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Before you submit, please make sure your paper meets some [basic academic standards](#), which include proper English. Some articles will be selected from the numerous papers that have been presented at the various annual international academic conferences organized by the different [divisions and units](#) of the Athens Institute for Education and Research.

The plethora of papers presented every year will enable the editorial board of each journal to select the best ones, and in so doing, to produce a quality academic journal. In addition to papers presented, ATINER encourages the independent submission of papers to be evaluated for publication.

The current issue of the Athens Journal of Tourism (AJT) is the fourth issue of the sixth volume (2019). The reader will notice some changes compared with the previous issues, which I hope is an improvement. An effort has been made to include papers which extent to different fields connected to Tourism and Hospitality, and will further promote research in the specific area of studies.

Gregory T. Papanikos, President
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The [Center for European & Mediterranean Affairs](https://www.atiner.gr) organizes the 13th Annual International Conference on Mediterranean Studies, 6-9 April 2020, Athens, Greece sponsored by the [Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies](https://www.atiner.gr). The aim of the conference is to bring together academics and researchers from all areas of Mediterranean Studies, such as history, arts, archaeology, philosophy, culture, sociology, politics, international relations, economics, business, sports, environment and ecology, etc. You may participate as stream leader, presenter of one paper, chair a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available (<https://www.atiner.gr/2020/FORM-MDT.doc>).

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- Acceptance of Abstract: 4 Weeks after Submission
- Submission of Paper: **9 March 2020**

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The [Tourism, Leisure & Recreation Unit](#) of ATINER organizes its 16th Annual International Conference on Tourism, 8-11 June 2020, Athens, Greece sponsored by the [Athens Journal of Tourism](#). The aim of the conference is to bring together academics and researchers from all areas of Tourism. You may participate as stream leader, presenter of one paper, chair a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available (<https://www.atiner.gr/2020/FORM-TOU.doc>).

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- Abstract Submission: **4 November 2019**
- Acceptance of Abstract: 4 Weeks after Submission
- Submission of Paper: **11 May 2020**

Academic Member Responsible for the Conference

- **Dr. Valia Kasimati**, Head, [Tourism, Leisure & Recreation Unit](#), ATINER & Researcher, Department of Economic Analysis & Research, Central Bank of Greece, Greece.
- **Dr. Peter Jones**, Co-Editor, [Athens Journal of Tourism](#) & Professor of Management, University of Gloucestershire, UK.

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Tourism Entrepreneurs with Nature-Based Businesses in Sweden – The Role of the Lifestyle and the Place

By Anna Sörensson^{*}, Maria Bogren[†], Annika Cawthorn[‡]

A growing amount of research focuses on lifestyle entrepreneurs in the tourism industry. Lifestyle entrepreneurs often go into business with the aim of making a hobby their income source or to create a certain quality of life in a specific place. Previous studies argue that lifestyle entrepreneurs are often motivated by non-economic goals. Nature-based businesses include traditional businesses such as those in the agriculture and forestry industries as well as new emerging businesses that are based on nature's resources such as tourism. In rural areas, these types of tourism businesses generate important income and are therefore of great importance from a business development perspective. The aim of this study is to explore how tourism entrepreneurs see their lifestyles and nature-based businesses in rural areas. The study was conducted using a qualitative approach. Seventeen different cases were studied between autumn 2015 and autumn 2016, all of which were nature-based businesses in the area of micro-tourism located in rural Sweden. Data were collected from semi-structured interviews, observations, and written material. The study's results show that there are several differences between tourism-lifestyle entrepreneurs in rural areas with nature-based businesses. We have identified four types of tourism-lifestyle entrepreneurs, each with different motives for running their businesses. The results also show that they focus differently on their nature-based businesses, depending on what kind of tourism entrepreneur they are. Many of the lifestyle entrepreneurs focus on developing several different types of income to reduce risk and obtain growth. Tourism-lifestyle entrepreneurs therefore seem to try different types of businesses and appear to be more open-minded and innovative where creating new products and services is concerned.

Keywords: *Hipster Entrepreneur, Life Enjoyer, Lifestyle Entrepreneur, Motives, Nature Based, Tourism, Traditional Entrepreneur.*

Introduction

Tourism entrepreneurship is an area of research that has not received the level of attention that it deserves (Ioannides and Petersen 2003). Since Schumpeter (1934), entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs have been seen as an important part of the development of sparsely populated regions. Nowadays, entrepreneurship is discussed in many different contexts and disciplines, including tourism. A growing number of research studies is focusing on lifestyle entrepreneurs in

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tourism (Ateljevic and Doorne 2000, Peters et al. 2009). Lifestyle entrepreneurs often start their businesses so they can make their hobby an income source or so they can create a certain quality of life in a specific place. Previous studies argue that lifestyle entrepreneurs are often motivated by non-economic goals (Shaw and Williams 2004). In this paper we will focus on tourism entrepreneurs whose main income is from nature-based businesses and who have extended their traditional farm operations to include tourism.

The Swedish government (2016) has named “Green industries” as a focus area for entrepreneurial development. The term “Green industries” (“Gröna näringar” in Swedish) means businesses within agriculture, forestry, landscape management, and other natural-resource-based commercial activities in rural areas. This concept does not exist in English, and in this study they will be referred to as “Nature-based businesses”. Nature-based businesses include traditional businesses such as agriculture and forestry but also new emerging businesses that are based on nature’s resources, such as tourism. In Sweden, nature-based businesses have great growth potential. Entrepreneurs in these businesses are considered to have a good forecast for growth and development since there is a high demand for products and services such as locally produced food, renewable energy, nature experiences, and rural tourism (Pettersson and Arora-Jonsson 2009). In rural areas, these types of businesses provide important income and are therefore of great importance where business development is concerned. Nature-based tourism businesses are often seen as providing a way of living for entrepreneurs who have a certain value and vision with their entrepreneurship (Pettersson and Arora-Jonsson 2009). The Swedish government sees this industry as being of particular interest for growing and creating new businesses. Since this industry is seen to be of great importance in Sweden, it is interesting to see how these entrepreneurs develop their business ideas to incorporate tourism. Over the years, nature-based businesses have struggled with, for example, the decline in milk prices and access to slaughterhouses. Political changes have led to less support for entrepreneurs with nature-based businesses such as agricultural businesses, which has led to an added focus on tourism. These changes have led to a steady decline in the number of agricultural businesses (Suess-Reyes and Fuetsch 2016). Among tourism entrepreneurs with nature-based businesses are entrepreneurs who have expanded existing businesses into the tourism sector. Previous research has shown that diversifying businesses, into tourism for example, is one way to create new business using existing resources such as buildings, labor, or equipment. Hansson et al. (2013) have shown the importance of, for instance, farm diversification into the tourism sector and also how this may change the identity of the farmers (Ilbery 1991, McNally 2001, Chaplin et al. 2004, Gorton et al. 2008, Barbieri and Mahoney 2009, Maye et al. 2009, Brandth and Haugen 2011, Grande 2011, Vik and McElwee 2011). For many nature-based businesses, the main motive for entrepreneurs running these businesses is the lifestyle they can offer as well as how they can be run as family businesses. Starting a business is often triggered by personal lifestyle goals in combination with the goal of living in a certain rural area, which often opposes pure economic driving forces (Ateljevic and Doorne 2000, Andersson Cederholm and Hultman

2010, Helgadóttir and Sigurdardóttir 2008, Marcketti et al. 2006, Andersson Cederholm 2015).

Previous research has also shown the importance of tradition and heritage among tourism entrepreneurs in nature-based businesses. These reasons are also important for understanding what motivates tourism entrepreneurs with nature-based businesses (Getz and Carlsen 2000, Hennon and Hildenbrand 2005, Hildenbrand and Hennon 2005, Andersson Cederholm 2015). It is important to realize that different types of entrepreneurs exist within this industry and that they have different goals with their businesses (Sörensson and Dalborg 2017). Entrepreneurs with nature-based businesses are often driven by the desire to choose a way of living and their own lifestyle. Nature-based businesses are also often family businesses due to family tradition (Anthias and Mehta 2003), and in Sweden there are many farms that have been passed from one generation to the next for long periods of time. Andersson Cederholm (2015) argues that family interests, personal lifestyle, leisure, and commercial interests are all important dimensions when discussing entrepreneurs with nature-based businesses. These types of entrepreneurs might not be driven by purely economic reasons. Andersson Cederholm (2015: 318) argues “in some types of family businesses, such as farming, the notion of heritage and tradition in connection to family life is important in order to understand what motivates the farm family.” This complexity with many different reasons for being an entrepreneur with a nature-based business and hope of growth given by the government make it interesting to study entrepreneurs with nature-based businesses who have diversified into the tourism industry. The aim of this paper is to explore tourism entrepreneurs’ points of view regarding their lifestyles and nature-based businesses in rural areas. This is examined in depth using the following research questions:

RQ1: What kind of motivations and values do tourism entrepreneurs in nature-based businesses have for their businesses in rural areas?

RQ2: What conditions do tourism entrepreneurs with nature-based businesses work under and what challenges do they face in developing and obtaining growth in rural areas?

In this paper, these entrepreneurs are referred to as tourism entrepreneurs with nature-based businesses. The paper is structured as follows. First a literature review is presented that addresses previous research in tourism in nature based business. In the next chapter the study’s methodology is presented. Furthermore, findings and discussion are addressed in the next chapter. Finally, the conclusion of the study is presented.

Literature Review

Some researchers use the term agri-culture tourism, which in this paper is interchangeable with tourism entrepreneurs with nature-based businesses. These

businesses can include a variety of products and services, such as accommodation or on-farm attractions such as festivals and educational events. It can also include farmstays, bed-and-breakfast accommodation, pick-your-own produce, agricultural festivals, and farm tours for children, hayrides etc. (McGehee and Kim 2004).

The concept of entrepreneurship has changed over time and nowadays there are many different fields of research in this area such as economics, business administration, sociology, psychology, and tourism (Dawson et al. 2011). Different types of tourism entrepreneurs with nature-based businesses, and their motivation for entrepreneurship as well as the conditions they work under and the challenges that they face is the focus of this theoretical part.

Research on motivation for entrepreneurship plays an important role in starting new companies and is therefore highly significant when studying entrepreneurship (Carsrud and Brännback 2011, Segal et al. 2005, Shane et al. 2003). Bredvold and Skålen (2016), state that the traditional view of entrepreneurship would state that tourism entrepreneurs work towards the goal of maximizing economic profit. Traditional entrepreneurship research focuses on economics but also the attributes of entrepreneurs. The aim of most tourism entrepreneurs is to be their own boss, to be independent and to have an interesting job. Getz and Carlsen (2000) have identified two types of entrepreneurs in Australia: “family-first” and “business-first”. Family-first entrepreneurs are motivated by emotional factors associated with their family and the desire to optimize their leisure time. Research has identified tourism entrepreneurs, however, as having goals other than economic goals, such as non-economic factors including lifestyle and family reasons. Dawson et al. (2011) discuss that research into entrepreneurship today includes a wider concept that includes cultural, economic, geographical, political and social factors. Getz et al. (2004) discuss “that the entrepreneurial process is not just an economic activity but is driven by the motivation of individuals as they seek to satisfy their own personal and social as well as economic goals”.

Lifestyle tourism entrepreneurs are people who either balance economic and non-economic goals or are mainly motivated by lifestyle rather than economic goals (Morrison and Teixeira 2004, Dawson et al. 2011). Previous research has used the term “lifestyle” in different ways but the main idea is that non-economic factors are important for people who start their own business (Dawson et al. 2011). Other studies have shown that for many businesses, specifically in rural areas, the maintaining and protection of lifestyle is more important than profit maximization (Dawson et al. 2011). Niskanen (1998) has shown that entrepreneurs who have inherited farms that have been passed down the generations have the goal for the next generation to take over the farm. This has a larger emotional importance than other family businesses.

Cardon et al. (2009) have discussed the importance of passion within entrepreneurship research. Already Schumpeter in 1934 stated it is “the joy of creating” that triggers an entrepreneur to start a business. Smilor (1997) argues that passion is seen as one of the most important areas within the entrepreneurial process. Research has shown that the passion from the tourism entrepreneur has a significant impact on creativity, endurance, and efficiency. Passion is also seen as

being of great importance in developing a business and the ability to mobilize resources and establish relationships in starting up a business. Passion is therefore considered to have a positive impact in terms of managing the different roles that entrepreneurship requires (Baum and Locke 2004, Cardon et al. 2009, Sörensson and Dalborg 2017). One reason for this passion might be a certain geographic location. Entrepreneurs who are passionate about living in a certain place may have had the entrepreneurial process triggered by a desire to live there. Hallak et al. (2012) discuss place identity in relation to tourism entrepreneurs. In recent decades, research into place has included place attachment, sense of place, rootedness, place memory, community identity, community attachment, place dependence and place identity, just to name a few factors. In this paper, we focus on place identity as this includes a person's cognition, beliefs, perceptions, or thoughts that the self is invested in a particular spatial setting (Hallak et al. 2012). Ek and Hultman (2007) argue that place has different roles. Agnew (1987) states that there are three aspects that complement each other rather than compete with each other, namely location (1), sense of place (2), and locale (3). Location focuses on a place in relation to other places while sense of a place refers to subjective feelings that people have about a certain place. Locale refers to people's everyday relationships and how they act towards each other in a certain place or region (Ek and Hultman 2007). Place may play an important role for entrepreneurs and we think that current research into tourism entrepreneurs with nature-based businesses has failed to focus on this.

Kuhmonen et al. (2016) argue that three areas are of great importance when discussing rural areas among youth in Finland, namely livelihood (1), accommodation (e.g. location) (2), and lifestyle (3). The study shows that in rural areas, entrepreneurship is seen as an opportunity that comes with freedom of choice. It also shows that the lifestyle recipe could include nature-related and space-related activities. McElwee (2006) states that De Lauwere et al. (2002) have identified five groups of farmers; Economic entrepreneurs (1), socially responsible entrepreneurs (2), traditional growers (3), new growers (4), and doubting entrepreneurs (5). Economic entrepreneurs create a significant economic change while socially responsible entrepreneurs believe that economic success must be balanced with environmental and social factors. Traditional growers are focused on an activity that has a history of being successful while new growers try to diversify and try new but similar businesses such as tourism. Finally, doubting entrepreneurs are unwilling to make changes. It is therefore of great importance to understand the entrepreneur's identities, attitudes, and motivation (McFadden and Gorman 2016). Mottiar et al. (2018) examines the relevance of social entrepreneurs in rural destination development, which play a significant role in rural development. Social entrepreneurs within the tourism industry have a significant impact on tourism and development in rural areas. Social entrepreneurs, despite industry, is not focused on earning money but rather have other non-economic goals.

Hansson et al. (2013) discuss the fact that diversification is highly recommended by the European Union as a way to obtain growth and development in nature-based businesses. This could be done by helping farmers to find new or

complementary commercial methods, such as tourism, using existing resources. Today, research often shows interest in farm diversification and entrepreneurship (Ilbery 1991, McNally 2001, Chaplin et al. 2004, Gorton et al. 2008, Barbieri and Mahoney 2009, Maye et al. 2009, Brandth and Haugen 2011, Grande 2011, Vik and McElwee 2011, Hansson et al. 2013). Many studies discuss how farmers often are “combiners”, meaning that they have other work despite working on a farm as well. Farmers’ motivation for diversifying their businesses is complex and includes many considerations other than economic reasons. The motivation underlying farmers’ decision making is possibly context-dependent and therefore embedded in and dependent on their business’ situation (Hansson et al. 2013). Many farms are run like family businesses and therefore the family’s situation may play a more important role when decisions are made to expand the farm into the tourism industry.

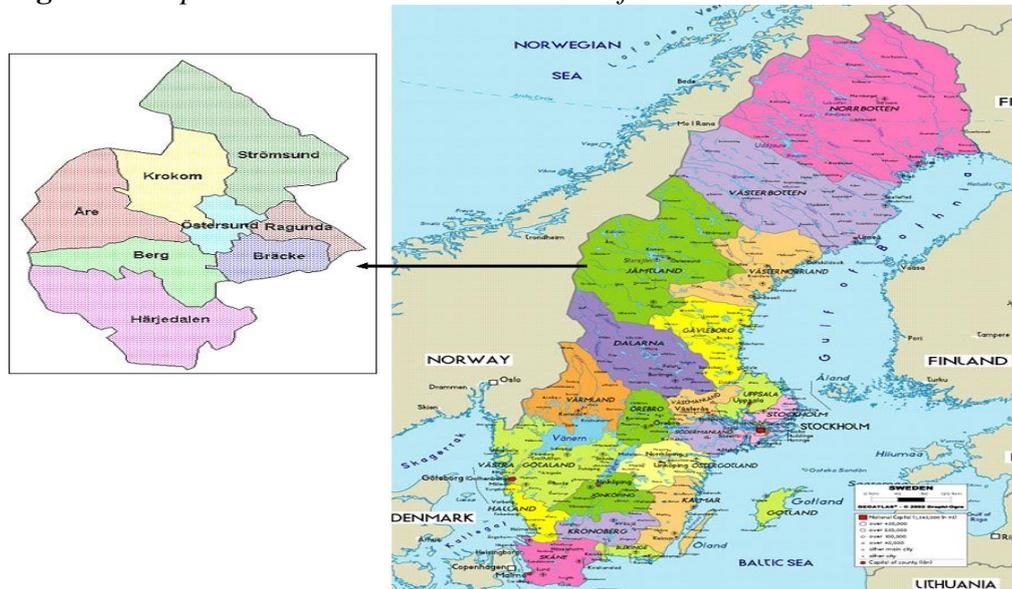
Methodology

The starting point for this study came from a university course focusing on strategic issues for businesses. We realized that nature-based businesses in Sweden have not been studied from an entrepreneurial perspective. We prepared the study by conducting a literature review with a focus on lifestyle entrepreneurship. From this literature review, we decided that a quantitative study would not take into account the diversity of nature-based businesses while a qualitative approach would let us dig deeper into the business life of nature-based businesses. We conducted case studies on a total of 17 different businesses over the period of a year. We started in autumn 2015 and continued until autumn 2016. All 17 cases consisted of micro companies with nature-based businesses in the rural province of Jämtland in Sweden.

The province of Jämtland is situated in the middle of Sweden and borders Norway. It makes up 12 percent of Sweden’s land area but is only home to 1.5 percent of Sweden’s population. It is divided into eight municipalities. Together with the island province of Gotland, Jämtland has the highest rate of businesses in Sweden, currently 16 companies per 100 inhabitants. Jämtland also has the highest rate of entrepreneurship among women in Sweden with eight female entrepreneurs per 100 female residents in the age group 25-64. An impressive 48 percent of the population aged between 18 and 30 in the provinces of Jämtland and Västernorrland would prefer to be self-employed to being an employee, which is the highest figure in Sweden (SCB 2018). Jämtland is also one of Sweden’s largest tourist destinations. Jämtland has 58,000 hectares of farmland, which comprises one percent of Sweden’s total farmland. There are around 8,200 farms supporting 9,100 people; about seven percent of the population is permanently employed in this industry, which is above the national average. Agriculture in the province of Jämtland is dominated by milk and meat production, cattle are the most common livestock but sheep, pigs and reindeer are also farmed. Jämtland has 80 companies involved in reindeer husbandry and there are over 45,000 reindeer in the province. About 200-300 people are employed in this industry.

After Gotland, Jämtland is the least industrialized region in Sweden with only 15 percent of the population involved. Industrialization is dominated by small businesses; only 50-60 of the province's industrial companies have more than 50 employees. More than 16 percent of Jämtland's industrial workers are active in forestry.

