 units), tourist stays do not exceed one day (45% of arrivals), the average age of foreign tourists is equal to 21-40 years, 70% are habitual tourists while 23% are local residents, it follows that territorial appeal is generally weak, despite the significant mainly natural resources. Weak demand is the outcome of an inefficient tourism supply. Both structural problems (see Tab. 7: indexes of density accommodation and quality of the accommodation), and governance of the tourism system impact negatively. Despite the significant increase in density accommodation due to numerous investments to improve tourism flows, all the indicators, including the attractiveness of global area, reported a decreasing trend.

The National Park of Cilento and Vallo di Diano

Relative to the specific assets (tangible and intangible) in the Cilento area, in terms of availability and enhancement, on average, extremely high values were reported above all, as concerns Public sector stakeholder involvement.

Table 8 Structural Components (Cilento)

Reference	Private Sector (tourism firms)	1	2	3	4	5
Assets	Infrastructure and access to the territory					
	Potential for hospitality					
Tangible	Integrated services, tourist packages					
	Local area advantages, specifics of the tourism offer					
Assets	Networking, service networks					
	Marketing of the area, promotional and enhancement tools for the territory					
	Service culture					

Reference	Public Sector	1	2	3	4	5
Assets	Infrastructure and access to the territory					
	Potential for hospitality					
Tangible	Integrated services, tourist packages					
	Local area advantages, specifics of the tourism offer					
Assets	Networking, service networks					
	Marketing of the area, promotional and enhancement tools for the territory					
	Service culture					

Source: Adapted by the Authors from empirical data

Firms declare themselves quite satisfied with reference to the enhancement of infrastructural resources in the territory. Thanks to public sector programs of ongoing intervention relative to renovation and improvement, an efficacious road network system of accessibility is guaranteed. As a result, the firms in most cases, have declared that connections are sufficiently facilitated both as concerns the market of supplies and distribution and that of outlet. Some complaints have been evidenced in the case of Cilento firms established inland, where viability is slow and the area mountainous/hilly.

With reference to the potential of hospitality in Cilento, the seasonal tourism product offer is sufficiently staggered, thanks to the strong appeal of its eno-gastronomical and landscape nature (often protected by international heritage branding and standards of high quality). Hospitality services are adequate on the whole and the business fabric above all local businesses, continue to invest in tourism. It should be highlighted that the firms declare themselves quite satisfied with informational and organizational tourism services which act as drivers for improving the hospitality potential.

Entrepreneurial dynamics characterizing firms in the Cilento area highlight the importance acknowledged to integrated services. Most of the operators interviewed benefit from the territorial website (<http://www.cilentoediano.it.html>) which offers besides visibility to an entrepreneur's product, also structured packages that integrate the offer of the many other stakeholders involved (itineraries, theme circuits) not to mention forms of cultural, eno-gastronomic, religious, natural, seaside and congress tourism. This supply is characterized by traditional flanked by new and rapidly growing forms of tourism such as: green, social, wellness, adventure, eco-sustainable and big events.

In terms of local area advantages and specifics of the tourism offer, Cilento due to its size covers many areas, mountain, hills, coastal and agricultural ground. The uniqueness of the traditional advantages can be added to organized itinerary formats which favors the staggering of seasonal periods. The vicinity to other regions such as Calabria and Basilicata represents a significant added value, contributing to improved catering services and hospitality.

As concerns intangible resources, the crucial importance attributed to cooperation and collaboration with other firms within and outside the territory should be noted. In this sense, synergies with neighboring areas in Puglia and Basilicata, through forms of integration with the various productive sectors by means of cooperative agreements, are also highlighted.

Firms in the Cilento area present more pronounced strategic-managerial trends compared to those in the Matese area evidencing at the same time, greater awareness of the necessity to improve managerial, organizational and marketing knowhow in order to deal with competitors. In part, this could be motivated by the area's long history of tourism and hospitality which has resulted in greater professional growth. The approach to marketing in place is an evident manifestation of the scale of tourism development in the Cilento area, not to mention the professionalism of local operators. This is confirmed by the range of elements of differentiation of the product offer that are coherent with service markets, from the choice of brokering channels to well-structured and defined communicational and promotional strategies.