Figure 1. Map over Sweden and the Province of Jämtland



Source: Retrieved from <http://reregions.blogspot.com/2009/10/jamtland-conty-council-sweden.html>.

The study's data was collected using semi-structured interviews, observations, and written material. The interviews were conducted in various locations and notes were taken. The questions in the interviews focused on different areas of questioning such as: What is the company's current situation? What are its threats and possibilities? What are its challenges in the future? What kind of possibilities do tourism entrepreneurs see for development? How is it affected by being located in a rural area? The observations were made at the location of each business. Conditions were studied in terms of buildings and the surrounding area, but also how the distance to the nearest major location could be perceived and if there were any available transportation options. Documents that were studied included written sales material and the business' website and Facebook pages. Each case was then treated as a separate unit and was not compared to the other cases until all data collection was finished. The 17 cases were then analyzed and categorized with an interpretative approach based on the study's themes.

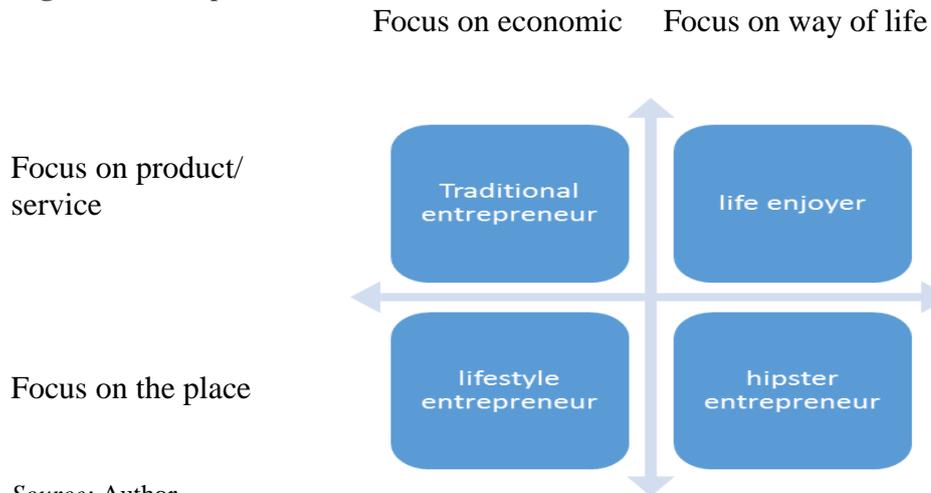
Findings and Discussion

The tourism entrepreneurs' views on their lifestyles and nature-based businesses show that they base their businesses on their interests. All of these companies base their businesses on what nature can offer. About half of the

tourism entrepreneurs own land and forest. They also have other assets in the form of buildings and animals. A common trait in all the tourism entrepreneurs is that they have a strong interest in nature-based businesses. They are very interested in nature and have built their income on this interest. The result also shows that the tourism entrepreneurs' background and interest play an important role in what type of business they have. They also seem to have a large social network. A strong interest is the passion or joy of creating. Their lifestyle includes spending a lot of time in nature and they have made this part of their business life.

This burning interest among the tourism entrepreneurs gave them great experience and the knowledge they needed to move on in business and develop their ideas. A common feature is that the entrepreneurs within nature-based businesses conduct their business in a genuine way and with authenticity. Many of the tourism entrepreneurs focus their production on "locally-grown products" or locally produced goods. Most of them prefer to sell their products at local markets and many have started different tourism businesses. It is important to minimize transportation for their customers. There is a great demand for ecological products and there is also an active debate that benefits businesses that focus on ecological products, especially concerning food in Sweden. Sustainable tourism is also a much-discussed issue today and ecological alternatives are something that people choose more and more. Many of the farmers produce high-quality meat products that are also more effective since they can sell them for a higher price. Another common trait is that many of the entrepreneurs own large amounts of land, both forested and farmland. The value of forestry is important and can be seen as an "insurance" in times of instability (the price on milk and meat differ depending on international markets). Some of the tourism entrepreneurs see this as a possibility to invest in other business ideas. They also spread the risk by conducting business in different areas such as forestry, dairy production, and tourism, all on the same farm.

The results of this study show that there are several differences between lifestyle entrepreneurs in rural areas with nature-based businesses. The study's 17 different cases have shown a pattern that we used to construct the following model. Four types of entrepreneurs were identified, all with different motives for running their businesses. The motives differ according to economic goals and what kind of life they are looking for. The categories are labelled traditional entrepreneur (1), enjoyer of life (2), lifestyle entrepreneur (3), and hipster entrepreneur (4). The traditional entrepreneur is mainly looking for economic growth while lifestyle and place are not of great importance. The enjoyer of life is not aiming for economic profit nor a specific lifestyle or location, but is rather more of an artistic sort. The lifestyle entrepreneur is primarily not looking for economic growth but the location and the lifestyle are highly important to these entrepreneurs. The final category identified was "hipster entrepreneurs" who are aiming for a combination of lifestyle and living in a specific location. Hipster entrepreneurs are more often found within the tourism industry.

Figure 2. *Entrepreneurs with Nature-Based Businesses*

The study shows that the place are relevant to discuss in relation to the studied cases. Ek and Hultman (2007) discuss place from three different perspectives: location, sense of place, and locale. In this study we could see that traditional entrepreneurs mainly see location as the important factor. Some of the entrepreneurs have inherited their farm, making the location very important due to family history. There are other entrepreneurs who are more focused on the sense of the place. They like a place because of the feeling that a certain place has. They want to live there and enjoy that feeling in their everyday life and have therefore tried to find a way to make a living there. These are the lifestyle entrepreneurs that are presented in Figure 1. The third perspective that Ek and Hultman (2007) address is the locale. Locale is the focus of both the enjoyer of life as well as the hipster entrepreneur. Both of these categories focus on relationships with others. The other people living in a certain place become important and may be a reason for choosing to live there.

The tourism entrepreneurs seem to have different motives and values as shown in Figure 1. All the entrepreneurs see nature and the environment as central aspects in their businesses. Some of them see the possibility to live and work on their own farm as a great opportunity and they value this highly. They use the resources that the farm and land can offer to make it possible to remain there. Many of them also want to share these values with other people through tourism, for example, many children today are not aware that milk comes from cows so farm tours are organized. It is also important to spread information about how animals are kept from an ethical point of view. People are becoming more aware of the importance of these issues and are interested in buying farms products and tourism products that are responsibly produced. The knowledge level among the tourism entrepreneurs becomes an asset since they have the expertise to make it into a business. Another result from this study is that the entrepreneurs are very genuine. The combination of tourism entrepreneurs who have a strong knowledge of nature and who operate with respect to nature becomes authentic. All of these

companies have a strong place attachment but in different ways. They are also more family-first oriented than business-first oriented (Getz and Carlsen 2000).

The results show that tourism entrepreneurs have both differences as well as challenges in common within their business life. Most of the tourism entrepreneurs are highly dependent on themselves and their family members. This makes their businesses very vulnerable in cases of sickness, accidents or separation. About half of them hire seasonal employees. They do not have the financial possibility to hire people on a permanent basis, only during peak seasons. Many of the tourism entrepreneurs would like to hire more staff on a regular basis so they could find the time for business development.

These businesses are dependent on EU funding and some of them also apply for funding to develop their businesses. When farmers need to develop their buildings, the costs are high. There are often too few employees to fully maintain the care of the farm, including cleaning, administration, and maintenance of buildings. Many of the tourism entrepreneurs do not have enough time to work with marketing, which is of importance since customers need to find them in a highly competitive market. Some of the tourism entrepreneurs do not even have the skills and/or the interest to work with their website and Facebook page, for example. The rapid technological advances seen today are a challenge for many small business owners.

The practical implications from this study is that tourism entrepreneurs in nature-based businesses are driven by different goals. This should be taken into account by the politicians to be aware that all entrepreneurs are not driven by economic reasons. It is therefore of importance to create places where entrepreneurs want to live and run their tourism business.

Conclusion

This study should be seen as a first attempt to find out more about tourism entrepreneurs with nature-based businesses. The different cases have shown differences between the tourism entrepreneurs as well as within the industry itself. In conclusion, we identified four different categories of tourism entrepreneurs. Place plays an important role for lifestyle entrepreneurs and hipster entrepreneurs with nature-based businesses. One of the main motivations for these tourism entrepreneurs is to live in a certain location. The results also show that depending on what kind of entrepreneur they are, they focus differently on their nature-based businesses. Many of the lifestyle entrepreneurs are focused on finding several different types of income to spread the risk and also obtain growth. The study also shows that traditional entrepreneurs with nature-based businesses prefer to focus on the main income and not so much on tourism. The lifestyle entrepreneurs therefore seem more willing to try different types of businesses and appear more open minded to create and innovate new products and services.

It would be interesting to continue this study by investigate other industries to see if the four categories also exist there. We would also like to do a comparative

study with other countries to see if the categories also exist despite other national cultures.

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Connecting Nautical Tourism and Agro-food Industry as a Way to Boost Competitiveness and Sustainability of Mediterranean Destinations. The Case of Cambusa Project

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Nautical Tourism in the Mediterranean is a relevant source of revenue for the involved territories. Nautical destinations are geographical hubs capable of hosting boats and vessels. In turn, these capabilities provide both technical services and tourism-related services to the visiting yachtsmen and to the residents. Nautical destinations can be viewed as gateways to the inner or internal areas bordering the coastal areas. This access occurs provided that there are sufficient links between the offer of goods and services of the inland (agro-food products, cultural, and natural attractions and connected services) and the potential users or customers which reach the area from the sea. The Cambusa project addresses the need to establish such links. There are several means through which this project can facilitate these connections. For example, by leveraging on the attractiveness of the maritime activities, supporting the access to high quality, locally produced traditional food and fostering the connection between coast and internal areas to boost competitiveness of both maritime business and agro-food companies of the rural areas. The paper describes the approach used to develop the project and define its strategy by the means of an innovative combination of participative policymaking and lean start-up methodologies and techniques. The study result is the definition of a best practice which allows two different economic sectors to create and implement a joint territorial strategy with shared goals in order to achieve better performances.

Keywords: *Nautical Tourism, Traditional Products, Lean Start-up, E-Commerce, Microenterprises, Competitiveness, Blue Growth, Euro-Mediterranean Region.*

Introduction

Sustainability is a classic problem in tourism studies (Butler 1991, Briguglio et al. 1996, Saarinen 2006). Recently, further actions have taken by the European Union interconnecting sectors to improve sustainable destinations and helping academic research and guide investments in the blue economy. Going beyond

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the green economy, the blue economy aims to create sustainable ecosystems to enhance more rentable and greener local economies. In this perspective, *The 2018 Annual Economic Report on EU Blue Economy* claims that nautical tourism has received ample support from the European Regional Development Fund. In fact, as already declared in 2017 in the *Report on the Blue Growth Strategy - Towards more sustainable growth and jobs in the blue economy*, the EU “responsibility today is to make sure that maritime economic development leads to a sustainable and competitive blue economy”. However, while data from several reports as the 2017 *Commission Staff Working Document on Nautical Tourism* suggest that in the Mediterranean area the nautical tourism is a fast-growing sector, evidence shows that the near inland agro-food small business industry is characterized by a dense environment of small and micro enterprises which showcase a reduced operational capacity and little or no international activity. This evidence supported the idea that greater efforts were needed to ensure a connection between inland agro-food industry and the nautical tourism sector. In this context, this paper aims to introduce a project designed to highlight the economic potential related to the yachting sector for the economic growth of the inland: the Cambusa project.

Cambusa is the Italian word for *galley*, the kitchen and cooking apparatus of a boat. The title of the project intended to highlight the relation between nautical tourism and local food. Nautical destinations are geographical hubs capable of hosting boats and vessels and provide both technical services and tourism-related services to the visiting yachtsmen and to the residents. Nautical destinations can be viewed as gateways to the internal zones bordering the coastal areas (Bizzarri and La Foresta 2011, Kovacic et al. 2016). However, this view is provided that there are sufficient links between the offer of goods and services of the inland (agro-food products, cultural and natural attractions, and connected services) and the potential users or customers which reach the area from the sea (Jolić et al. 2011, Mikulić et al. 2015).

The Cambusa project is an EU funded initiative whose aim is to foster the connections between the coast and internal areas and boost competitiveness of both maritime business and agro-food companies of the rural areas. The project started on March 2018 and it will close on February 2021. The aim is to highlight the importance of a European project to develop local areas, as already shown in the past in other areas such as the case of the Southern Baltic area (Hacia and Łapko 2017).

The final goal of the project is to leverage on the large number of nautical tourism practitioners and on the higher spending capacity shown by this type of consumers. This spending capacity could be extended to support small and micro-enterprises operating in the food sector with high quality traditional products that are normally not sold in large quantities. The purpose of the study is to describe the methods and the process used to develop the Cambusa project from the design phase to the implementation of the activities. The relevance of the study is given by the analysis of the combined approaches used to determine and implement a set of actions (building a dedicated quality brand, create an e-commerce platform and manage the related logistics, build a coordinated

communication strategy and a viable business model to sustain and expand the activities in the future) aimed at reaching the project objective and preventing failure.

This paper begins by describing the design process of the project Cambusa and what kind of approaches have been used to set it up. It will then go on to show the next steps and the need for further investigation in order to expand our understanding of how the agro-food industry can be interconnected to the nautical tourism.

Literature Review

This study draws its theoretical bases from diverse disciplines as geo-economics, blue economy and blue growth, tourism-related economics and marketing. The Euro-Mediterranean area is characterized by an extraordinary territorial diversity. For instance, the area represents a macro geographical region, which corresponds to a complex geo-economic mosaic and multiple geopolitical models (Prezioso 2015). For some researchers, this complexity leads to the hypothesis that the Mediterranean area can incorporate more macro-regional entities (Cusimano and Mercatanti 2018). Similarly, for all scholars, the region represents a real challenge in terms of socio-economic growth and development.

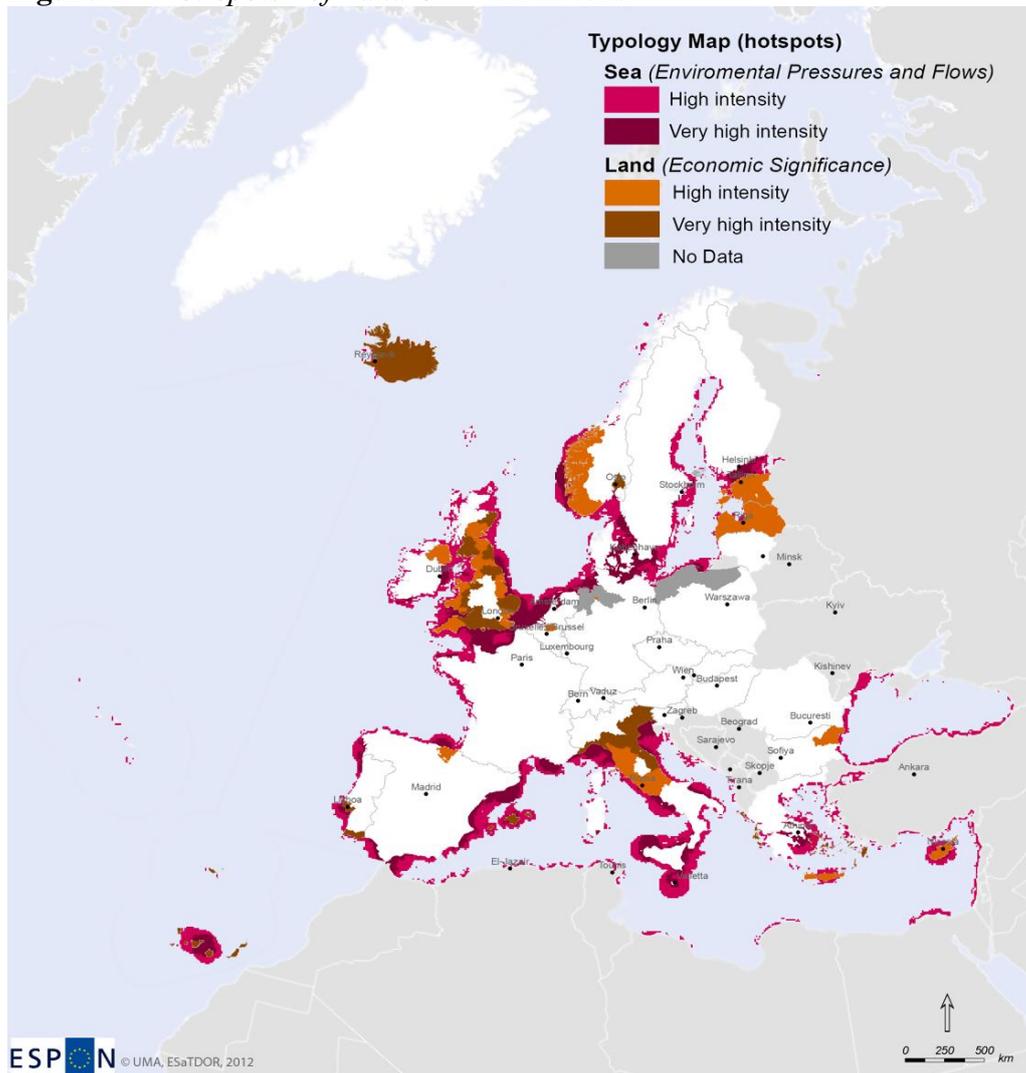
In this research, we explore possible spatial aggregations to overcome the gap of growth and development that has been generated in two main instances. This study will consider spatial aggregations within the Mediterranean region and between geographical areas. We, therefore, observe areas with specific territorial features including remote and peripheral territories, widely studied by the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion in 2010 and 2013. For example, these peripheral territories could encompass small islands and internal or inner areas. These areas were selected as different distance, commuting, dissimilar access to the labour market create strong limits to growth to participate in the European debate on the development of territories with geographical specificities, stimulated by the Lisbon Treaty (ESPON EUROISLANDS 2013).

The paper investigates the strengths and potentialities of development of insular, sparsely populated coastal areas, and internal territories connected to them. In addition, this study considers the advances for the hypothesis of a possible revival of these areas through the blue economy, that according to the World Bank (2017) identifies the sustainable use of marine and maritime resources as the strategic tool for long-term economic growth.

The Mediterranean region seems to be the ideal place to develop the virtuosities connected to the blue economy. According to Prezioso (2015: 95), “the territorial diversity of the Mediterranean - measured in terms of real and potential territorial capital - emerges as a relational asset that is already the bearer of blue and green values useful for redesigning the land-sea relationship”. However, complex as it may be, the variety of scenarios in the Euro-Mediterranean area is, in fact, an added value. Thanks to the implementation of

links between inner/internal geographical and coastal areas, which can be found considerably in the Mediterranean basin (Figure 1) there are potential development models to consider. For example, would be possible to achieve sustainable and tailor-made development models, directly inspired by the Blue Growth Strategy of the European Union (European Commission 2012). In fact, the recommendation of the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (known as DG MARE) is to explore the growth options in the maritime sector and contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 goals through the Blue Growth strategy. The Directorate accomplishes such efforts by securing jobs and growth in coastal areas, with positive effects also in the internal areas.

Figure 1. “Hot Spots” of Land-Sea Interactions



Source: ESPON, ESaTDOR - *European seas and Territorial Development, Opportunities and Risks* (2013).

Indeed, evidence suggests that the Blue Economy is already among the most important factors for development of sustainable economies in the European Union with particular reference to the Mediterranean regions. In general, the EU

Blue Growth involves 5.5 million employees and generates € 500 billion of gross added value a year (European Commission 2019). As part of EU's Blue Growth strategy, the coastal and maritime tourism sector has been identified as an area with special potential to foster a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe. Specifically, as reported in the *Coastal and Maritime Tourism* document by the European Commission in 2019, coastal and maritime tourism generates €183 billion in gross value added. According to the Commission Staff Working Document on Nautical Tourism of the European Commission (2017: 3), "the nautical tourism activity is concentrated in the services sector, which generates approximately 59% of its economic output, and on the Mediterranean coast".

It is important to note that in recent years, with regard to boat moorings alone, the Mediterranean has become the landing point for over 18% of them (Buono and Soriani 2012).

This performance is linked, not only to the climatic and environmental conditions of the area, but also to the improvement of port infrastructures. In turn, these infrastructures have made possible an important expansion of the cruise business. Given, these activities, many port cities have been regenerated. Ergo, it is assumed that by proceeding along this line of development, it is possible to encourage the development of the inner areas. This development could stem from reinforcing the interconnections between marine and land areas. In this contest, ports take a crucial role in the sea-land connection. As shown in the map published by Espo in a working paper in 2017 (Figure 2), port areas in the EU can provide services to internal territories reaching a population that varies from 5 to 20 million people (ESPON 2017). At the same time, accessibility to the sea guarantees access to consumer goods for the island regions, as well as the expansion of the market segment into which local products can be placed.

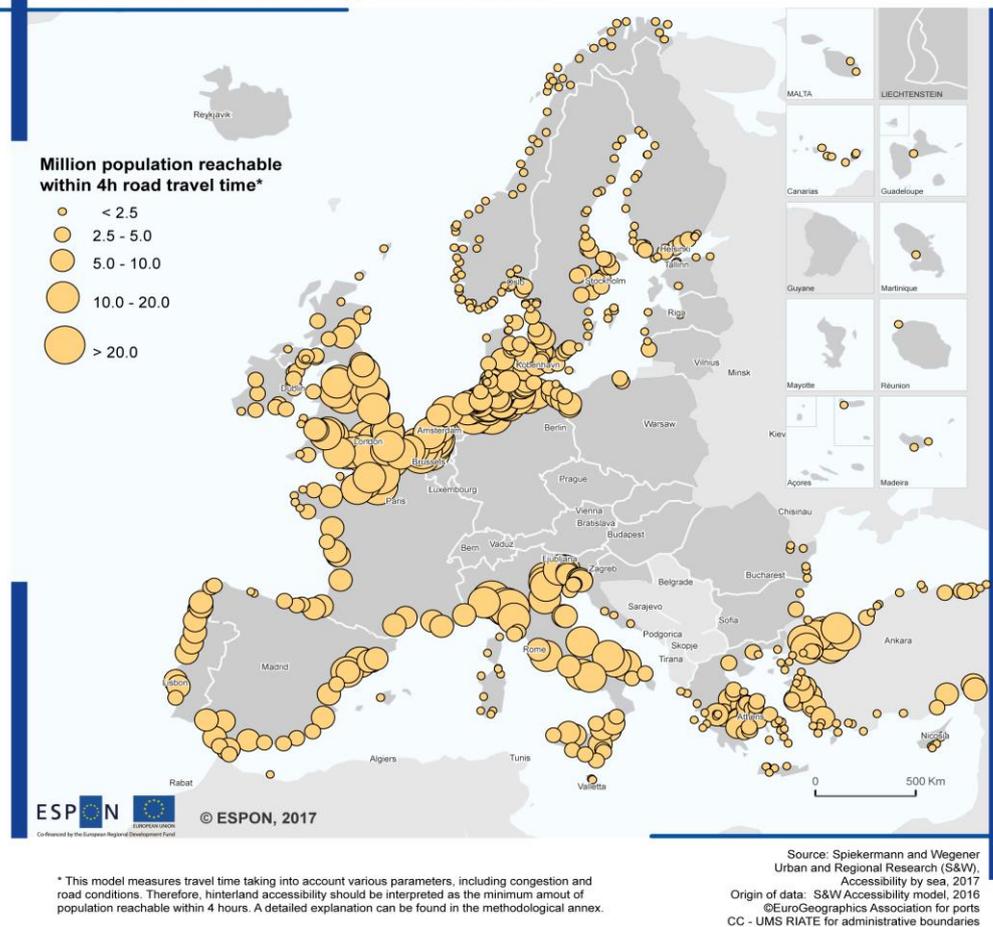
By embedding the economy of the internal areas with the economy generated by the maritime sector, nautical tourism can be the right tool to raise the competitiveness of those extremely vulnerable geographical areas, that today face complex development challenges. Therefore, it should be compulsory to rethink and redesign the strategy of the territorial development of the Mediterranean area. In doing so, this analysis would lead to adopting a more geographical-functional approach inspired by the EU Blue Growth strategy (Coronato 2018).

The functional approach pushes towards the search for new spatiality, which can become the object of a different planning oriented to the co-development of close areas (Camerada et al. 2019).

In order to study a functional development strategy for the analysed territories, it is advisable to provide a definition of internal and inner areas to scan the opportunity to link them to coastal territories. According to the Italian research group coordinated by Prezioso that operates within the PRIN (*Progetti di Ricerca di Rilevante Interesse Nazionale*) with the theme "Territorial Impact Assessment of territorial cohesion of the Italian regions" inner areas can be defined as territories "located or occurring within or near a centre" (Prezioso 2019: 142). On the other hand, internal areas are territories geographically distant from a growth engine and service centres. In the first case, these are areas in decline and are typically close to cities or adjacent to metropolitan

regions. These are areas often affected by the industrial transition that occurred in recent history (Scrofani et al. 2019). In the second case, these are territories that have not been able to compensate their distance from the centre by exploiting their territorial capital. In both cases, they are areas that today play a marginal role in socio-economic development. In essence, these are territories marginal, not only in geographical position, but also distant from the average economic performance of the regions to which they belong (Pagetti and Ietri 2019).

Figure 2. Hinterland Accessibility of Main Ports
Hinterland accessibility of main ports



Source: ESPON (2017).

Structural delays and low resilience to economic crises are common in these areas as well as in island territories. The limits to the development of the inner areas are comparable to those of the island regions. In fact, “islandness, peripherality, and dependence are considered to constitute the elements of the concept of insularity; which relates to the wider spectrum of specific conditions impinging upon human development in island territories” (ESPON GEOSPECS 2013: 63). Looking at the island, “the main characteristics of insularity are a small size of population and limited access as well as limited resources and remoteness from the European or national centre. Other factors include isolation

and low accessibility, unique cultural heritage, and rich but fragile natural environment” (ESPON GEOSPECS 2013: 63). Therefore, islands and internal/inner areas in Mediterranean region are often affected by limits regarding accessibility, low access to services, and critical population structure. In short, we can define these geographic areas as less favoured in the territorial growth process. This impact could occur as these areas incorporate both for geomorphological conformation and because they are extraneous to the development processes, prerequisites for poverty and social exclusion. In the territorial planning, it is fundamental to promote and exploit the “territorial capital” (Camagni 2009), which distinguishes specific territories. The peculiarities of the multiple geographic realities existing in the European space can become a strength, even when they seemingly assume the connotation of territorial handicaps. In this new approach the tools and goals of polycentric and inclusive development are determined on the basis of regional realities through an evidence-based approach (Camerada and Podda 2017). Starting from this perspective, it is possible to determine the tools and goals of polycentric and inclusive development. These tools could be obtained based on regional realities and diversity through an evidence-based approach and by exploiting the set of territorialized capabilities through which it is possible to generate collective competitive advantages (Dematteis and Governa 2005). Therefore, the European Grouping on Territorial Cooperation (ESPON EGTC 2017) already started to investigate and empower the land-sea interactions.

From a more theoretical point of view, the project develops through the process of *glocalization*. In fact, the development of virtual spaces in cyberspace has enhanced the geographical dimension thanks to the interpenetration of global and local, virtual, and real. According to Bailetti et al. (2018), *glocalization processes* can expand from a bottom-up approach (globalization of the local), from a top-bottom (localization of the global) and horizontally (local migration and global dissemination). In fact, every phase of the project shows the consistency of this axiomatic characterization.

Methodology

The purpose of the study is to describe the methods and the process used to develop the Cambusa project from the design phase throughout the first year of implementation.

The methodology used is a descriptive analysis of the activities conducted and it is divided in two steps, preceded by a short resume of the project goals, partner network and main activities.

The first step of the descriptive analysis is dedicated to the project design phase. This first aspect describes the initial status and the identified problems through SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. In addition, this step also illustrates the stakeholders’ role in defining a solution, the choice of the specific objectives and of the tools used to meet set goals.

In this phase, the potential failure threats in terms of:

- Problem-solution mismatch.
- Supply side operators (Harbours, agro-food companies, local communities) involvement.
- Users involvement.

and are matched by appropriate measures adopted by the project partners and described in the paper.

The second step of the analysis focuses on the implementation phase including the use of surveys, focus groups, and mapping tools. The initial steps of the project are explained and the use of participative activities and of lean start-up methodologies (Ries 2011) is highlighted.

Qualitative and quantitative research designs were adopted to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon.

This type of analysis provided the project partner with the needed insights regarding the available products in the area and the business needs of the local food sector. Likewise, the data also establishes a quantitative framework for detecting the nautical tourists' interest.

The paper draws from the analysis a set of conclusions and recommendations (lessons learned) which could help other decision makers to plan future actions in the same field.

Results and Discussion

Description of the Project

The Cambusa project involves 2 local entities (the municipalities of Bonifacio, Corsica, and Capoliveri, Tuscany), 3 business associations of nautical operators (Assonautica Nord Sardegna, Assonautica La Spezia, and France Stations Nautiques) one university (Sassari), and the lead partner, the Chamber of Commerce of Sassari. The project was successfully submitted for funding to the second call for projects of the Interreg Maritime cooperation programme of the European Union.

The Cambusa project's objective is to create a sustainable e-commerce platform supported by an integrated logistics system. Through this method, yachtsmen and nautical tourism practitioners can purchase high quality traditional food products (often made in the internal territories) and have them delivered directly to the chosen harbour. The products will be identifiable thanks to a quality brand, whose requirements are designed in collaboration with the local enterprises. The brand not only provides for the identification of the products but also guarantees that the technical features that ensure safe storage and use aboard vessels, especially medium or small sized ones. The technical features are mainly related to the packaging solutions used, which must be capable of preserving the sensory characteristics of the products in the maritime environmental conditions (resistance to humidity, saltiness etc.).

At the same time, the project will provide the harbour or marinas management companies with an additional innovative service, thus boosting their competitiveness and attractiveness. Moreover, the project aims to enhance the potentiality of the nautical tourism in a variety of manners. For instance, these enhancements could be accomplished by: 1) developing a new digital service integrated to the marinas' web interfaces in order to increase the quality of web communication and the territorial land-sea interconnection (Benevolo and Spinelli 2018). Other methods include: 2) integrating the philosophy of privacy by design and security at the very beginning of the project (as indicated by the European General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR). This incorporation serves to strengthen the general competitive profile of tourist destinations that develop in port contexts. Moreover, these profiles should be established according to the importance of the cybersecurity in the tourism market (Magliulo 2016, Panai 2018) and its geographical influence (Panai et al. 2019).

The key point and value-added feature of the project is its focus on micro/small businesses. Normally, these businesses are excluded from other commercial opportunities although their products are highly interesting for this specific category of tourists. According to the idea that consumer behaviour may influence new opportunities (Cohen et al. 2014), the underlying hypothesis of this paper is that nautical tourists are involved in "exploration" and "discovery" of new experiences (including culinary experiences) more than the average tourist. These tourists represent a niche of consumers that is deeply interested in specific products. Likewise, these consumers enjoy searching for specialties that are deeply connected to the regions they visit during their trips.

Step 1: Project Design Phase

Project Cambusa is inspired by a similar initiative called "*la Cambusa di Assonautica*". Assonautica is the main business organisation of the nautical sector in Italy and its North Sardinian Branch is one of the members of the partnership currently managing the grant. Both projects start by defining the problem from the agro-food companies' point of view. The quality agro-food sector in Italy is one of the pillars of the national economy. Italy is the first EU country for PDO, PGI and TSG certifications (269), followed by France (219) and Spain (180).

There are over 56,600 agro-food companies in Italy, employing over 385,000 workers (Federalimentare 2018). Indeed, the total turnover of the sector is estimated in €140 billion per year. The agro-food sector is made mainly by small or micro-enterprises and are often family-based. According to the Italian National Institute of Statistics¹, in 2017 these companies made up for 98.4% of the total number of enterprises and employ 62.4% of the workers. As a result, these companies generate approximately 40% of the total turnover.

While the overall performance of the sector increases steadily, the smaller businesses struggle to keep up with the sector's average. This limitation is

¹ISTAT. <https://www.istat.it>.

especially significant in terms of internationalisation and export results (ISMEA 2018).

The SWOT analysis (Table 1) executed in the design phase of the project, in collaboration with the project partners, identified the following issues:

Table 1. SWOT ANALYSIS

	Strengths	Weaknesses
<i>For Nautical Destinations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involved in networks - Environmental attractiveness - Strategic position in the Mediterranean - Different targets - Inland territories rich in traditions - Large availability of mooring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lower-level of services available - Little cooperation with internal areas - Sector-Oriented business model - User retain
<i>For Local Agro-food SMEs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High number of quality products - Sustainable production - Traditional productions - Large number of companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small dimension - Weak e-commerce capabilities - Low export/sales capacity - Reduced operational capacity
	Opportunities	Threats
<i>For Nautical Destinations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capitalise on the links between coast and interior areas - Increase services available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Competition from other Med areas (East, North Africa)
<i>For Local Agro-food SMEs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Renowned agro-food heritage - Appeal of the Mediterranean diet as a healthy lifestyle - Appeal for sustainable (non-industrial), proximity production - Differentiate sales channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presence of strong players (catering companies and organised retail networks) - Incomplete transition towards digital operations

The main points identified among the strengths are the networking capabilities and the overall attractiveness of the nautical destinations in the Mediterranean areas. The routes connecting the territories of the project are strongly connected and populated by yachtsmen. The agro-food SMEs can leverage on the high variety of quality products. It should be noted that these products are manufactured according to traditional methods. The proximate inland areas of the cooperation area are densely populated with a high number of agro-food SMEs.

The combination of high numbers of possible players and a large variety of available products of renowned quality is an asset on which a development strategy can be built upon.

On the other hand, the weaknesses of the nautical destinations are linked to the high investments required to maintain competitiveness. Nautical tourism is growing in other areas of the Mediterranean Sea, which leads to an increase of competitiveness from other regions. Agro-food SMEs, especially the family-

owned businesses, experience difficulties in adopting new business models and to adapt to technological change. This weakness, combined with the higher capabilities shown by their direct competitors (supermarket chains, catering providers), is leading these companies to underperform.

In this framework, the project partners identified the following problem-solution scheme (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Problem-solution Fit Scheme of the Cambusa Project



The elements of the problem-solution fit scheme were identified during the initial phase of the project using official data provided by the Chamber of Commerce and by the nautical companies' associations.

The initial version of the Cambusa project contemplated only the setup of exposition points in the harbours. In this case, the yachtsmen could know more about local products and eventually purchase them autonomously.

The recent availability of mobile and e-commerce solutions made it possible to integrate these components within the initial version of the Cambusa. The revised version of the project maintained the element of the exposition points (showrooms) while upgrading the logistic support features to sales with a centralised system and an e-commerce "app". The showrooms become, thus, not only a showcase of the local production or an information point, but also a temporary storage facility and picking station. Consequently, the orders are delivered by the producers, are assembled, and then taken to the final client. A coherent marketing and communication strategy was then introduced as a specific component of the project. The intent was to ensure that both, the institutional communication requirements (mandatory for EU-funded projects) and the promotional activity related to the Cambusa system, could reach its target. The marketing strategy is also linked to another pillar of the project, the Cambusa Quality brand. This brand will group under a series of technical specifications all of the products available on the Cambusa app.

Step 2: Implementation Phase

After the project start-up phase, in March 2018, the activities related to the Cambusa Quality brand regulation drafting were started by the University of Sassari. The university developed a holistic strategy aimed at acquiring information on each aspect of quality brand building. In this regard, this aspect involved both supply and demand side of the market (yachtsmen, food producers, harbour managers, and local business associations). The university, in collaboration with Assonautica North Sardinia, developed:

- A questionnaire on the features of the Cambusa system. This tool was administered to yachtsmen in all the regions involved in the project (402 interviews).
- A focus group structure used to organise meetings with the local producers in each region (minimum 4 meetings per region).
- A mapping tool used to collect, per each region, the most relevant and representative local products (cheeses, wines, olive oil, honey, bakery products, and cured meat) which the partners wished to introduce in the Cambusa system.

In this phase of the project, the project partners mapped all the most relevant and representative traditional products in each region. The aim of this mapping effort was to share a common knowledge base among the partners. As a result, all parties could understand which products could be introduced in the Cambusa system and what kind of requirements should be integrated in the Cambusa Brand regulations. The mapping activity resulted in approximately 100 product fiches. These findings included information on type of product (e.g. bakery, wine, meat or fish-based preparations) and description of the product manufacturing process. In addition, the mapping effort comprised references to the traditions and history of the product, packaging requirements (vacuum, refrigeration, type of container, size). The analysis also highlighted the presence of previously-obtained EU certifications of origin such as *Protected Designation of Origin* (PDO), *Protected Geographical Indication* (PGI), or other local certifications as *Label Rouge* for France and *Prodotti Agroalimentari Tradizionali* (PAT) for Italy.

Through the analysis we grouped 9 types of products:

- Wine and alcoholic beverages
- Mineral water and non-alcoholic drinks
- Dairy products
- Confectionery products
- Pasta, bread, and baked goods
- Meat, vegetables, and fish preserves
- Delicatessen and sausages
- Honey and oil
- Other typical local products

Once the results of these three actions were shared among the partners, the university created a draft of the brand regulation guidelines with specific sections for each category, subject to a two-step validation by the partners. These guidelines contained the award procedures, requirements and points, duties, and rights of the applicants.

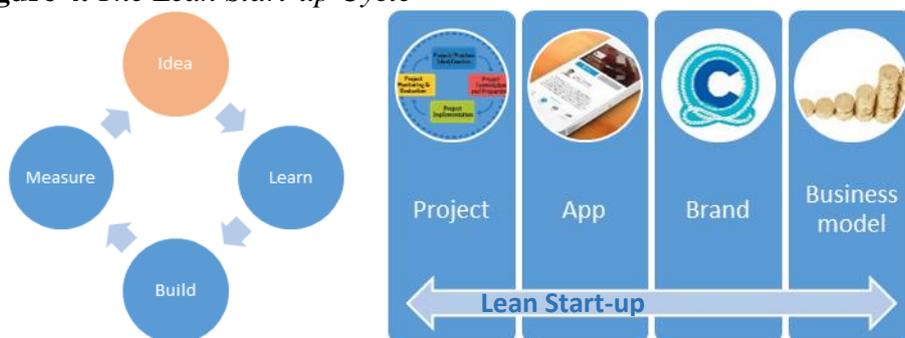
Participative Approach and Lean Start-Up Strategy

The risks connected to activities, such as the ones included in the Cambusa project, are similar to those sustained by digital entrepreneurs. Failure to achieve adoption on the users' side of the proposed solution is one of the main concerns of the project team.