The category of demand for services according to most of the interviewees in the sample, consists in both considerable national and international tourist flows. This is reflected in adequate policies in terms of: courtesy of the staff, the creation of a calm atmosphere, customer care relations etc. to increase the level of customer satisfaction and as a consequence, the customer retention rate. With reference to the choice of distribution channels, it should be pointed out that in most of the cases analyzed, the direct channel is flanked/supplemented by distribution mediated by both national and international Tour Operators and by the various agencies of tourism marketing operating in the area. Furthermore, nearly all the firms interviewed have a website available on the Internet which in some cases, showcases their offer and in other cases, in an interactive mode deals with (bookings and e-commerce). All this is reflected in a widespread service culture. The huge potentials deriving from cross territory collaboration, the need for the tourism industry (food processing, food and wine, swimming, cultural heritage, etc..) to comply with quality standards and the attempt to make its offer (global output) even more specific and close to new demands and new experiences (Grottoes of Pertosa) has encouraged widespread attention to the culture of service (see Section 1.1).

With reference to the public sector, a preliminary item of synthesis to highlight emerges from the importance the public sector attributes to enhancement (see Table tab.8). During the interviews a strong focus was placed on the need for globally shared aims for harmonious development on a general scale.

Another significant element to highlight is the stage of achievement with respect to the Governing Body Coordinator (Park Management Authority). From the empirical findings, a clear cut concept of territory governance focused on the sustainable development of the entire aggregate system emerged. This greatly contributes to the enhancement of the vocation of the area as a whole. The establishing of a permanent negotiations and coordination Group (Park Community) comprising the Province and municipalities in the Park area also contributes to coordinated intervention. The planning instruments for the Park (Plan of Economic-Social Development; Park Plan, Park Regulations) represent the product of concerted interests to ensure the maximum coherence and complementarities of content. Furthermore, in the context of the main aims of the "Park Board" in terms of the protection, preservation, conservation, safeguarding and enhancement of the territory, ongoing efforts to seek coherence and compatibility between economic-social development initiatives and the protection of the landscape heritage, are the norm. The idea according to which the protection of the landscape heritage is possible only by means of a link with activity which is strictly traditional is thus overcome. In other words, the trend is towards safeguarding fundamental values not limited to "not doing" but rather demanding "to do" i.e. to act by virtue of a kind of cultural updating of the traditions in order to put in place projects that incorporate the goals of conservation and enhancement.

The commitment and the will emerge on the part of the "Park Board" to orient territory planning in a coordinated and concerted manner, seeking reciprocity with the various stakeholders of the territory. In this sense, the articulated agenda of meetings should be highlighted, which besides the many local authorities, see the participation of numerous categories of associations, professionals and environmentalists operating in the area. The goals of the meetings are debates and ongoing or future planning issues.

In the context of the basic guideline strategies and in the light of considerable capacity for proposals on the part of the local authorities, it is evident that the enhancement of resources has led to significant intervention on the infrastructure which has guaranteed greater accessibility to the territory and more efficient transport services.

Perceptions on the part of the public sector relative to the potential for hospitality and local area advantages (specifics of the tourism offer) are evidenced in the regenerated rural areas, ad hoc urban planning, new coastal infrastructure, staggering seasonal flows and rationalization (balancing costs/internal areas) and cards for integrated services.

The instruments for promoting the territory are the same as those illustrated in the case study on Matese. However, in the present scenario, results are by far, more evident. The desire to build a 'unified image' and a brand identity indicate the importance acknowledged by the interviewees to territorial marketing. Tools for promoting the territory are numerous (organizing big events, certification systems of quality of the services delivered to citizens and tourists, area brands, information and awareness campaigns addressed to residents on the issues of hospitality and territory potential). This demonstrates a clear cut service orientation as a lever for qualifying the tourism offer. The public sector interviewees have evidenced besides their policies and strategies in place aimed at stakeholder satisfaction, tools of e-collaboration such as intranet networks. With reference to the system components of the Cilento territory by virtue of the parameters underpinning the interviews, a particularly accentuated systems thinking vision emerges with regard to the public sector.