This fact stimulated the project team to adopt practices based on the lean start-up methodology described in Ries (2011). The lean start-up method “provides a scientific approach to creating and managing start-ups and get a desired product to customers' hands faster”. In this case, the term start-up is referred to new companies. For the purpose of this study, the term customer is used to refer to the final users of the project. The lean start-up is based on the continuous iteration described in Figure 4.

The project team decided to apply the methodology to the project as a whole, to the brand regulation drafting, to the app and logistics platform design and testing and to the final activity which intends to develop a viable business and organisational model capable of keeping the project active after the EU funding period is over.

Figure 4. *The Lean Start-up Cycle*



Source: Adaptation from Reis (2011).

The First Cycle Took Place during the Initial Version of the “Cambusa di Assonautica”

The concept was only partly validated and struggled to scale up given some technical elements, such as an adequate logistics platform, a coordinated marketing strategy, a commercial network, were not yet developed or integrated in the model. The second cycle is running at the present time. The idea was developed and tested thanks to the surveys and the focus groups. We could also hypothesize that, being Cambusa an EU-funded project that undergoes strict evaluation processes

by third-part experts, that there was a theoretical pre-testing phase of the project's viability carried out by the evaluators. In fact, EU projects are strictly evaluated by a committee of experts. This allows to presume that a project awarded funding has already undergone an independent screening aimed to ascertain its reliability and the capability of the partners to deliver the expected results described in the technical proposal.

Regarding the testing of the initial idea, the main features of the Cambusa e-commerce product were validated through a survey issued to over 400 yachtsmen in the area. The questionnaire contained a profiling section. The following two sections were dedicated to describing which type of agro-food products and what kind of service components the future users could consider of interest.

The profiling section investigated on the characteristics of the sample both in general terms as age, sex, place of residence, and technology awareness (is the level of familiarity and expertise of the user related to the use of technology). This section also included questions regarding the specific traits of the yachtsmen such as the type of vessel, size, and frequency of use. The section also included survey items on the consumption behaviour and desired contents of an app for yachtsmen.

The sample obtained counted 402 respondents (81% male, 19% female), with an average age of 52.4 years. Sailboat users are 59.4% of the sample, while the rest are motor boat users. The average size of the vessels is 13 meters (~43 ft.) with engine-powered boats showing a slightly larger size (14.37 m; ~47 ft) compared with sailboats (12.25 m; ~39 ft).

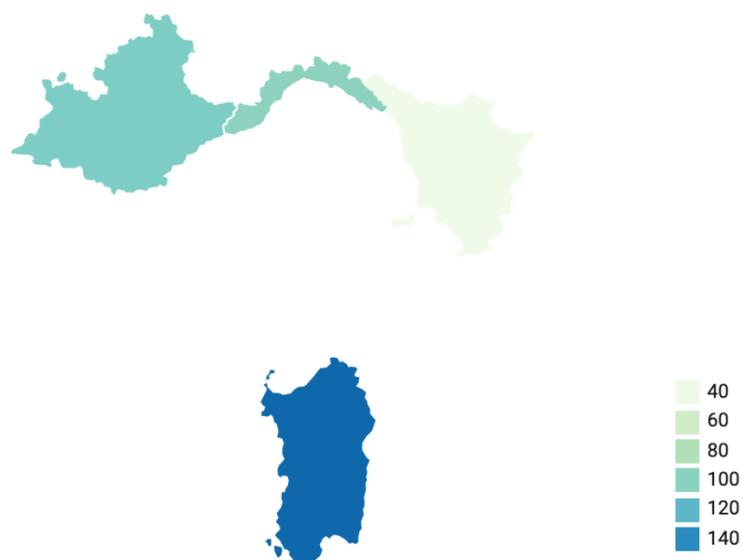
The surveys were collected during summer 2018 in Sardinia (38.80%), Liguria (24.9%), Tuscany (9.6%) and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (26.7%) regions, as shown in Figures 5 and 6.

Figure 5. *Map of Europe with the Regions of the Investigation Survey area*



Source: Elaboration by the authors.

Figure 6. Map with only the Regions with Data
Survey area



Source: Elaboration by the authors.

The product of section of the survey contained 5-point Likert-scale items on the kind of desired food products. This section included considerations in terms of price and type of food (generic, traditional, high quality). In a similar fashion, the section dedicated to the service attributes evaluated the interest of yachtsmen towards the other features of the Cambusa system. These features included showroom facilities, in-harbour delivery, and additional content (such as information on cultural events or points of interest). Finally, the service section included also questions on the type of payments and on the willingness to pay an extra charge to use the Cambusa system.

The preliminary results of the survey confirmed the fitness of the initiatives with high levels of potential adoption. Yet, there were some differences found in the samples. For instance, the different consumer behaviour of small boat and large vessels owners/users, are addressed with an appropriate marketing and communication strategy.

Participation of external stakeholders, apart from the project partners, is key to avoid project failure. The building of the Cambusa Brand regulation guidelines was achieved through a participative method (focus groups) organised in each territory. The purpose of using this kind of techniques was to prevent the partners from defining the brand guidelines in a way that did not take into account the companies' opinions. Adoption of a quality brand is often a stressful procedure for companies that, as in the case of agro-food, are already subject to a large number of binding regulations. Negotiating the technicalities with the companies by asking their representatives which requirements could improve the customer satisfaction proved to be the way to create regulations with a shared vision. This vision resulted in an appropriate level of strictness and a higher applicability. Furthermore, inviting the producers in the early phase of the project showed

positive effects in terms of ownership and participation to the project activities. As a result, this effect contributed to build a strong support base among the companies involved.

Conclusions

The study is part of the European political debate on the development of territories with geographical specificities. Specifically, the study investigated the competitive opportunities of isolated areas rich in unique resources. Looking at the Mediterranean area, the opportunities for growth in this region are expanding by using the potential of this in terms of Blue Growth. The relationship between land and sea identifies the strategy for bringing out the potential of the territories in question. This relationship can be facilitated with the incorporation of tools provided by technological innovation that capable of interconnecting places and territorial capital.

To this end, the Cambusa project is presented here, an EU founded project aimed at developing the interaction between nautical tourism and agro-food companies of the internal areas. The first phase helped to define the project's needs of the agro-food companies. During the second phase, this study employed survey methodology to investigate the feasibility of the project. By the end of the survey period, data had been collected from more the 400 yachtsmen and the team is now investigating the collected data. Despite its practical nature, this study will offer some insight into attitude of purchase of nautical tourists and any possible geo-economic impact. Regarding the approach used to define and implement the project activities, the involvement of all the concerned actors, through a multi-level approach to the stakeholders, proved to be effective in terms of participation and sense of ownership developed by the companies and the local entities involved.

The future developments of the project, which will finish in 2021, will be subject to analysis in order to understand the impact of the adopted approach in terms of final performance. The evaluation of the performance will be based on a set of indicators such as number of transactions, overall generated turnover, and additional turnover generated for the single participant. Other aspects include quality levels perceived by the users in terms of satisfaction for the additional services provided, satisfaction of the harbour operators regarding the effectiveness and attractiveness. Lastly, social media performance analysis could also be part of the evaluation. Lean start-up methodologies include such indicators in their implementation as a tool to steer the project towards the best final results. The importance of sharing the results of the performance indicators and, more generally, using the common base of information to co-design the development strategies with a collaborative approach, is the key of the success of initiatives like Cambusa. These characteristics are recognised by the partner organisations' representatives. Further research should be undertaken to investigate the yachtsmen behaviour. Research questions that could be asked include the correlations between type and dimension of the boat and the consumer purchasing

decision-making. Additionally, the data obtained could be used to develop maps of the yachtsmen routes in central-western Mediterranean in order to create a base of knowledge useful to determine development strategies shared by the bordering regions of the area. While this paper has drawn a set of recommendations which could help other decision makers to plan future actions in similar fields, forthcoming implementations will have a number of important implications for the local market. Briefly, future findings will have significant implications for the understanding of how the link between the inner areas bordering the coastal areas and the nautical tourism could be strengthened.

The paper's main limitations are mainly connected with the fact that the project is still in the early implementation phase. More precise data and quantitative feedbacks will be obtained at the end of the first cycle of testing of the e-commerce system, which will take place during summer 2019.

Another limitation of this study is the nature of the data that was used to define the methodology. Only the project partners have been involved in the interviews and meetings carried out to define the project activities. This could have led to a positively-biased evaluation of the project structure. External, non-biased data, which will be collected during the last phase of the project (late 2020), will help to determine whether the positive bias hypothesis should be rejected. This last phase will include communication and networking activities to promote the adoption of the Cambusa model in other Mediterranean territories.

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Tourism, Local Communities and Environmental Governance: Analysis of the Souss Massa Nature Park Governance in Morocco

By Mohamed Boukherouk* & Rachid Ed-Dali[‡]

Although it has been proven and well integrated in many states, the bottom-up development approaches and the participation of the local population are very recent orientations in Morocco. In this very centralized state, the process is still slow and difficult to implement. However, the new territorial and environmental challenges require local governance where the local community needs to be more involved in decision-making and planning for environmental protection. Through the analysis of the national environment strategy, this paper sheds light on the integration of environmental governance in the Natural Park of Souss Massa (PNSM) in South-west Morocco linked with tourism actors. Indeed, the development of responsible and ecological tourism takes part in this new orientation and makes it possible to federate several actors with the aim of protecting and safeguarding the natural environment. It highlights the environmental governance mechanisms and frameworks proposed to the local community to participate in the implementation of the strategy. A field study made it possible to recognize the various points of view and the aspirations of the local population to participate in the environmental management of their fragile and threatened space.

Keywords: *Ecological Tourism, Environmental Governance, Protected Areas, Local Governance, Strategy, PNSM.*

Introduction

In Morocco tourism is a crucial sector. Its development raises several problems, especially in the protected areas. The pressure on lands offering the best views and conditions for receiving tourist flows is a threat to these ecosystems, especially in a developing country with a nascent environmental awareness, and several economic and social development priorities. However, Morocco seems to be displaying a strong commitment to a sustainable policy, just like the global infatuation with this path.

Indeed, today's world has recognized the significance of protecting the environment and keeping the ecosystem for the benefit of the world and future generations as well (Reid Walter et al. 2005). The world's concern about marine, forest, and wildlife degradation has prompted the global world to take serious decision to set up protected areas and to mitigate the extinction of certain species (Cheung et al. 2009). The intensive use of the ecosystem can lessen the

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chances of future generations to take advantage of their natural, social and economic resources (Chapin III et al. 2000).

Recognizing and protecting certain special areas in any given country is not new but it dates back to the nineteenth century and to the notion of “paradise” highlighted by the Kahn dynasty in Asia whereby a large number of areas were protected for ceremonial hunts, but today’s purpose has altered to incorporated natural processes per se (Rogers and Laffoley 2011). Most countries protect endangered species and areas for the sake of its citizens, environment, and tourists. A crucial number of tourists, recently, have become interested in spending their holidays surrounded by green spaces and endangered animals (Reid Walter et al. 2005). Nature-based tourism has, therefore, assisted many parts and facilitated the recognition and protection of the wildlife and nature for economic purposes (Chan et al. 2012, Daniel et al. 2012, Moyle et al. 2017).

In fact, the increase in the number of visitation to certain protected areas has encouraged many governments either to take the full responsibility of managing the areas or to pass it to private corporations with ready-managed plans to improve the services in the protected areas and to increase the visitations as well (Steven et al. 2013). The increase in the number of visitors, domestic and international tourists, encourage the setup and emergence of new tourist activities to attract the attention of nature-based and non-nature-based tourists to spend more time in the destination and to discover more facts concerning nature-based tourism (Torland et al. 2015). Also, the number of visitors in parallel with the stable economic situation can absolutely strengthen and boost the conservation activities and the management of the protected area (Steven et al. 2013). In this vein, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (UN 1992) highlighted the significance of nature-based tourism and its sustainable execution to mitigate poverty and promote the protection of the environment (Cantoni and Rignall 2019).

Nature-based tourism cannot achieve its targets without optimal strategies, including the creation of Natural Protected Areas (NPA) (Boege 2008). The reliance in these areas is on rationally profiting from the availability of the natural resources encompassing wild species populations, habitat, and the different aspects of the bio-cultural heritage (Carámbula Pareja et al. 2013). According to UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2016), there are more than 217,155 protected areas worldwide with 14.7% of terrestrial surface and 4.7% of marine areas. However, tourism can be a menace to natural protected areas if it not to be planned and managed and if certain conservation objectives are not to be respected (Deguignet et al. 2014).

Morocco is not an exception as more efforts have been made to improve the industry and to increase its revenues. Tourism attracts the attention of local and international tourists and is considered as one of the most significant and strategic sectors in Morocco. The latter is featured by its natural and cultural assets that prompt more than 11 million tourists who spend about MAD 62.3 billion annually to consider it as an interesting destination (Observatoire du Tourisme Maroc 2017). It is also one of the jobs’ providers with 515,000 direct jobs in 2016, which is approximately 5% of jobs in the overall economy due to its significant contribution to boosting wealth, mitigating unemployment and

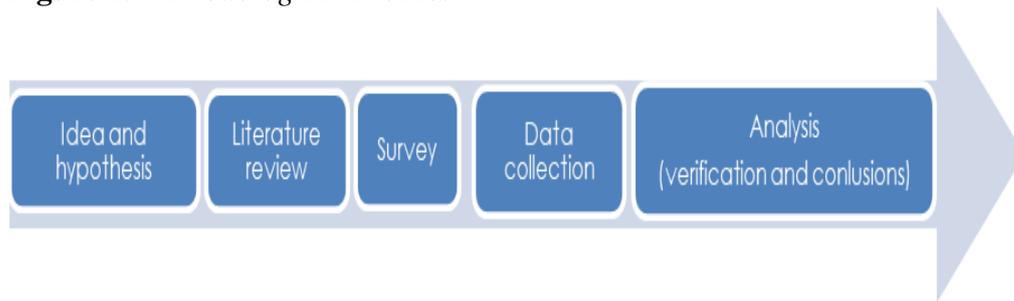
poverty in different Moroccan cities that witness the arrival of thousands of tourists weekly and millions of visitors annually (Observatoire du Tourisme Maroc 2017). When the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was adopted in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit, Morocco was one of the pioneer countries to ratify the convention and the King of Morocco emphasized in his speech in 2009 the importance of preserving the environment and urged the government and the decision-makers to implement a new policy aiming at protecting the environment and expand the green zone in the country as well. Also, the organization of COP22 in Morocco reveals the real procedures taken by Morocco to protect its environment and protected areas.

The emergence of an environmental consciousness as well as the launch of an environmental governance policy are the main subjects of this study. After a literature review that sheds light on tourism, the environment and the different relations between these two fields, this study presents the context of the birth of an environmental governance in Morocco, including its different aspects, actors and tools before explaining, through the case of the Souss Massa National Park, the results of this field study on the perception of the local community and the environmental governance in this protected ecosystem.

Concept and Research Methodology

The study of governance puts us first and foremost in front of the obligation to analyze the system of actors and stakeholders in the territory of our study. It is, in other words, a space featured by confrontation, struggles, and formal and informal negotiations. From this point of view, our initial hypothesis is that the divisions of governance in the Souss Massa National Park are caused by divergent stakeholder visions and the lack of synergy. The second hypothesis is the failure to make PNSM a flagship ecotourism product which is the outcome of these disputes.

Social geography allows us to identify stakeholders, their spatial strategies and their actions in the territory to verify our hypotheses. The study uses qualitative and inductive research methods based on participatory observation and completed by a field study to complete our analysis. Scientific studies, the production of many administrations, associations and organizations along with a field investigation using a questionnaire for semi-structured interviews to collect data (opinions, feelings, judgments), to investigate the local community perceptions of tourism and environment governance in the natural parc are relied on. The sample is compound of 20 interviewees who reside in the park and investors working in tourism inside the park. Also, forty-five to sixty-minutes meetings took place in October and November 2018 and the interviewees expressed their point of views freely (Figure1).

Figure 1. Methodological Process

Source: Adapted from Berg (2007).

The questionnaire includes four categories of questions (Table 1). First of all, those concerning the interlocutors and then those concerning the different subjects of this work: ecological culture and the perception of environmental constraints, the perception of operational tourism activities in the parc and the perception of governance of the PNSM.

Table 1. Questionnaire Outline

General information	Gender Place of birth Place of residence Employment
Ecological culture and the perception of environmental constraints	Climate change consciousness Park ecosystem change conscicenceness Causes of these changes The importance of natural heritage and the obligation of its preservation Effectiveness of enviornment projects Stakeholder engagement Actions for the protection of the park The difficulties of environmental management
Perception of Operational Tourism Activities in the PNSM	The mportance of tourism The impact of tourism on the park Conficts of use and political conflicts in the park
Perception of governance of the PNSM	Actions in favor of environmental protection The actors involved the management approach The coordination of actions The effectiveness of the participatory approach The relations between the population and the management of the park The perception of the project governance in the field

Source: Elaborated by authors.

In addition, the thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected. Answers were coded in order to make it possible to highlight the answers which concern the same previously defined topics. A reverification of the themes, after tests were done, in order to refine the themes and answers before making a report

took place. The development of the answers was also done by re-checking them, the situations and the facts that are reported by the respondents.

Ecological Tourism in the Protected Areas

Internationally, tourism is deemed as one of the most important growing industries and is featured by the tendency of tourists to visit certain destinations and by the ability of the destination to gratify the desires of the consumer while offering various products (WTO 2016). According to World Tourism Organization, the number of tourists, globally, has increased sharply between 1950 and 2015 as 25 million tourists traveled in 1950, 674 million tourists visited a different country in 2000 and more than 1186 million tourists traveled in 2015 (WTO 2017). Furthermore, World Tourism Organization in 2017 shed light on the benefits of the world from the industry that increased from 2000 million Dollars in 1950 to reach 1,260,000 million in 2015. World Tourism Organization (2016) also found that Asian, African and Latin American countries have to a large extent benefited from global tourism due to the avoidance of a great number of tourists by European and North American countries.

Tourists have become more concerned about the quality of life and the quality of the services offered by the destination. As a new trend, tourists are more interested also in discovering preserved areas and in a clean environment as well. Destinations tend multiple services and brands to charm the visitor and prompt them to spend more days in the host country. Over history, each destination used to offer just a particular product that interests particular tourists but the growing economy and the changeable tastes and competition led to the emergence of multiple-serviced products. Nevertheless, the outcomes of tourism can also be negative due to the disarrangement and massive exploitation of the field. Ioan (2013) revealed that between 1900 and 1990 devastating effects occurred in ecosystem in Europe that lost approximately 45% of its sand dunes, especially Mediterranean countries such as Spain, Italy and Portugal whereas the Alps which is visited by more than 50 million tourists annually lost its original natural charm owing to the construction of the infrastructure to satisfy the desires of the tourist.

Balmford et al. (2015) argue that nature-based protected areas around the globe receive more than eight billion visitors per year including iconic parks and those near the outskirts of some urban areas. These parks are of paramount significance to the ecosystem and the urban cities as they provide multiple services to the environment and the population as well (Balmford et al. 2003). Yet, the deterioration of the green zones and the decrease of governments' funding pushed the latter to seek efficient solutions throughout the transformation of certain parks and protected areas to the private sector (Eagles 2003). Further, protected areas managers consider tourists as potential harm seeking recreation regardless of the costs of affecting the ecosystem negatively and, thus, implement firm measures to guarantee the sustainability of the park or the protected space (Watson et al. 2014).