Table 9 Systemic Component (Cilento)

Riferimento	Attori Privati (imprese turistiche)	1	2	3	4	5
Visibility and depth of relations	Modalities and diffusion of information					
	Mutual trust					
	Commitment towards ongoing relations					
	Risk sarin					
Concertation/agreement Between stakeholders	Presence of Governing Body					
	Agreement on plans and objective strategies					
	Legitimacy and acknowledgement of roles					
	Regulation procedures of decision making processes					

Riferimento	Attori Pubblici	1	2	3	4	5
Visibility and depth of relations	Modalities and diffusion of information					
	Mutual trust					
	Commitment towards ongoing relations					
	Risk sarin					
Concertation/agreement Between stakeholders	Presence of Governing Body					
	Agreement on plans and objective strategies					
	Legitimacy and acknowledgement of roles					
	Regulation procedures of decision making processes					

Source: Adapted by the Authors from empirical data

The extreme importance attributed by businesses to forms of networking is confirmed in the various types of aggregation observed. Agreements both of a horizontal type (peer to peer) between operators belonging to the same phases of the tourism and vertical (top down/ bottom up), between operators of adjacent stages, characterized by relational and synergic momentum in proportion to the increase in critical elements of the product service exchanged. In particular, it was evidenced that the depth of relationship varied depending on the type of relationship and type of partner. Informal aggregations were the most widespread form among the firms interviewed in the sample, followed by equity type alliances. Analyzing the modalities of collaboration, highlighted both the perception of elements functional to collaboration and the risks linked to the relationship. In

particular, balanced interests and confidence constitute the factors that favor successful collaboration associated to which are mechanisms of communication and relational capacity on the part of partners. Risks can be traced to the fear of unethical behavior on the part of partners, the disclosure of confidential information and the unwillingness to share resources. Undoubtedly, a positive finding consists in the awareness of the need to collaborate in order to achieve better results in competitive terms. In other words, the perception emerges of the need to put synergies in place to achieve and distribute on national and international markets, integrated tourism products. Effectively speaking however, all the contexts in which profitable collaborations were achieved have been guided by the “Park Board” and by public sector stakeholders in the role of “Proposing entity”. For instance: customized hotels in small municipalities, officially approved products (DOP/IGT dairy produce above all), access in consortia to distribution channels and international markets. This finding is certainly of interest in that on the one hand, the awareness of the importance of collaboration in inter-entrepreneurial relations emerges, on the other, this is fully achieved only when the opportunity is glimpsed of participating in projects sustained by other public sector partners. Accordingly, resistance to forms of collaboration for sharing knowhow and skills in order to beat or displace competitors in terms of destination rather than in terms of individual firms, is clearly evident .

Effectively speaking however, all the contexts in which profitable collaborations were achieved have been guided by the “Park Board” and by public sector stakeholders in the role of “Proposing entity”. For instance: customized hotels in small municipalities, officially approved products (DOP/IGT dairy produce above all), access in consortia to distribution channels and international markets.

Perceptions on the part of the private sector of belonging to the system are strong; the interviewees in fact, define the Park of Cilento as a unitary reality characterized by well defined boundaries. Furthermore, they recognize the importance of the presence of a collective entity that guides and coordinates tourism development; however, they often cannot identify the same. In particular, the emphasis is placed on the following institutions: the Region, the Province, Park Management Authority, municipalities.

With reference to the public sector stakeholders interviewed, remarkable interest emerged relative to putting in place forms of collaboration both of a horizontal kind (peer to peer) for agreeing conditions functional to the development of the area as well as vertical (top down, bottom up). In this case, there is a tendency to involve private sector operators more closely in order to include them in the decision making relative to the area. The governance of the “Park Board”, sustained ever since the early days of its constitution and characterized by a strong valence of territorial and sector integration, is reflected in a strategic vision of unity shared by the stakeholders concerned. A strong desire emerges on the part of the interviewees to create a product offer system in terms of destination This is confirmed in the numerous and diverse projects of territory enhancement which through top-down and bottom-up dynamics, aim to promote the area and create competitive advantage. Finally, the legitimization that the interviewees attribute to the role of governance of the “Park Board” is also quite evident.

To appraise to what extent, in terms of level of competitive capacity of the destination, the considerations emerging from the empirical analysis can effectively be evidenced in numerical terms, data relative to arrivals and stays in the Cilento territory are reported on the basis of structures for hospitality and resources i.e. number of beds available.