In addition, nature-based tourism cannot achieve optimal goals without the participation and contribution of tourists who should be sensitized regarding the

significance of protecting the environment as well along with practicing their favorite sports and activities in the host country to guarantee the protection of the environment and the cultural heritage simultaneously (López Bonilla and López Bonilla 2008). Nonetheless, some developing countries do not reveal serious concerns regarding the protection of the environment and are deeply interested in the revenues and lucrative benefits generated by the industry and cause the partial destruction of the protected area (Zhong and Liu 2017, Geffroy et al. 2015). Cañada and Gascón (2007) revealed in a study some of the negative effects of tourism on the environment including producing more waste, changing the land cover and land use, pollution, consuming more natural resources, urbanization, acquisition of lands by more investors interested the infrastructure rather than green zone, etc.

Concerns regarding the deductive relationship between the visitor and the park/protected area and the influence of the former on the latter prompted Blangy and Mehta (2006) to call for a different relationship based on motivation and mutual respect and the preserve of the environment. Weaver and Lawton (2017) also seek a crucial relationship between visitors and the park whereby the former should be encouraged to amuse themselves and to serve the ecosystem and park throughout being motivated agents able to contribute to the improvement of the eco-activities done by permanent employees. This contribution will absolutely help foster coexistence between the visitor and the environment in order to discard Budowski's (1976) conflict scenario.

According to a study conducted in 2015 by Balmford et al., more than eight million tourists annually visit certain protected areas globally and this tourism type generates more than 600 million dollars as revenues. Yet, massive tourism could affect ecotourism negatively if it is not to be well-controlled, especially during an international sports event that attracts millions of tourists interested in the game and in supporting their national teams (Eagles et al. 2002). Therefore, it is a dire prerequisite to generate laws capable of protecting the environment from some tourism-related activities that could deductively influence the ecosystem negatively (Marion et al. 2016). Governments should ensure the stability of the activities proposed by decision-makers and investors in the industry to create a balanced atmosphere that could benefit all parts (Das and Chatterjee 2015).

According to Blamey (2001) and Weaver (2008) "eco-tourists" are featured by their interests to spend time in anxiety-free atmospheres whereby they might feel the strength of nature and the primitive life of their ancestors, by their willingness to learn more about natural phenomena and to help their accompanying children, for parents, to benefit from nature and by their behavior (Cheng and Wu 2015) within the protected area which endeavors to sustain and preserve the environment. Further studies classified nature-based tourists into different types. Lindberg (1991) classified tourists into soft and hard ecotourists with the former interested mainly in short encounters and good services and this type is prevalent in most eco-parks. The second categorization classifies tourists into minimalist and comprehensive (Weaver 2005) with former preferring coexistence and the latter interested in a deep understanding of the setting and trying to well grasp the functions of the surrounding environment.

Weaver (2013) conducted a survey to measure the participation of minimalist and comprehensive tourists in “focused activism” and found out that 8% of the tourists who visited National Parks in the hinterland of Australia’s Gold Coast were interested in planting trees along with additional hard activities. Identical results were reported in previous surveys (Weaver 2002). Regarding “incidental activism”, the same surveys demonstrated that 75% of the participants were ready to engage themselves in such activities, including the pickup of trash (Weaver 2013). In this regard, the significance of ecological security for the tourism industry becomes a dire prerequisite.

The concept of tourism environmental and ecological security stems from ecological security (Zhou et al. 2015) and is based on offering clean and sustainable tourist destinations to boost the revenues of the industry (Yang et al. 2018). Scholars have so far relied on different measures while studying the ecological security of the tourism industry throughout shedding light on regions (Yin and Zheng 2017, Zhang and Qiu 2014), cities (Li et al. 2013), provinces (Cheng and Yue 2011), grasslands (Lu et al. 2008), wetlands (Li et al. 2012), mountains (Li et al. 2010), and forests (Zheng et al. 2015). Ecological security of tourism takes into consideration as aforementioned the lucrative benefits and revenues besides the conservation of the ecosystem so as to guarantee the rehabilitation of vegetation, the conservation of water, and controlling the loss of soil and sand, especially in areas characterized by mass tourism (Jin and Liu 2016).

The economic and social needs of any given country push the latter to consider tourism as a crucial pillar in the economy (Mao et al., 2016) due to the increasing number of employees hired in the sector (He et al. 2010). Nevertheless, the massive exploitation of the ecosystem by tourists, especially reckless tourists, endangers the stability of the environmental system and its security (Zhang et al. 2016). A number of studies were carried out in countries interested the development and security of the ecosystem, such as China and Australia, (Wang et al. 2012, Jia and Feng 2012) to measure the impacts of tourism on the ecological system. Scholars argue that ecological degradations are not apparent and emerge in middle stages (Liu and Zhang 2009) and the intervention of decision-makers and managers is a prerequisite to mitigate the negative influences of the visitor on the ecological system.

Environmental Governance: Literature Review

Globally, the risky status of the ecosystem is an incentive that united countries to consider feasible measures to protect the environment and limit their bleeding. In this regard, environmental governance has become a necessity to reduce the damage and effects of human beings on the environment. However, the limited resources of many governments, particularly in underdeveloped countries, to implement real measures and meet certain standards, led to the intervention of non-governmental and non-profit organizations along with private managers, as aforementioned, to help guarantee the achievement of certain goals (Guttman 2015). The bulk of studies, germane to environmental governance, highlight the

role of many non-governmental and non-profit organizations in democratic and developing countries in addressing core topics related good environmental governance (Bartley et al. 2015, Auld 2014).

In fact, after a long period of scarcity of issues related deductively to tourism and environmental governance (Buthe and Mattli 2011), many researchers focus on environmental governance and gave an abundant work on the field. In fact the available literature incorporates laws that aim at protecting the ecosystem and improving the social and economic standards of the local community in general (Guttman et al. 2018). The lame implementation of real steps to stop environmental bleedings was behind the emergence of the great role of the private sector to guarantee an utter implementation of governmental laws (Vatn 2018). Pressure on public budgets and the priority given by developing governments to other sectors and industries were behind the neglect and the inability of many governments to execute the existing laws and to adjust the constitutional laws to enable the private managers, NGOs, and non-profit organizations to interfere (Baron 2013).

Furthermore, environmental governance cannot accomplish specific targets without the existence of effective structures (Koimann 1993). Governance structure encompasses actors that simplify the interaction between the different institutions and actors, including economic, social and civil society actors (Vatn 2015). Economic actors involve private managers and corporations who take the full responsibility of a park or a protected area and offer payable services to the visitor interested in spending enjoyable experience in the park (Bromley 2006). These economic actors intervene to maintain a clean atmosphere regardless of the number of tourists and even engage tourists in ecological activities to sensitize them about the significance of protecting the environment (Vatn 2018). Political actors encompass parliamentarians and political leaders responsible for determining and transferring the management of the protected area to private corporations while civil society actors involve political parties and different non-governmental organizations that function as intermediaries between political and economic actors (Hodgson 2007).

Well-established environmental governance does not rely solely on public institutions and actors, but it is also based on private corporations throughout the privatization of land and water (Bromley 1991). Privatization of land is considered as an old process though more than 80% of the land is still owned by governments (Agrawal 2007). The latter has recently initiated a process of getting rid of budget burdens and cuts either by selling large hectares of lands or signing long-term exploitation contracts with private companies, corporations and foreign investors to enhance the services offered to domestic and international tourists and to maintain a pollution-free atmosphere (Cotula 2012). Further, privatization of land does not involve merely the leakage of lands to private corporations, but it also includes “land trusts” (Logan and Wekerle 2008). The latter are non-profit organizations that receive donations and grants from different sources with the objective of conserving and protecting the environment while providing free services to visitors. Hodge and Adams (2012) argue that “land trusts” is “a policy that represents a direct state intervention to push back the operation of the private land market and override the interests of individual owners in order to promote

collective action in support of public policy objectives”(Hodge and Adams 2012: 476).

Nevertheless, Perrot-Maitre (2006) argues that the core idea behind privatization is attracting tourists and visitors in addition to protecting the environment, but this objective has not yet achieved and turned to be a trade. Wunder (2005) also indicates that privatization has become payments for ecosystems services and deprived the lower class of benefiting from payable protected areas and parks. On the other hand, Milder et al. (2010) demonstrate the high costs of investing in protected areas for the sake of managing the sector and meeting the required objectives. In 2009, investments in projects to improve the infrastructure mounted to approximately 23.5 billion USD for the sake of protecting water services, biodiversity and enhancing landscapes to attract more visitors (Milder et al. 2010).

Table 2. *Actors Typology*

	Endogenous	Exogenous/Allogenus
Frame	Living environment	strategic field
Relation	The actor identifies with space, at home, his locality consubstantiality (Raffestin), geographicity (Dardel)	Distancing and indifference, stranger
Space nature	The substrate, a living memory, generator: civilizational crucible	Product, an action field, an issue, support: physical or economic object
Example	The native of a locality or region	Bank, promoter, company
Attitude	Closing, protection	Opening
Economical attitude	Consumerism	productivist
Intervention	Involvement from the interior	External intervention

Source: Belhedi (2002) (translated from French).

Therefore, environmental governance is conditioned by the system of actors and the logic of the various stakeholders. Its success, as well as its failure and congestion, are conditioned by the nature of the system's relations. Two broad categories of actors according to their mode of appropriation, relationship with the setting, and position in the adopted strategy were identified by Di Méo (1987) and cited in Belhedi (2002), as shown in Table 2. The first category encompasses the endogenous actors who are residents whose space is above all a living environment that allows them to identify themselves. The second category involves exogenous actors with an external relationship with space which represents rather a strategic field for exploitation and production. The boundary between these categories is not obviously watertight. An actor can have both positions simultaneously and can also shift the positions. A promoter can claim both positions at once while putting one at the service of the other. It is in this context that Di Méo sheds light on a transitional actor who is to a large extent considered as a double-faced actor (Belhedi 2002).

Morocco's Environmental Policy in Protected Areas

Morocco is ranked as one of the pioneer countries concerned with the protection and implementation of server measures related to the preservation of the environment and signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CDB) on 13 June 1992 and ratified it on 21 August 1995 in order to express its international commitment to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity, and to adopt and to implement measures to promote access to genetic resources and fair and equitable sharing benefits arising from their use (Ministry of Energy and Environment 2015).

The last decades have also witnessed the execution of several environmental reforms to maintain a sustainable environment and to encourage the visits of nature-based tourists (Nahraoui et al. 2011). Morocco's 2020 vision regarding tourism aims at reaching 20 million tourists and decision makers took into account nature-based tourism to strengthen the pillars of the tourism industry and to attract the attention of more domestic and international tourists (Bouzahzah and El Menyari 2013). Morocco was categorized amongst the top ten best climatically conscious countries besides Denmark, Sweden, and Belgium and the best country in Africa according to the Climate Change Performance Index (Kousksou et al. 2015). This classification is based on several criteria such as CO₂ emissions, the development of renewable energies in addition to climate policy (Galli 2015). This environmental policy was behind the dire concern to host COP22 in Marrakech in November 2016.

Morocco's ecological policy generated flourishing accomplishments involving the protection of the 11 national parks in Toubkal, Al Hoceima, Eastern High Atlas, Ifarne, Iriqui, Khenifiss, Khenifra, Souss-Massa, Dakhla, Talassementane and Tazekka (Adnani et al. 2018). Decision makers in the country took further measures to demonstrate the willingness of the country to contribute internationally to the protection of the planet. 2001 witnessed the set-up of Mohammed VI Foundation for the Protection of the Environment, by the king of Morocco, and it is to a large extent concerned with environmental education, protecting coastal areas, revealing the significance of responsible tourism, and restoring historical gardens (Environment Department 2014).

The country also extended its efforts to preserve the ecosystem throughout relying on extra procedures germane to renewable energy to generate clean energy and mitigate its reliance on fossil energy by generating 42% of the country's needs from renewable sources by 2020 and 52% by 2030 (Kousksou et al. 2015). "Noor 1" project is the first achievement of the country to increase the production of clean solar energy (Cantoni and Rignall, 2019) along with the construction of 13 wind farms in different Moroccan coastal cities and the intention to set up six more wind farms by the end of 2020 (Allouhi et al. 2017). In fact, the implementation of an effective ecological policy has affected Morocco's environment and economy positively due to the crucial increase in the number of foreign investors and tourists who basically seek nature-based tourism (Observatoire du Tourisme Maroc 2017).

The PNSM (National Park of Souss Massa)

Protected Areas are essential tools for combating the loss of biodiversity. They also represent a source of human well-being through many ecosystem services such as tourism, recreation, and livelihood. The diversity of actors in these spaces, administrations, public institutions, and national and international associations, creates ambiguity owing to their complexity, functions, and roles of each part. Also, the diversity of the projects is very astonishing and the gap between the speeches and the number of projects without results is utterly shocking.

According to Law 22-07, the protected area refers to any land, area and/or sea which is geographically defined, duly recognized, and specially developed and managed for the purpose of ensuring the protection, maintenance, enhancement of biological diversity, and the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage with its enhancement, its rehabilitation for sustainable development, and the prevention of its degradation.

From 1942 to 1991 many national parks appeared like Toubkal in 1942, Tazekka in 1950, Souss Massa in 1991, Iriki in 1994, Ifrane in 2004 and Khnifiss in 2006. The identification of these sites and their important values in the ecosystem urged the emergence of environmental policy in 1996 which identified the sites of interest in biology and ecology (SBEI) and identified almost all the natural ecosystems in the country.

Indeed, Morocco signed and ratified in 1995 the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), adopted at the Rio Summit, and showed a fervent willingness to preserve biodiversity and to ensure an equitable distribution of benefits derived from the use of biological resources. The 1996 Biodiversity Action Plan and Protected Areas conception is a road map for the conservation and rehabilitation of the natural environment in the protected areas and other sites of Biological and Ecological Interest (SBEI).

Presentation of the PNSM

The PNSM was set up on August 8, 1991 (Decree No. 2-91-518 of 26 Moharram 1412). It extends over 33800 ha (65km long and 5km wide) along the Atlantic coast, between 7 municipalities in the prefecture of Inzegane Ait Melloul, and the provinces of Chtouka Ait Baha and Tiznit. The protected area in the intersection of two eco-region areas are defined by WWF as steppes, northern Saharan forests and Mediterranean dry forest of acacias and Argan trees. It is also the core area of the Arganeraie Biosphere Reserve (ABR) that was recognized by the UNESCO in 1998 and Birdlife International classified also the region as an important bird area.

The PNSM is a unique natural habitat rich of different endemic, rare or threatened species of fauna and flora. Indeed, this ecosystem, located between two wetlands, incorporates 300 rare plants and species including Argan forests, many mammals (30 species: fox, jackal, hare, deer, porcupine.), and 360 bird species (the bald ibis, red-necked ostriches, ducks, shorebirds, laridae, flamingo, etc.), migrants and breeding pairs, living in the park.

The PNSM also includes the two wetlands of the mouths of Oued Souss and Massa (EOS) and (EOM). These sites are located on the Atlantic flyway, between Europe and Africa. Listed on the Ramsar list because of their importance for wintering, nesting and stopping a large number of water birds, these estuaries have different peculiarities related to the water system to which they are subjected. As part of the ecological monitoring program, the PNSM regularly monitors these wetlands in winter. In 29 years, more than 42,000 birds with 53 species corresponding to 14 families and winter numbers exceeding 4,000 individuals have been identified. Over the same period at EOM, more than 7,100 birds were counted with 76 species representing 16 families and a maximum of 5,000 individuals enumerated several times during the winter count. Many migratory and sedentary water bird species continue to frequent these wetlands where conservation is still possible (Bonin and Idlallène 2015).

Figure 2. *The National Park of Souss Massa*



Source: Elaborated by the authors (map background of the PNSM).

The PNSM is near the fast-growing metropolis of Agadir with many medium-sized cities. The population density, the anthropogenic action, urbanization, and intensive agriculture are factors that disturb the balance of this ecosystem. Also,

the coast of Agadir is known to be the second tourist destination in Morocco receiving more than 700,000 tourists every year. It is a coastal tourist area which is deemed as a source of revenue for the region and the local population and whose spatial development is very greedy in space and place of great attraction for activities due to its threat to the protected space (Bonin and Idllalène 2015).

Legal and Institutional Framework of the Park Management

The Dahir of 1934 was the first piece of copyright regarding the protected areas in Morocco. The legal framework was latterly expanded by other texts in order to better respond to the international environment principles of the protection of natural heritage. The 22-07 Law classifies the protected areas into biological reserves, nature reserves and natural Parks. Decision-makers in the country, through this law, design the guidelines to protect the environment and they also determine the framework of the economic activities. The concern regarding preservation and protection is largely linked to the local population's well-being.

Table 3. *The Legal Framework of the PNSM*

Text	Regulated domain
The Dahir of October 10, 1917	The conservation and exploitation of forests
The Dahir of April 11th, 1922	Fishing in continental waters
The Dahir of July 21, 1923	The police of the hunt
The decree 3 November 1962	of the Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform and the permanent regulation of hunting
The Dahir of September 11, 1934	The creation of National Parks
The Dahir of 17 December 1976	the publication of Conservation on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
Decree No. 2-91-518 of 8 August 1991	establishing the PNSM
Decree No. 2-93-277 of 28 January 1998	The general regulation of the PNSM and organizing its development

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The park obeys a nominative list of legislative texts (Table 3). Its management is ensured by the Park Service within the Regional Directorate of Water and Forests and the Fight against Desertification of the South-West region. Its management is the subject of a specific regulation. The park team is made up of 20 people from the Office of Water and Forestry and the Fight against Desertification HCEFLCD and a head of the eco-development office in the Ministry of Agriculture.

According to the decree of the park (Decree No. 2-93-277), a park advisory committee was created under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture and chaired by the Minister or his representative. The committee gives its opinion concerning the development plan of the park and its projects before their approval by the relevant ministry department. It brings together all the actors of the

institutional territory, local authorities, public authorities, the elected officials, and the representatives of the external services of the various ministries working in the field of tourism, agriculture, fishing, equipment, urbanization, Ibn Zohr University and all individual or associative actors whose competence in the conservation of natural resources is recognized. The secretariat of the committee is given the management of the park.

The Park Governance and Collaborative Approach

In 1995, the park management plan (1998 implementing decree n°2-93-277 of 28 January) distinguished a traditional activity zone and three resource protection zones (public forest land conservation zones). This distinction incorporates areas of the conservation of natural resources (8200 ha) and rehabilitation of the environment, species, scientific research and ecological monitoring, natural resource management areas (6300 ha) for rational management and the development of natural resources with the local communities (Beekeeping, grazing, nature tourism, etc), areas of traditional use (18800 ha) for the promotion of human activities in the spirit of sustainable development (traditional agriculture, extensive livestock farming) and then areas with special use (500 ha) that include villages and tourism infrastructure.

The PNSM is also a model and a pilot experience in the management of protected areas. The PNSM is involved in numerous international cooperation agreements that rely on local development associations but also on the quality of the administrative staff. Sustainable development projects and initiatives were carried out with local development associations to create income-generating activities and promote biodiversity (beekeeping, shellfish farming, bird watching, park guides, Argan cooperatives). In addition, the first tourism development plan allowed for the construction of the tourist infrastructure, picnic areas, an eco-museum, and an information center.

Several organizations intervene in the management and governance of the PNSM including the Department of the Environment which is in charge of the national policy on environment and sustainable development, the Department of Maritime Fisheries that is responsible for the management of marine protected areas for fishing, the Department of Equipment and Transport, concerned with the management of the public maritime domain, the National Institute for Halieutic Research (INRH), as a scientific institute dedicated to research regarding sea environment, and the Office of the HCEFLCD as the administrative authority which takes the responsibility of the establishment and management of protected areas (Table 4). The degree of intervention of each actor is different. HCEFLCD's institutions and the Local Water and Forest administration, on which the institution of the park depends, is both a major managerial and financial institution. Forest engineers and agronomists work alongside experts and administrators in the external services of other ministries.

The local authority directly supports the actors concerned by the protected area. The governor and the elected local district council as well as the Royal Gendarmerie are involved in the management of the park and ensure the

application of the law. In addition, several NGOs besides the local community and the region through the regional council (CR) and the regional council of tourism (CRT), and the provincial council of tourism (CPT) are involved in different projects within the park. They provide both financial and technical support to different projects that aim to safeguard and enhance the ecological, economic and social development of the local population. Partnership and collaboration are very broad, given the diversity of actors and institutions.

Table 4. *Typology of the Actors of the PNSM*

Quality	Level/Mission	Actors
Exogenous	International funders and supporting organization	FEM / UNDP, European Union, UNDP, GEF, Aquitaine region, French Development Agency AFD (Boutot, 2011) , Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), Catalan Agency for Development (ACCD), OrganismoAutónomo Parques Nacionales (OAPN)
Exogenous	NGO's	GIZ, SEO / Birdlife, The ETEA Foundation is the Development Institute of the Loyola University of Andalusia
	Compagnies	Tour operators, Travel agencies, Hotel Chains, investment funds...
Exogenous and Allogenic actors	National	HCEFLCD, Ministry of tourism, SMIT, Ministry of finance, ministry of agriculture, ministry of interior, ONMT
	Regional	Wali, CRT (SRL), Consultative Committee of the National park, Regional direction of agriculture (DRA), Directorate of Equipment, Transport and Logistics Hydraulic Basin Branch, Al Omran, regional delegation of fisheries, Representative of the National Agency for the Development of Oasis Zones and Argan (ANDZOA), INDH, regional delegation of tourism/ RDTR, ADS/ University
		Travel agencies, transportation companies, hotels.
Endogenous and transitional actors	Provincial	Governor, CPT, PAT (SDL), DP/SMIT, regional delegation of tourism/ Travel Agencies,
		Travel agencies, transportation companies, hotels.
	Local Community	local communities administration and authority, PNSM, HCEFLCD
		Population Jemaa., local association
		Cooperative, guides, hotels, restaurants

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Besides, several actors intervene to guarantee the management of different projects and programs like the Apiculture Program that seeks the promotion of the floristic and the Saharan bee and the revival of the local population through the creation of four beekeeping units, two cooperatives, and the training of the beneficiaries and their financing. The project was carried out in partnership with the beekeeping cooperative of Souss, FEM/ UNDP and GTZ. The second program is gender approach and the fight against illiteracy and the promotion of handicrafts

in Timzilt including the support of a local association and thirty women. POCTEFEX is the third program under the auspices of the European Union. The project includes the “DRAGO” project, which aims to improve the quality standards for tourist services and the development of responsible tourism activities.

Nature tourism is the fourth project and includes principally the project of the discovery of the Saharan fauna and bird watching, whereas the ecotourism routes in Messguina and Tamri is the fifth and is based on an agreement and cooperation with Germany. The sixth project is Education Related to Environment (ErE) by AGRN-PRONALCD and approximately involves twenty associations. The Project brings together the PNSM with the RAPNADD and COPErE with several stakeholders such as the Park (PNSM), Regional Academy of Education and Training (AREF-SMD), the Association of Teachers of Life and Earth Sciences (AESVT), the Association of Sciences of Life and Earth of Souss (ASVTS), the Association of Souss Nature and Development (ASND), the Association of Qualified Actors of Rural Development (AAQDR) and the Association Tilila. The project was funded by the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the Micro-Financing Program of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Legal Frameworks and the Importance of the Local Population in the Management of the Protected Areas

The orientation of Morocco through the 2020 framework of the Master Plan for Protected Areas insisted on the improvement of the effectiveness of the protected areas. In fact, we can read that “*..the actual management of officially established protected areas requires approaches and tools, developed in line with the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, and the development needs of local populations. These approaches must also be developed as part of a shared vision for the conservation and management of the national natural heritage*” (Aghnaj et al. 2013).

Another strong point of general context is the concern regarding the economic and social situation of the local population, living in and around the protected areas. A real intention exists to develop a partnership. Also, there are efforts to implement a participatory approach with national education and NGOs active in this field to strengthen the network of National Parks by sharing information and experiences, communication and transparency and by implementing the protected areas’ communication strategy.

Law No. 07-22 on Protected Areas states different elements regarding the management of the protected area. In section one regarding the development and management plan, the 19th article insisted on the importance of the existence of a management and development plan. It is based on the initiative of establishing a competent administration related to the local population. The same section describes in detail the components of the protected area, the objectives, the strategy, and the programs as well as the impact indicators and estimated financial needs on a five-year basis. It takes clearly into consideration the local population indicating in the same vein that the project should consider specific measures and restrictions to ensure the conservation of the protected area as well as the zones in

which agricultural and pastoral activities or other activities are authorized by the administration and not involving harmful impact on the protected area. Local authorities and administrations are also involved in the process. It is clearly identified in the second section (Article 24) that local communities and the population should be involved not only in the design of the project but also in the management of the protected area.

Aspects of Mobilization and Strategies of the Park's Inhabitants

The demographic pressure on the park is very important. The population could be estimated to reach 28,000 inhabitants in 2018. In 2008, the area knew a high density (62 inhabitants per km²). Eight Douars (tribes) witnessed the presence of about 4000 inhabitants, 2010 was located inside the park, and another 25 with 22,800 inhabitants (Harif et al. 2008) were mainly engaged in traditional agriculture and traditional fishing activities. In the park, 65% of the land is owned by the private sector and the local communities and 35% is a forest area. Food agriculture on small plots of land with traditional means is the most common process. The traditional mode is governed by ancestral traditions of water use and conflict management between residents. Therefore, usage conflicts are born from over-crowding of tourism in Sidi Rbat and the coastal strip from Sidi Ouassai to Aglou, the illegal use of coastal cliffs for the construction of caves (Figures 3 and 4), grazing and the collection of mussels causing the destruction of the reefs. (Thibaud 2010).

The population is therefore very active in this area. Although *Jemaa's* traditional management is concerned with *Douars*, local NGO's and cooperatives have emerged recently, revealing the awareness of the locals to find new frameworks for dialogue and relations with the various exogenous stakeholders. Indeed, there are about ten associations and cooperatives that emerged in the mid-1990s. Their main objectives are the economic and social development of the inhabitants as well as the protection of the environment. The creation of cooperatives came later in the mid-2000s, following the launch of the INDH (National Initiative for Human Development) to respond to the need to improve the economic and social conditions of the local population. They operate mainly in the production of Argan oil, livestock, and tourism.

These new structures are highly sought-after by the park management body and international NGOs. The need for concerted management where local communities are consulted and mobilized is the desired approach to sustainable site protection. Indeed, through our survey, members are mainly attracted by the economic interest of the project. They observe the actions of funders and partner support organizations that can enable the economic and social advancement of members. Having benefited from several support programs and training on ecology, protection of the environment, local flora and fauna, the production, the promotion and the sale of tourist products as well as ornithology equipment, the partnership seems very beneficial and profitable.

Figure 3. *Cave Rooms in the Cliffs*

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Figure 4. *Ruin in Souss Massa Estuary in the Natural Park*

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Tourism in the PNSM

A few kilometers from the second tourist's destination in Morocco, the PNSM is not far from the influence of Agadir. It receives 739,447 tourists and has a capacity of 39020 beds (Observatoire du Tourisme Maroc 2017). As a seaside destination, tourism in Agadir is mainly based on the traditional 4S with mass tourism that relies on hotels from Western Europe and Benelux. Although the countryside of Agadir is rich in natural and cultural assets, tourist activities are limited to excursions from Agadir to the cities of Taroudant, Tiznit, and Tafraouat. Ecological tourism is developing little by little but is still stammering like niche tourism activities that attract enthusiastic tourists interested in trekking, bird watching, surfing, recreational fishing, geo-tours, and bike tours.

According to a study from Wurzburg University, the PNSM receives around 100,000 visitors per year and many excursion destinations for the urban population of Agadir. The lack of data regarding the visits hides the reality that the park remains a very close and important excursion area for tourists from Agadir hotel-clubs and other types of accommodation. However, the lack of reception facilities (hotel, restaurant, etc.) and free access to the park is a sign that this activity generates only very limited benefits and even negative effects. Excursions are generally sold by hotels, travel agencies or carriers to individuals and groups and rarely integrate the products and tours developed at the Park, except some lunch and guiding services which are optional. In order to enhance the local potential and create an impact on the park and benefits for the local population, two animal reserves were created for the acclimatization of antelopes and red-necked ostrich in view of their introduction into their Saharan biotopes.

Tourist Strategy in the Area

The Regional Development Plan (PDR), adopted in 2017, considers tourism as a crucial economic development factor in the region but also insists largely on the revival of the seaside product with a multiproduct offer. It also insists on the need for the enhancement of the hinterland through the development of nature, culture, and religious tours and it is the same vision launched in 2019 by the Regional Development Corporation (SDR).

The 2010 tourism vision was accompanied by rural tourism development strategies. The implemented devices are very diverse. The creation of the CPT (Chtouka Ait Baha) in 2005 and the set-up of the PAT (Chtouka Ait Baha) in 2019 aimed to unify the actors of tourism in mixed structures alongside the institutional actors to prepare the design and the realization of the projects of the territory and programs designed in RDPs (regional development programs). This device has been replaced, as part of the 2020 Vision, by the National Development Program. Also, integrated mountain areas and oases (Qariati) program designed by SMIT was launched. It advocates the creation of SDR regional development company and SDL local development company that will replace respectively CRT and CPT.

Nevertheless, it seems difficult to set up neither the PAT nor the CPT. Both projects did not manage to make an impact on the territory despite the great propaganda and projects of the first years of their inauguration, including the development of ecotourism activities in the park and a project of 1000 bed in Tifnit. Qariati program failed to start, unlike the eco-Resorts. Initiated by the SMIT, the PNSM eco-resorts is a project which aimed to reach 4000 beds (lodges, hotels and tourist residence on the seafront) on several spots with shops, a nautical and marine center, and a discovery park center. It is a major tourist development project that covers 1000 ha on 7 sites inside the park at SidiToulal, Tifnit, Douira, SidRbat, SidiOuassay, SidiBoulfdail, and Issourh (see Figure 2).

On the other hand, HCEFLCD is very active. It launched, in consultation with the CPT and the CRT in Agadir, various procedures and actions including the discovery of the Saharan fauna of the park and the launch of a bird watching itinerary. To start with, the discovery of the Saharan fauna in the park was behind

the discovery of two animal reserves and a coastal area. Its boundaries start in the Rokein information Center and end in Tifnit. It is a 25 km route to visit the Addax antelope in Rokein and the Oryx antelope reserve and Dorcas gazelles in Arrouais. The itinerary covers the coastal area of Ait Amira, the fishing village of Tifnit and the coastal area of Tifnit-SidiRbat where it is possible to observe birds (the bald ibis).

Under the leadership of the CRT and the management of the Park, an ethical charter was developed for travel agencies that are responsible for organizing the excursion. Visits are made during the week, except Tuesdays and Sundays, in the form of a pedestrian tour or safari in 4x4 cars or on minibuses. It can be organized during a half day which will include exclusively the visit of the two animal reserves, or a full day with the visit of the reserves followed by a meal in the area and a visit of the dam or the city of Tiznit. The morning of Sunday is devoted to nationals and locals with a discounted rate (50%) and access to the only reserve of Rokein, with the possibility to make it with minibuses instead of 4x4 vehicles. In that case, visits should be made in groups of at least 12 minimum participants.

However, the limited number of agencies that market the product, the lack of communication, the complexity of the planning and the organization of visits are so far responsible for hindering the development of this product. Admittedly, the management of the entrances to the reserves is done exclusively at the level of the offices of the direction of the Park, whose premises are not in the park. Travel agencies and individuals must purchase tickets in advance. The commissions on sales remain not really attractive.

Regarding bird watching itinerary, the PNSM is a hot spot for identifying rare and endangered birds. Migratory bird passage routes and wetlands, rich in a variety of valuable species, attract several travel agencies and bird watching specialized tour operators. However, local agencies are not very attracted to this niche that needs a lot of knowledge, specialist bird guides, and professional observation equipment. Few Moroccan agencies offer tours but usually on demand. The activity remains, therefore, little organized and largely dominated by an informal activity and organized by enthusiasts, encompassing guides.

Nevertheless, the PNSM is included in the programming of all ornithology specialists. They essentially incorporate American, English and Dutch clientele. This is the case for Rockjumber and Birdingbriks which offer an annual program with stages in Souss Massa. The commitment of some of these tour operators allows the financing of some projects like that of the backup of the Bald Ibis in collaboration with SEO Birdlife by financing the surveillance and by collaborating with the guides of the park.

The individual clientele seems very important, given the large number of guides who confirmed the organization of two trips a day during the high season. The guides are indeed an essential element in the organization of bird watching trips. Indeed, 18 native guides from the villages of the park accompany the visitors. Part of them is gathered in El Oued Association of Guides of the Souss Massa National Park. A large part of them also set up a cooperative of the park's guides. They frame two types of hikes, including a nature discovery circuit whereby the tourist crosses a distance of 2 to 5 km on foot or on donkeys and a

bird watching tour that takes place along the route of the park between Binzaren and SidiRbat for 3 km. The trip allows the observation of water birds from the mouth of the Oued Massa and the guides offer their service and rent the necessary equipment (binoculars and long views). In collaboration with the Park and ARGAT, sixteen guides participate in on-site scouting tours and receive information and documentation from the Park to be able to manage the product and ensure an optimal tour for the clientele.

Accommodation in the PNSM

The approved accommodation in the park is limited to a few units, not exceeding eight, with a capacity of 163 beds with the possibility of extra beds. Ksar Massa Hotel with the dune inn, both located in Sidi Rbat, dominates 53.33% of that capacity and the majority of the accommodations are authentic and well integrated into the local frame. The others take the form of a modern style detached house converted into a cottage, an inn or a residence. In the south, between Aglou and Mirleft beaches outside the perimeter of the park, several waterfront accommodation units are used by foreign and Moroccan customers during the summer holiday. They consist of hotels, cottages, villas, and houses proposed for rent. Twenty-four accommodations listed on Airbnb platform are identified. They are composed of surf camps or home-stay accommodation or converted cave rooms (see figure 3). They vary in quality and comfort. The majority of these accommodations are concentrated in Tifnit and SidiRbat on the littoral band. In the south of the park, these kinds of accommodation are more numerous and only two accommodations are part of the Rural Tourism Development Network (RDTR)⁵ that adopted the Quality and Environment Ethical Charter.

Local Community Perception of the Governance of the PNSM

The study of the setting of the local population in the governance of the park essentially must consider the analysis of the local perception of actions in the park. To do this, this field study targeted different actors among the local population (Table 5). A 30% is based on reasoned scaling method where variables like the tourism activity of the interviewees (60.6% of the cases), and their indigence and nativity at the PNSM (89.76% of the interviewees). 70% of the sample considers themselves involved or beneficiaries. The sample consists also of 98.2% of males; women are not well represented because of the dominance of males in the

⁵Rural Tourism Development Network (RDTR), is the only association to bring together local tourism players from the rural world in Morocco. In 2015, this association created the first Quality and Environment Charter in Morocco and a labeling system for its members. The Network were initiated in collaboration with the General Council of Isère and the Tétraktys association, the discovery tour of the region, in 8 days, across the coast, the dunes, the plains and mountains. This tour allows the discovery of the region with a stage at the PNSM to observe the fauna and flora of the region and visit the fishing village of Tifnit and the Park.

activities. Two women who cultivate crops in the valley were interviewed informally.

Table 5. Sample Composition and Nature of Interviewees

	Interviewee	N=30	Nature	Type
Innkeeper	2	6.6%	1 native 1 resident	Endogenous/Allogenuous
Restaurant	2	6.6%	1 native 1 investor	Endogenous/Allogenuous
Guides	10	33.33%	Natives	Endogenous/Transitional
Walk/ donkey ride monitor	2	6.6%	Natives	Endogenous
Cooperatives	2	6.6%	Natives	Endogenous/Transitional
Woodsman	2	6.6%	1 native 1 resident	Endogenous Exogenous
Inhabitant	10	33.33%	6 natives 4 residents	Endogenous Endogenous
Total	30	100%		

Source: Elaborated by the authors

The analysis of the questionnaires revealed the participation of 49.25% of primary school 33.52% of secondary school and 5.5% of high school graduates. An 11% of the interviewees were illiterate. Also, guides and walker/donkey ride monitors confirmed receiving different training sessions in ecological tourism and bird watching, offered by the park, GIZ, Seo/Birdlife, and GOMAC. They learned while accompanying visitors in their infancy. The rest of the sample has no training in the field.

Ecological Culture and the Perception of Environmental Constraints

The perception of ecosystem fragility and climate change among all respondents is of paramount significance. All residents are aware of the landscape changes around the park and the growth of the population, the intensive agriculture and the new constructions. The guides recognize the importance of natural heritage and the need to preserve it. They showed concerns regarding the changes in the ecosystem where they live and are aware of the threats that might affect the environment. An interviewee said, "*The Douars grow rapidly and we have started to experience an uncontrolled population explosion and different problems emerged*".

Indeed, all villages have problems with wastewater and waste. Some black spots really perplex the population and prompt them to question the effectiveness of certain projects and the involvement of certain local stakeholders in the management of household waste. The anthropogenic pressure of the local population itself complicates the situation due to pollution and the use of

agricultural methods and extensive breeding that affect the environment negatively. A forester confesses that *“some inhabitants overgraze their goats everywhere. We are always forced to watch and drive them out”*.

While some areas in the park are dry, the best spots and especially those located on the shoreline are subject to another kind of exogenous pressure. In fact, some sites like Tifnit, Sidi Ouassai and Aglou in the south are sought by tourists. The interviews and the field survey show lands devoted to tourism or real estate projects. They are subject to several conflicts between the urban agency, the park and the local population. Hotel chains and real estate investors made this space their preferred target. The mobilization of NGOs such as GOMAC and Birdlife stopped mega-projects but illegal construction is a shocking reality and a risk to the environment.

Generally, the interviewees are aware of the risks that threaten the park's ecosystem. Unanimously, they reveal the importance of a new policy which should respect their social and economic needs. They also feel the difficulty of the management of the environment. Neither the local authorities nor the management of the park can stop this negative process. An inhabitant said that *“managers also responsible for the degradation of the situation. They lost credibility and the population does not trust them either”*.

Perception of Operational Tourism Activities in the PNSM

The majority of the interviewees in the park (86%) do not ignore the importance of the development of the tourism sector in the park. The majority uses tourism to earn extra income besides agriculture or other activities. *“There is not much to do. Those who work in tourism are lucky. In the villages, you can only see mainly seniors and children. Poverty pushes young people to go to Agadir to work”*, said a young man at the entrance of the park.

The park is an attraction and can potentially be an ecological spot. *“The park attracts a lot of tourists and Moroccans too. We have Germans, Dutch and French. It's very diverse,”* explains a guide. Thus, the development of accommodation, guiding and birds' watching, trekking, donkey riding, etc., can absolutely benefit the park and the population as well. Some guides have developed their activities; they have websites, Tripadvisor pages and they rely on social media to deductively attract customers. They have improved their background knowledge and abilities, especially in terms of languages. The others work with the customers of the hotels or they wait for the customers at the entrance of the park in SidiRbat, SidiBinzaren or in the south of Massa.