Table 10 Tourist Statistics (Cilento) 2003 – 2008

Year	Domestic Tourists		Fpreign Tourists		Totals	
	Arrivals	Tourist Stay	Arrivals	Tourist Stay	Arrivals	Tourist Stay
2003	127.368	440.793	101.089	538.795	228.457	979.588
2008	133.578	496.742	107.579	565.711	241.157	1.062.453

Year	Hotels		Other Accomodations		Totals	
	N° hotels	N° Sleeps	N° accomodations	N° Sleeps	N° Structures	N° Sleeps
2003	373	24.030	105	18.563	478	42.593
2008	411	26.075	121	21.957	532	48.032

Source: Adapted by the Authors from statistical data 2009

In the Cilento area a high concentration of facilities, both hotel non-hotel is evidenced (approximately 66%). CNR (IRAT Report, 2007) surveys with respect to non-hotel facilities, there reported a conspicuous presence of tourist villages and camping sites (45 equal to 52%), as well as farms (46 equal to 53%) with a more balanced distribution between the Cilento coast and the inland. Hotel quality respects regional average (synthetic index of quality equal to 2.88) thanks to the widespread presence of 3-star hotels. A more equal distribution is reported in the presence of catering facilities (410 firms). With reference to the economic perspective, the coexistence of diverse tourism systems are based on offer that exploit the numerous heritage resources of the territory. In particular, beach tourism is predominant (41 firms) and an important role in the inland areas is covered by spa tourism (5 firms) although there are no wellness centers functional to spa tourism. Table 11 indicates trends during the period 2003-2008.

Table 11 Synthetic Indexes (Cilento), 2003 – 2008

year	Tourist Attractiveness	Index value
2003	$\frac{979.588}{440.793}$	= 2,22
2008	$\frac{1.062.453}{496.742}$	= 2,14

year	Density Accomodation	Index value
2003	$\frac{42.593}{181.048}$	= 23,53%
2008	$\frac{48.032}{181.048}$	= 26,53%

year	Length of stay	Index value
2003	$\frac{979.588}{228.457}$	= 4,29
2008	$\frac{1.062.453}{241.157}$	= 4,41

year	Use of the beds	Index value
2003	$\frac{979.588}{42.593}$	= 23,00
2008	$\frac{1.062.453}{48.032}$	= 22,12

year	Receptive service quality	Index value
2003	$\frac{13.697}{10.333}$	= 24,29%
2008	$\frac{14.785}{11.290}$	= 14,67%

Source: Adapted by the Authors from statistical data 2009

Compared with data relative to the Region of Campania, and more in general the Province of Salerno, the Cilento area represents a significantly relevant statistic factor. The Province of Salerno, second to that of Naples, comprises the area with the most hotel beds (26%). The predominant category of hotel is medium level (3-star) representing 50% of total beds, followed by the 4-star category (27%) and finally the 2-star level (16%). The province of Salerno registers almost 60% of non-hotel accommodation in the Campania Region, by virtue of beach tourism and green tourism. Compared to 2003 an increase of 14% was recorded for the category of supplementary facilities (+71%) and farm hospitality (15%). The indicators show a stable trend (in terms of: average length of stay, density accommodation, use of beds) thanks to satisfactory infrastructure and effective territorial governance. The level of tourism quality service reported has sharply declined due to the

increased number of minor hotel categories (inferior to 3-star). On the whole, the appeal of the Cilento area, during the period analyzed, has maintained a constant trend.

4.5. *Preliminary considerations*

The analysis of the research findings relative to the two Park systems provides useful insights for debate.

Above all the recognisability in terms of difference, partly due to the specific vocation of each territory should be evidenced. The issue therefore shifts to the perspective of territorial governance as concerns the enhancement of the structural and systemic assets and the deployment of public-private relationship dynamics.

From the overall findings it can be argued that the case of the Park of Matese evidences local tourism development in the in embryo stage.

With regard to the private sector, this is confirmed by: the need to enhance tangible rather than intangible assets acutely perceived, strong individualism and low entrepreneurial culture that influences the capacity to work in terms of aggregation and value chain logics, a widespread level of distrust with regard to local institutions, a scarce sense of belonging to the system.