According to the guides, efforts were made to prepare the visits in the park, but unfortunately, certain necessary repairs were neglected as the installations and machines are no longer operational. *“The kiosk of the park's guides is always closed. It's not connected to electricity. An eco-museum was built next door, but it is also closed. It never opened its doors. It's a real mess”*, said a guide. Another one explained the cause and said that *“no guide can stay at the kiosk. Everyone should work to feed his family. A day without work is a loss as we have no fixed salary. We are paid per visit and we get 450 MAD per day and 350 MAD for a*

half day. Some guides are obliged to do two jobs to support the needs of their families. Among our group, there are farmers, drivers, gardeners, fishermen, etc”.

According to the guides, the lack of expertise in the field does not help the development of tourism. They are, of course, all on the ground and no one has the skills or the profile to be able to organize and manage a tourist activity from an office. Therefore, the activities are controlled by travel agencies and the park which created the tours, the animal reserves and fixed the tariffs. *“Visits’ management is not well done. Groups of travel agencies and tour guides come from outside and make visits freely. You see, the entrance to the park is free and everyone can get inside,”* according to a guide.

Another cooperative employee pointed out that the ministry and the local council strive to attract investment and promote tourism development. *“The most striking remark is that everyone wants more and more tourists,”* said an inhabitant who was met in the fields of the valley. The same point of view is shared by all the interviewees. Also, certain questions were asked by the interviewees who focused on the perils of constructing more hotels and infrastructure in the park on the ecosystem. One of the guides said that *“they want to construct big hotels and have more tourists. Isn’t this a threat to the environment? The big hotels will need space and a lot of water for the pools... I do not think this is how we are assumed to protect the park’s natural resources. The dam has already caused a lot of changes”.*

The interviews reveal the need for financing and supporting the projects. The respondents do not hide their desire to develop projects related to accommodation, transportation, and human capital. The sentence the interviewees repeated mostly during the interviews was: *“We need funding to launch tourism projects”.*

Perception of the PNSM and Local Governance

All the interviewees exhibited enthusiasm and excitement. They indicated the importance of the intervention of national and international actors to guarantee the progress of the park and its survival. *“We were consulted by the park (He refers to the park managers). GTZ / GIZ created the association and the cooperative. We went through a lot of training. However, the equipment are obsolete and must be renewed. The first ones were not of good quality”*, said a cooperative member. Another member continues by saying that *“the impacts of the actions are weak. These are periodic actions; they consult us for a moment and then they leave. There is a lot of money, and the foreign associations give a lot of money, but we do not receive anything.”*

The analysis shows that the participatory approach is operational but lacks depth and impact. Communication is established through local associations, cooperatives, and elected officials but does not really solve problems and does not generate a beneficial effect for the community. The population feels marginalized. Some cultural social projects were canceled by the park like the construction of a soccer field and many other activities. *“We suffer from the absence of a vision that protects the interests of the citizen. The real problem is negative mindset. We also suffer from the lack of a complete long-term vision,”* said a student who is very active in the field.

Indeed, the relationship between the park and tourism stakeholders is complex. Each part needs the other but this is not the case. The guides, for instance, feel they are under total pressure and have no space for dialogue to express their viewpoints. They want to take advantage of tourism and pay attention to the fact that their opinions do not upset the management of the park and lead to the blockage of the launched projects. However, they also feel they are merely tools in the hands of managers. *“They have the expertise of the officials. They do not know the real needs of the population. In addition, their attitude towards the population is disdainful. They always think that they are superior to us,”* said a cooperative member.

This situation is widely linked to other local political conflicts. Very often, the respondents mention the disappointment of the representatives in their district. The interviewees even speak about the hostility of the elected elite towards the policies of biodiversity preservation. In this sense, the crisis of local politics in Massa reveals the congestion of local affairs and blockage in the socio-economic development projects because of the conflicts between the political groups inside the district council. This is the case with regard to the use of land for construction. The crisis of representation and legitimacy goes beyond the right to use and collective lands. In this way, the inhabitants and the native dwellers criticize the management of pasturing in the areas, the agricultural space and the building policy in their villages. The conflict between residents is also another concern of the local population. The conflict between the population because of goats and camels grazing in the park as well as the illegal construction of caves and the collection of mussels is a serious concern.

Furthermore, the analysis of the implementation of the strategies, in the discourse of the interviewees, reveals that the institutions are unable to coordinate. Efforts and resources are scattered due to the lack of tools to channel them. With a plethora of institutions, commissions, and committees, communication is scarce. The carried out actions are also inefficient and some of them have environmental costs. This is the case of real estate, residential and tourism projects included in SMIT's plans and approved by the park direction and HCEFLCD.

As a result, the local population does not positively perceive the regulation of the park and the projects. They are dictated by exogenous factors and illegitimately monopolized without consideration of the needs of the appropriate holders. The majority thinks, also, that the laws benefit only foreign investors without considering the local population. Consequently, a sense of disappointment and inferiority is prevalent among the local population.

Conclusion

This study focuses on the governance of the PNSM as a coveted protected area and the perception of the population regarding the strategies and regulations in this space. The study responds to a specific time and spatial context and cannot be generalized to other spaces. However, it focuses on the weaknesses of governance in an environment of great ecological and environmental value.

Despite the mobilization of a large number of actors and the dissemination of programs and actions, the park witnesses a perilous pressure and greedy activities in the setting. Certainly, the projects and the proliferation of urbanization, as well as the socio-economic changes in the villages, are issues which complicate governance in the PNSM. The actions carried out there have shown their limits, despite the existence of a plan to develop the area. Indeed, tourism and other activities are unorganized and even are done illegally and uncontrollably and they result in several conflicts and dysfunctions.

The efforts in recent years to promote effective collaborative environmental governance have thus become stalemated. Thus, the difficulties in involving these communities should find a more adequate framework. The created associations and cooperatives in the park receive little and sometimes no support from the population and the projects do not seem appropriate to them.

Moreover, the place of the local community in the environmental governance of a protected area like the PNSM reveals the insufficiency of the actions and the mode of the chosen regulation. The field study showed rising awareness of environmental issues and climate change. It also shed light on the various actors and the actions undertaken in this area. Tourism as a newcomer undercuts several questions and the analysis also indicated the different conflicts of use in this environment. The local population seems to be shelved in an embryonic environmental governance policy.

The path of good environmental governance should overcome these complications and lead to the construction of relations with more effective communication between the different stakeholders. Similarly, the logic of time-limited projects must be supplemented by long-term projects aiming at the empowerment of the local population. These could be research orientations that need to be explored.

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Identifying the Potential of Health Tourism in Pasargadae Region, Iran

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Health tourism is one of the most influential parameters that can play a significant role in the tourism development of the country. Although this concept has been given special attention in the developed countries, developing countries such as Iran, in spite of the richness of capabilities and potentials, have not made a worthwhile investment in this field. Despite the fact that health tourism in Iran is in its infancy, it can strengthen its foundations in Iran by creating new opportunities and competitiveness of the tourism industry. This paper seeks to provide a first assessment of this emerging phenomenon in the area, which aims at introducing and designing a health tourism centre or health village in the Pasargadae region of Fars province, due to the high potential of this region to attract tourists and excellent positions to construct health village. For this purpose, by identifying strengths and opportunities for sustainable health tourism development, as well as by examining challenging issues and threats, guidelines for converting the weaknesses into opportunities, and effectual usage of strengths and positive points with the applicable approach are presented.

Keywords: Pasargadae, Traditional Medicine, Medical Herb, Tourism Development, Health Tourism.

Introduction

Nowadays, due to environmental pollution in the crowded city, and the aging of the population and long time working, constructing a place for personal and social health seems essential. Health tourism is an alternative for people who care more about their health and welfare and are longing to flee from their daily stressful life (Vajirakachorn 2004). This type of tourism can be seen in all ages, but on average, 45-year-old women have shown the highest tendency for wellbeing tourism. Generally, The customers who are eager for this type of tourism, have high levels of income and education (Smith 2010). Health tourism comprises three separate categories including Medical Tourism, Curative Tourism, and Wellness Tourism.

Fars province is one of the most popular destinations in Iran and is known as a medical pole in the south of Iran that has achieved a noticeable reputation in transplant surgeries (especially kidney, liver and corneal), infertility treatment,

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cosmetic and vital surgeries that lead to being one of the main purposes for medical tourism. Annually numerous patients from adjacent countries arrive in Shiraz (Capital of Fars) in hopes of seeking health and visiting attractive places. Though Fars has considered itself as a high-rank place to have the most attractive monuments and sightseeing, unfortunately, it has not been through a deep survey in terms of absorbing patients (Rokni et al. 2013). The existence of a health village far from urban congestion and pollution can improve this industry in this province as a consequence of encouraging patients to travel and using health services. One of the best advantages of a health village is reducing the course of treatment to recover the patients who survived the serious disease. Another one is preventing and controlling mental diseases and hurry sicknesses such as anxiety, stress or depression that roots from crowd and pollution in the megacity by nature health treatment or wellbeing courses in the health village. This study is aimed to introduce one of the best occasions for creating a health village in Fars and clarifying all aspects of health tourism in this region due to the potential opportunities and challenges.

Literature Review

Health tourism programs in Iran were first launched in 2002 by the ministry of health, treatment and medical education (initiation of the 4th development), and some facilities and ads are allocated for developing this industry in the middle east state, that was welcomed by numerous visitors from Islamic countries or the Persian Gulf state (Izadi et al. 2013). Iran is intended for entering into this industry with the advantages of health tourism including low-cost services with high quality, skilled doctors, and numerous natural attractions (Shalbafian 2006). However, due to political tensions, the uncertainty of the promise to accept western tourists remains to be seen. Previous studies in Iran demonstrate that this country embraces the high potential to attract tourists seeking treatment and enjoying sightseeing at the same time (Kazemi 2007, Jabbari 2009). The lack of comprehensive planning systems for health tourism has led to focus on understanding the various aspect of this process in the relevant studies, moreover providing practical solutions and suggestions in terms of planning and strategies for medical and health tourism (Shalbafian 2006, Bakhtiari 2005). Identifying potentials, challenges and obstacles for the development of this industry in Iran are argued in various research and considers a methodology for analyzing Iran's health tourism resources, which has led to the introduction of various cities for constructing a site, known as wellness tourism center such as Shiraz in Fars province, Isfahan in Isfahan province and Sareyn in Ardabil province (Nadim and Gandomkar 2016, Rokni et al. 2013, Tourani et al. 2010). Determining the executable and effective parameters for appealing medical tourism have illustrated the massive potential of health tourism in Iran in the region to become a pole in the future. However, accelerating the visa process for patients and their relatives, presenting accommodation and leisure facilities for relatives of patients, strengthening

collaboration between tourism organizations, diversification of medical tourism services, increasing the quality and reducing the expenses can facilitate the progression of medical tourism (Kazemi 2007).

Methodology

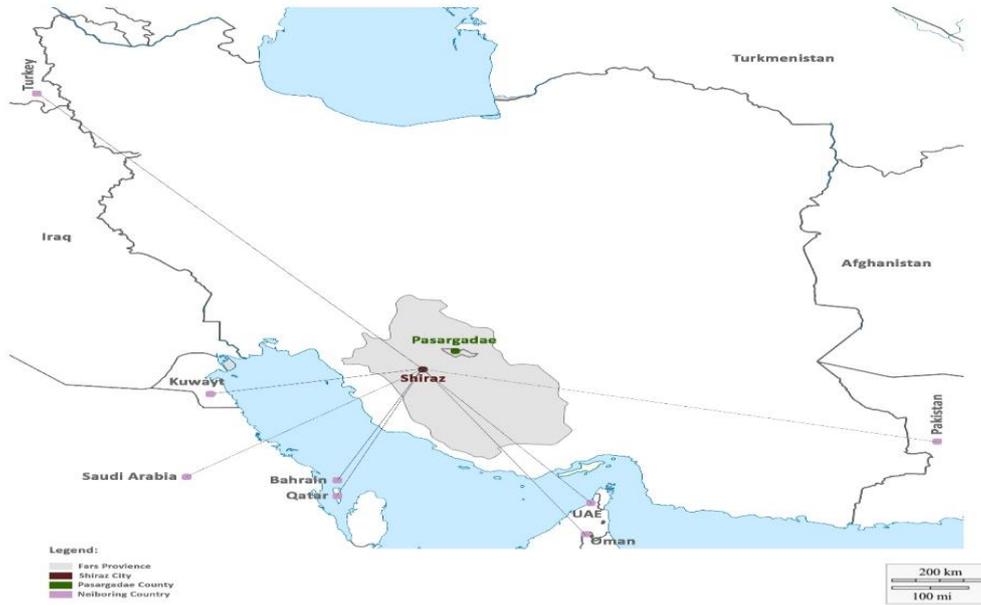
In order to achieve research issues, a descriptive and analytical method was used. This descriptive review article was done in two stages. First, the research data was extracted from the literature review, library study and field survey. The method of approach for the analyzing data conducted by means of the strategy model of SWOT for clarifying all aspects of health tourism in this region. SWOT analysis has been used to identify the main internal and external factors to achieve the goal. For this, internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external (threats and opportunities) environments were studied and a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats has been provided.

The Geographic Condition of Pasargadae Region

Pasargadae region is located in north-east of Fars province and has a remarkable potential for creating a health village with temperate weather (see Figure 1). This region consists of 5 rural areas and 6,532 inhabitants (permanent residents and nomads). The region includes Kord-shoul village with 850 inhabitants, Madar-Soleyman with 1605 inhabitants, Mobarak-Abad with 1288 inhabitants, Abolvardi with 2641 inhabitants and Dehno with 148 inhabitants (see Figure 2). This region is well-known by Pasargadae world heritage site, the first dynastic capital of the Achaemenid Empire, founded by Cyrus the Great, in Pars, the land of the Persians in the 6th century BC. High Zagros mountain and Morghab plain have created fabulous multiple valleys in this area with a rich ecosystem that attracts numerous tourists and adventurers each year. This capability is known as one of the strong positive points in creating a health village due to precious history, pleasant weather, the unique nature, and particular lifestyle (Gholipour 2005).

Figure 1 illustrates the situation of Pasargadae in Iran and other neighboring countries which are willing to travel for health reasons to Shiraz. Pasargadae region can absorb these visitors due to noticeable natural and historical resources. The number of annual visits to Pasargadae world heritage site by Iranian and overseas residents is presented in Graph 1. In 2017, more than 50,000 foreign tourists visited Pasargadae world heritage site that reaches a peak from 1997 and can be known as a consequence of the political position of Iran in the middle east and the world. This data shows the high potential of this region to increase the number of tourists by introducing other attractions such as health opportunities.

Figure 1. A Sketch Map of the Location of Shiraz and Pasargadae in Fars Province



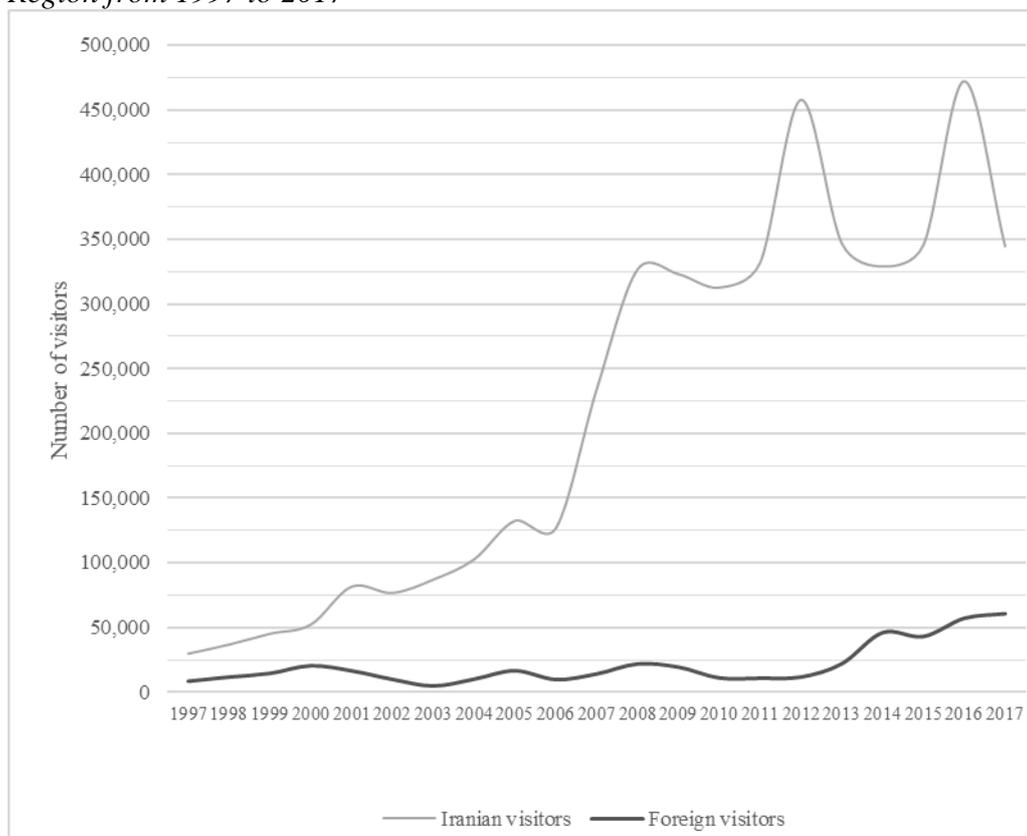
Source: Authors (2019).

Figure 2. An Aerial Photo of Pasargadae Region



Source: Authors (2019).

Graph 1. The Line Chart of Iranian and Foreign Visitors that Inter to Pasargadae Region from 1997 to 2017



Source: Archive of Pasargadae Research Centre, 2018.

Potential of Health Tourism in Pasargadae Region

Consistent travel for health and medical reasons in this region is nothing new and Cyrus II the Great mausoleum had long been recognized as a healer for visitors and locals. In the past, herders had blessed their animals around the tomb to protect against rabies or wild animals' attack or washing their body or animals in the Polvar river for healing reasons. Another example is a Hazrat-e Yaqub (Jacob holiness) mountain which has special respect between locals. In specific ceremonies, locals climb this mountain with the hope to cure their diseases by numerous energy of Jacob holiness. In addition to the local beliefs, this region is perfectly coinciding with healthiness tourism centre or health village due to remarkable potentials such as natural facilities without demanding chemical medicines, operations for healthy people in all age categories, traditional medicine, and diversity of medical herbs. Natural facilities include fresh air, various medical herb, clean water, safe environment, and a beautiful landscape with mountain and plain (Sedaghat Kish 2000).

The Pure Nature

In Iranian culture, a mountain is considered sacred. It is fertile and provides water and pasture for the herd. In ancient Iranian beliefs, mountains were considered as the place of descent of prophets, the location for light and water and shelter for most freedom lovers. The tough conditions and seclusion nature of mountains, have converted them to original incomparable birthplaces of ancient cultures in which profound interwoven ties between humans and nature are clearly observable (Irani Behbahani et al. 2010). Pasargadae region as the best example of this case is located in Morghab plain which belongs to the “High Zagros” zone and its long-lasting civilization date back to 3000 BC (Samani 2002). Having various lifestyles and several ecosystems in this region on one hand and the shape of mountain folds surrounding it, on the other hand, have provided a proper natural, geographical and strategic basis to establish the civilization from ancient time to now (Irani Behbahani et al. 2010). Mountain-plain region contains permanent-seasonal flows of Polvar-Sivand River and its several branches have provided proper natural conditions for different types of native plants and wild animals (Bahrami et al. 2007). Clean environment and fresh air contribute to distance of city pollution and crowded, soothing sunlight, wonderful skyline and virgin nature such as Bolaqi valley or Chah-Bid jungle, create a suitable place for nature therapy and raise of healing power that are within each person. In the Pasargadae region, the existence of a swamp in the Bolaqi valley will be provided with the possibility of using therapeutic natural mud. Hearing the music of nature due to the far distance of city centres, provide the incredible opportunity to meditate. Meditation as a therapeutic method causes physiological changes by regulating concentration on chosen subjects (audio and the image) in the specified time period (Ghafari et al. 2008). Yoga means the union of body, mind, and spirit, uses the natural energy as another kind of therapy, and work on the mental and physical health in the same time to reduce stress, improves breathing, making the powerful and flexible body (Hosseini et al. 2008) and (Gabor and Oltean 2019).

The Particular Lifestyle

Iranian shepherds and farmers have always adapted themselves to nature since ancient times. Some of them have chosen the nomadic system and proper seasonal migrations as their lifestyle due to severe climatic changes and differences in topographic elevations. Such a nomadic group, the Qashqa’i, Baseri, Khamseh, and Arab Sheibani pastoralists (Saeedi 2005) have chosen the seasonal migration in harmony with nature’s variations and during different seasons of the year as a way to achieve a cheap resource of provender and frequent pastures throughout the year and also to avoid drought and frost (Beck 1998). Tang-e Khersi (Beer valley), Tang-e Bolaqi (Bolaqi valley), Tang-e Khoshk (Dry valley), and Tang-e Siyah (Black valley) in the Pasargadae region, are the major routes of the nomads (Qashqa’i, Baseri, Khamseh, and Arab Sheibani pastoralists) that coincident with ancient rout lies of Achaemenian. In this region, the layers of life in terms of

nature and history are so interwoven that the signs and symbols of culture, from ancient ages up to now, can be traced and comprehended despite the passage of the time and the overlapping of consistent trends of life in the form of novel structures and natural changes.

This particular lifestyle can improve people's physical health by eating fresh and organic food, healthy and light diet, heavy daily exercises and breathing fresh air. On the other hand, living in nature with animals, feeling a relationship with family and being far from the virtual world can treat mental diseases. It would decrease loneliness, sense of isolation and depression, anxiety and arousal sympathetic nervous system and provide motivation for a healthy lifestyle (Sabzalian 2004).

Traditional Medicines

Using traditional medicine and medicinal herbs in Iran dates back to the time of Babylonian-Assyrian Civilization (Naghibi et al. 2005). Traditional medicine in Iran incorporates a wide range of knowledge on medicines, remedies, maintaining and promotion of health, which focused on the six main factors of climate, food and drink, sleep cycle, movement, and resting discomfort and its relief, and psychological state. This tradition has evolved over the years with the transfer of experiences from generation to generation that contains orally transmitted knowledge and practices or thousands of valuable manuscripts. This philosophy of traditional knowledge as an important part of the communal identity of Iranian is highly respected. In the Pasargadae region, traditional medicine is still alive between locals and nomads. Mostly the old women in the tribe, cure the patients with medical herbs which are prepared by themselves and acquired from other experienced persons, often close family members. To exemplify, locals strongly believe in bonesetters as a traditional orthopedist who has not undergone formal institutional training. They usually have a considerable reputation among locals by using herbal or animal materials for management of sprains and broken bones. They cover the damaged bones or muscles with turmeric, flour and animal oil. Moreover, a number of babies in rural areas are still delivered by local midwives or birth attendants who are not trained in official conventional medicine. These traditional birth attendants also use herbal preparations before or after delivery. In traditional medicine of Pasargadae, one kind of message is implied in the local bath by a traditional masseur that is called "Dalaak". Massages facilitate blood flow and affect subcutaneous cells and muscles, by physical movement on the outer surface of the body. (Hashemian 2004). In the local bath, "Kiseh" and "Sefidab" are an essential part of the bath time routine. Sefidab is a white-colored substance made of animal fat and naturally occurring minerals. Paired with a Kiseh, scrubbing glove or mitt, Sefidab is an excellent exfoliator and peel for the entire body. Furthermore, women applied some herbal powder as a hair care or hair colorings like walnut leaves with Hana and Spand for black color, Chamomile, and Hana for Brown color, Pomegranate hull and Hana for red color. Another kind of therapy is Aromatherapy that due to various herbal

plants in this region can be applied. Moreover, locals cure Corn disease by turpentine with animal oil or almond resin or use the fruit extract of *Ficus carica sylvestris* as a verruca remedy.

Medical Herbs

Pasargadae's specific geographical position and compatible climate make it wonderful grow-land for numerous, delicate, vast and varied medical herbs that attracted local's attention from ancient times. Medical therapy art is a section of Avesta, which as reported by the book, Serita (or Thritha) the first mythical physician, has given thousands of healing plants to Ahura Mazda (The God of Light in the dualistic theology of Zoroastrianism) (Hamedi et al. 2013, Adhami, et al. 2007). A relief in Persepolis (the Achaemenes capital, 500 BC) represents the cosmetic application of oils or herbs extracts which was extensively applied in the ancient civilization of Iran especially as sedative agents used after bathing (Moghadamzadeh et al. 2011).

Extraction of oil-soluble components of medicinal plants was reported in ancient documents and manuscripts, such as lily oil extracts used as topical analgesics (Adhami et al. 2007) or Saffron (*Crocus sativus L.*) and labdanum oil (*Cistus ladanifer L.*) as healing products for hand and face skin in as early as 330 BC. (Gershevich 2006). Islam appearance by introducing Iranian scientist in pharmacology and pharmacy, such as Rhazes (850-932) and Avicenna (980-1037), played a significant role in the evolution of traditional medical science. Such that during this period, using forty different pharmaceutical dosage forms and developing different kinds of extraction and preparing herbal medicines was considered in the treatment of certain disease such as cancer (Hamedi et al. 2013). According to the Great Iranian physician's beliefs, "there is no pain without a herbal therapy" that is survived in traditional medicine. In the Pasargadae region, most of the residents are the nomad that live in nature by seasonal migration. This person due to the deep relation with nature had a strong knowledge in workability of herbs in their healthy life. More than 275 species are used in the traditional medicine of Qashqa'i pastoralists that shows the rich knowledge of medical herb between them. They believe medical herb is more effective, cheaper and have a less side effect than chemical medicine. The common medical herb is *Thymus spp.*, *Anthemis persica*, *Achillea wilhelmsii*, *Artemisia persica*, *Teucrium polium*, *Anchusa italic*, *Berberis integririma*, *Nigella satvia*, *Glycyrrhiza glabra*, *Foeniculum vulgare*, *Ferula assa-foetida* and so forth. Furthermore, They Pastoralists implied medical herbs for curing some disease such as cold, diarrhea, myalgia, embolism, headache, kidney stone, urethra infection, flatulence, stomach ache and so on. Some plants like *Crocus satvia*, *Anthemis persica*, *Ferulago angulata*, *Anethum graveolens*, *Allium sativa*, *Mentha longifolia* used as a spice, *Salix excels*, *Pistacia atlantica*, *Ziziphus spinachirsti* and *Berberis integririma* as a chromogen plants, a leaf of *Althaea officinalis*, *Ziziphus spinachirsti* and *Myrtus communis* as a detergent, seeds of *Citrullus colocyanthis*, *Citrus media*, *Capparis spinosa* for endoparasite. During the last two

decades, there has been remarkable scientific research on the workability of traditional medicinal herbs which use by pastoralists. For instance, *P.harmala* has been used as a traditional medicine for the treatment of various disease, such as lumbago, asthma, colic, jaundice and as a stimulant emmenagogue (Bukhari et al. 2008). From current pharmaceutical studies, additional pharmaceutical applications of *P. harmala* have revealed anti-tumour effect, insecticidal effect, curing malaria, Anti leishmania, anti-spasmodic, anti-histaminic, vasorelaxant effects, wound healing, anti-oxidant activity, immunomodulatory properties, leukemia healing, hypoglycemic effects, analgesic and anti-inflammatory (Asgarpanah and Ramezanloo 2012). Some of these traditional herbs which grow in the Pasargadae region are mentioned in Table 1 (see Table 1).

Table 1. Selected Medicinal Plants Mentioned in the Avesta

Scientific Name	Old Name in Avesta	Ancient Indication	New Study	Indication
<i>Althaea officinalis</i>	Holyoum	Constipation treatment, Sciatica remedy, Disinfectant	(Watt et al. 2007)	Antibacterial activity against E.coli
<i>Boswellia carterii</i>	Hugun	Disinfectant, Aromatic, Increasing the intelligence of children	(Chevrier et al. 2005)	Disinfectant, Amnesia, Asthma, Cough, Peptic ulcer
<i>Bunium persicum</i>	-	Anticonvulsants, digestible, anti-parasite	(Moghtader et al. 2009)	Strong anti-bacterial effects, antioxidant properties
<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>	Kakole	Expulsion of kidney stone, Antispasmodic and anti-bloating, eroticism enhancer	(Kaur and Arora 2009)	Antibacterial activity
<i>Plantago ovata</i>	-	Hot fever, Intestinal ulcer, Constipation treatment	(Westerhof et al. 2001)	Wound cleansing and healing properties
<i>Cannabis satvia</i>	-	Anesthetic, Abortifacient	(Zuardi et al. 2006)	Antipsychotic drug
<i>Melissa afficianalis</i>	Vatrang	Sedative	(Akhondzadeh et al. 2003)	Alzheimer's disease
<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Avisan	Stomachic	(Sokovic et al. 2010)	Antibacterial effect
<i>Mandragora afficianalis</i>	Mirogya	Sedative	(Perry et al. 1998)	Alzheimer's disease
<i>Ephedra vulgaris</i>	Haoma, Hom	Religious mythical plant, Stimulant	(Baily and Day 1989)	Diabetes treatment
<i>Peganum harmala</i>	Spand	Antiseptic, Protection of devil eye as fumigation	(Nenaah 2010)	Antibacterial and antifungal activity
<i>Myrtus communis</i>	Murta	Antiseptic	(Elfellah et al. 1984)	Diabetes treatment
<i>Calendula officinalis</i>	Aerakeona	Dramatic	(Roopashree et al. 2008)	Antibacterial activity
<i>Lavandula Officinalis</i>	-	Epilepsy, sleeplessness, obsession and infective disease	(Rabiei et al. 2014)	Effect on memory and learning

The Main Challenges of Health Tourism in Pasargadae

Although tourism development due to its several advantages seems inevitable, still the problems and obstacles such as the poor transportation system or the lack of standard hotels or recreational facilities as serious infrastructural problems delay the development of health tourism in the Pasargadae region. In addition, the lack of a treatment visa and, consequently, the inability to use medical insurance, social challenges such as lack of public knowledge as tourist attractions as for tourism and national tourism attractions, enough comfort, health, and medical facilities, effective sanitary systems, political problems (US sanctions on Iran, Iran's policy in the region and with Western countries) are ahead of the tourism industry in this region. Therefore, it can be said that Lack of infrastructural institutes for provision and improvement of quality and standard of the services, creation a dual market structure in health services, non-portability of health insurances and lack of private sector by the government are highlighted as the most important challenges which Iran health tourism faced by (Heng Leng 2007) and (Tourani et al. 2010). A SWOT analysis can make clear the potential and challenges of health tourism in the Pasargadae region (see Table 2). To achieve the main goals and informing the later steps, identification of SWOT is necessary. In the process of analysis, the priorities in the field of tourism are:

- Constructing of application infrastructure and improving the quality of services.
- Developing human resources and institutional investments.
- Advertising in order to attract tourists and introduce the attractions of this region.
- Identification, promotion, and presentation of native and tourism products for local motivation and economic development (Goodarzi, Haghtalab, & Shamshiry, 2015).

Table 2. SWOT Table of Health Tourism in Pasargadae Region

Strength	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the popular and well-known tourist place in Iran because of Pasargadae world heritage site. • Rich and diverse historical and natural resources. • Noticeable clean and quiet Environment. • One of the origins of using traditional medicines and medical herb with an honorable past. • Specific geographical position (High Zagros mountain and Morghab plain) which has led to affluence and diversity of native herbs with unique remedial effect. • The plurality of ancient, historical, cultural and religious monuments and site. • Preserved vibrant rural areas with rich culture and traditional lifestyle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a clear description of the capacity of tourists attraction, the quality of services and essential facilities. • Lack of developed tourism infrastructure in most part of the municipality. • Unorganized marketing in the field of tourism especially health tourism. • Restlessness, tensions, and insecurity neighboring countries, which has led to the wrong perception of international tourists regarding Iran and decreasing the number of international tourists. • The difficulties of international tourism development despite united state political sanction against Iran. • Lack of sufficient planning to protect the environment by expanding tourism absorption.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remaining ceremonies and cultural, social and traditional events such as the celebration of harvesting agricultural products, traditional sports competition, dancing, marriage, and birth of a child ceremony. • The hospitable and friendly behavior of the residents. • Native and various handicrafts and food products. • Varied traditional and healthy dishes and drinks. • Is adjacent to international borders. (Shiraz-Isfahan-Yazd road) • Demand in neighboring countries and the middle east which have a weak medical system in comparison to Iran, such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of adequate public transportation. • The inability of people to speak in an international language such as English or French. • Lack of comprehensive strategies and scheme to develop health tourism, legal and public restriction in the field of health tourism. • Lack of recreational and tourism services centres. • Lack of training systems for catering and tourism that led to the work of nonspecialized human resources in this field. • Limited advertising and activity of travel agencies which led to a lack of personal investment in health tourism development. • Problems in providing social and public security especially in remote areas. • The weakness of the national economy and the high rate of inflation.
Opportunity	Treats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low cost and affordable services and facilities. • Widespread public acceptance of economic development using tourism. • The high rate of potential and capacity of health village construction. • Developing demands for health tourism across the world. • Expensive health services in some countries, especially wealth and western countries. • The high level of potential tourist in the neighbor and Islamic countries which have a cultural or religious relation. • The positive impact of tourism development on the local's quality of life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The probability of environmental pollution in pristine areas. • The possibility of changing the local's culture and lifestyle through familiarity with other culture. • The possibility of changing the local's lifestyle by increasing the level of income. • Failure in the development of health tourism and the wasting of the bulk of infrastructure investment. • Uncontrolled use of traditional medical experiences and it's a negative impact on tourism development. • Extinction or significant decline of native plants due to increased demand.

Applicable Solution

This section based on the suggestions by the interpretation of the main objective of this study for Pasargadae region. Some suggestions are expressed as follows:

- a. Health village includes a different department:
 - Beauty treatment by Using herbal oil, plant extract or traditional bath for beautifying skin and hair with organic material and traditional methods.
 - Yoga therapy which leads to stress reduction, breathing improvement and general health of the body (Letho et al. 2015).
 - Meditation which causes physiological changes and mental relaxation (Dehghani et al. 2014).

- Mud therapy can prevent many diseases by absorbing toxins in the body.
- Energy therapy which leads to promoting balance, relaxation, and health by clearing cellular memory through human energy.
- Silence and reflection which can facilitate the expression of feelings and reflection, encourage responsibility and convey empathy.
- Animal therapy that improves social health by decreasing depression, loneliness, sense of isolation, and anxiety.
- Aromatherapy that can cure imbalance and heterogeneity in patients by mixing and implying herbal oil and medical plant's extracts (Letho et al. 2015).
- Breath therapy can decrease stress, pain, anxiety, panic and negative feelings, improving the quality of sleep, and recovering from trauma by getting more oxygen to the body and brain.
- Laugh therapy that can improve quality of life by increasing the level of satisfaction, reducing stress and pain, and regulating blood pressure (Erdman 1994).
- Hot sand therapy that is possible in this region due to Pasargadae's warm weather and is effective in the treatment process of some disease such as muscular system-skeletal, scoliosis, arthritis, and osteoarthritis and rheumatoid (McSymytz 1993).
- Leech therapy that can use for some disease such as skin diseases, pain management, infection, wound management, not healing wounds, erysipelas, herpes, abscesses, and tumors by a systematic process of passing blood from vessels (Singh 2010).
- Massage therapy that can be effective for the relief of pain, swelling, muscle spasm and restricted movement.

b. Sleep camp: Nowadays many of people suffer from insomnia, sleeplessness and sleep disorder because of Spending less time in natural light and more time, at night, in computer light, however, has messed with our circadian rhythm. Insomnia and sleep disorder have a direct effect on consciousness, mood, Memory, and daily performance, also various side effect such as Fatigue, daily sleepiness, decreased memory and concentration, depression, anxiety, high sensitivity, impaired quality of work and life (Mai and Buysse 2008). Sleep camp can improve the quality of sleeping by learning some methods to meditate and prepare physically and mentally for restful sleep and using time in natural light to restore the natural circadian rhythm of the body.

c. Psychiatric rehabilitation institute: Rehabilitation is one of the most important factors in improving patients who suffer from severe and persistent mental illness. The important goal of psychiatric and spiritual rehabilitation is helping the disabled individuals to develop the social, emotional, and intellectual skills needed to live, learn and work in a society with the least amount of professional support. This institution provides a comprehensive program to assist persons to meet their individual needs and recover from their illness (Roessler 2006).

- d. Recovery homes for critical illness: More than one out of three survivors of critical illness experience depression long after recovering from the initial illness. In addition, life-threatening illness can significantly affect emotional and psychological well-being. Constructing these houses in nature can be effective in decreasing the recovery period due to the healing energy of nature (Elliott et al. 2011).
- e. Launching clinic of traditional medicine with herbal therapy: The diversity of medical herb in this region and the deep knowledge in traditional medicine are made the potential of constructing clinic for curing patient whom suffering from the mental and physical disease.
- f. Diversifying health tourism products: providing varied health tourism products in a package to health tourists such as medical juice or tea, herbal cream or soap, food spices for controlling body nature related to Iranian traditional medicine, production of herbal medicines in tablet, capsule or syrup form and so forth.

Conclusion

Pasargadae region is one of the best areas for appealing tourists due to historical and natural resources that are strong features to construct an ideal health village. Hence, this paper has tried to reveal the high potential of health tourism in this unique region with a focus on four capacities (pure nature, a particular lifestyle, traditional medicine, and medical herbs). Pasargadae health tourist attraction could be strengthened and changed into the first destination of this type of tourism among the Asian countries, due to the rich culture, human capital, and natural resources. Mentioned study results identified significant implications for the development of health tourism in this region. SWOT Analysis has attempted to promote tourism capacity in the region by developing strengths and altering weaknesses into strengths and opportunities by offering some strategies. However, the attraction of investors to create hotels and other tourism infrastructure in the region as well as the cooperation of the organizations of Pasargadae region in this regard could be a way to turn the main weak points into the strengths. Undoubtedly, developing health tourism have numerous advantages such as increasing individual investment, improving the rate of employment, enhance the feeling of dependency for the local residents. Nevertheless, enlarging this industry dependence on some of the basic infrastructure. Among the above-mentioned infrastructures, can mention the use of human resources with training in various aspects, the standardization, and classification of tourist facilities and the preservation of the unique natural geographical situation of the area. According to these arguments, if existing opportunities for the valorization of resources considered properly and managed successfully, sustainable tourism development with a focus on health tourism in the Pasargadae region will not unexpected. Further, it is vitally important to emphasize the principle weaknesses and take advantages of

opportunities to address the weaknesses of the issue of health tourism in the region.

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