With regard to the public sector, a desire for enhancement of the existing tangible and intangible assets is reported, but this is only from a potential perspective as often the stakeholders are handicapped by not possessing the right mentality and interpersonal skills necessary for the common development of the territory, or for an integrated tourism system. It follows that the potential coordination of activities and projects carried out by different entities results in the subsequent dispersion of resources and duplicated intervention.

At the destination government level, the role of the “Park Board” is merely formal i.e. institutional and not supported by concrete actions in common with local stakeholders, in other words, there is a formal governing body of the territory, which has facilitated territory planning in some cases, but is not perceived in its function of guidance and coordination. As prospected, models of governance based on a greater convergence between bottom-up processes and appropriate top-down mechanisms that are adequate for driving the shift from territory to systemic type tourist destination are crucial for the Park of Matese. In other words, consistent with the findings, in competitive terms, the Park of Matese requires government decision making that is coherent with the development of systemic synergies involving individuals, public-private networks and the tourist destination itself.

With reference to the Park of Cilento, in terms of destination, a strong systemic impetus underpinning governance action emerges. The “Park Board” has undoubtedly influenced the extent of tourism development in the area, emblemized in a global product that represents the whole Cilento area, recognized and recognizable in terms of quality and value. Awareness of the strategic role that tourism covers in terms of priority for the local economy, has led to a clear cut focus relative to intervention to enhance the Park’s structural and systemic components in order to create and communicate a unified and coherent image relative to territorial vocation.

The survey evidences that the “Park Board” operates in a perspective of cooperation and collaboration. This is confirmed in the fact that most projects involve the participation of local authorities (Province, mountain communities municipalities, etc.). in synergistic action. The capacity for planning, coordination and harmonization is reflected in the legitimacy accorded to the “Park Board” on the part of public sector stakeholders interviewed. Consensus in the sense of approval of the “Park Board” is evidenced in the development of the many initiatives and projects resulting from the concerted action on the part of the public stakeholders involved. Furthermore, the latter show a strong propensity for integrative action (especially in tourism services terms); collective strategies; networking ability both with respect to decision making on local development, and in relation to the promoting and regulating events and projects. In other words, a system of governance that is characterized by adequate knowledge acquisition processes that lead to value creating stable relations in the local context. This is also reflected in the analysis conducted relative

to competitive capacity, where the widespread exploitation of hospitality potential emerged in terms of staggering tourist flows.

However, if strong ties emerge with reference to horizontal (peer to peer) collaboration between the public sector, in the case of the private sector, resistance to forms of cooperation emerge, where individual enterprise is privileged as opposed to the sharing of advanced knowledge and skills capable of moving the competition to the destination level. In fact, if on the one hand a deep sense of belonging to a distinct territorial area and the awareness of the need to integrate network resources and knowledge emerge, on the other hand, the private sector has put in place synergistic partnerships only in respect of specific projects promoted by local institutions (public or private). Above all, small businesses in consortia actively participate in projects of territorial development and benefit from the available funding resources destined for the protected area, and some successes have been reported (farm holiday chains, leisure and eno-gastronomical activities, etc.).

Further efforts are needed to reinforce the offer by consolidating existing initiatives and creating of common knowledge frameworks for more effective flows of information, a necessary precondition for more transparent and willing collaboration. Only in this way can more advanced forms of networking be created to promote relational capacity (especially on supply chain level), trust and shared aims.

5. Conclusions and implications for further research

With respect to the considerations emerging during the phase of theoretical analysis and in particular from the assumption underpinning the research as a whole, it can be deduced that the empirical findings are fully convergent and coherent with the same. In particular, starting from the theoretical assumptions in terms of value creation and system thinking insights, “the capacity for value creation is closely linked to a destination’s competitive capacity”, given that “modern service systems, regardless of value propositions, are inspired by structure and organization in terms of systems thinking logics”. “The survival of any system in the *vSA* perspective, depends on the firm’s capacity to update value propositions in line with the contingent changes and needs of the context”. In this respect, “the link existing between the capacity for viability and the concept of ‘smart’, is bound by the concept of system and characterized by the capacity for adaptation”.

Furthermore, on an empirical level, crucial importance is attributed to the resources as a whole (structural and systemic component) for the potential benefit of the territory and to the fundamental role played by relations in stimulating the equilibrium of the system through the acquisition, sharing and exchange of resource. In other words, the focus is on the enhancement of inherent aspects of the structural and systemic components in terms of value and on the relational dynamics of tourist systems as a destination. The issue therefore, shifts to the perspective of territorial governance as concerns the capacity for enhancement of the structural and systemic assets and the unfolding of public-private relationship dynamics.

In terms of processes of governance, value creation and competitive advantage, the capacity for collaborative and synergistic interaction is closely linked to a converging perception of belonging to the system and to the network of value co-creation. This results in consensus and the sharing of respective resources, knowledge, and expertise. Therefore, establishing consensus consists in governing and reconciling stakeholder expectations by coordinating and harmonizing the various interests and extending to the utmost, the extent of contextual consonance, favoring consequently, consensual interaction capable of triggering a co-evolutionary processes of competitive capacity and value creation. In this context, the capacity for creating value is closely linked to a system’s competitive capacity (in a cognitive perspective) which is qualified by strategic coherence and coordinated action addressed to shared goals.

In this context, in the case of the Park of Matese, the total lack of an efficient governance process of convergent, harmonious and viable development and competitive capacity in system thinking terms, classifies the destination as in an in “embryo” stage. Consequently, in line with our

findings, for the Park of Matese a fundamental process of governance decision making, coherent with the development of systemic synergies is necessary that involves individuals, public-private networks and the tourist destination itself.

On the contrary, as concerns the Park of Cilento in terms of destination, a strong systemic impetus underpinning governance action emerges which has undoubtedly influenced the extent of tourism development emblemized in a global product that represents the whole Cilento area, in terms of quality and value. Consequently, the awareness of the strategic role that tourism covers in terms of priority for the local economy, has led to a clear cut focus on enhancing structural and systemic components in order to create and communicate a unified and coherent image relative to territorial vocation. The strategic coherence in place together with coordinated action addressed to shared goals, evidences the competitiveness of the area analyzed. In more detail, the convergence between top-down and bottom-up processes creates a virtuous pathway by means of which reciprocity with various stakeholders is sought. It is clearly evident that the “Park Board” effectively qualifies as an extended structure due to its flexible and relational capacity that facilitates the calibrating of the system with the dynamics of the context, thus ensuring the co-creation of value. Such potential favors the gradual forming of relational skills thanks to which, by improving interaction with the various entities, the variety emerging from the context can be controlled. In this perspective, the governing body favors a level of relations that is coherent with the context.

On the other hand, however, it should be noted, that the limited capacity of self-organization evidenced on the part of private organizations in terms of full cooperation and convergence i.e. “accomplished” system logics, results in the random exploitation of institutional initiatives and a non cohesive participation in network systems. This can be classified as a system in an “ongoing” stage of development.

In conclusion, our findings confirm the theoretical assumptions and highlight how the survival and viability of a destination depend on the validity of governance processes and in particular, on the capacity to create cohesive networks and shared goals relative to each systemic component or its aggregates. In this context, linking the concept of destination to the vocation of a territorial area, a tourist system exists when both structural and systemic resources are cemented by strong and stable interactions. In other words, harmonious development capable of satisfying varied segments of demand, at the same time, nurtures an effective process of value co-creation which renders one tourist destination more attractive than another .

Consequently, as in the two case studies examined, destination management has to take into account that the presence of specific attractiveness factors within a system, effectively contributes to the concept of evolutionary service systems (classified in SSMED terms as “smart”) and whose potential for success renders them viable.

The paper attempts to highlight the need for a more in-depth study relative to the extent of tourist-stakeholder participation in the co-creating of value and the need for further research on innovative models of governance and management conceived in a perspective of systems thinking logics. At the same time, the study proposes to stimulate reflection on modern processes of value co-creation, which would be favored in tourist systems by a new entrepreneurial type of governance involving both the private and public sector (e.g. public and private partnerships). These processes need to be embedded within the so called service system (SDL) and to become systemically really “smart” (SSMED) in order to result effectively viable (VSA).

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