Special Issue
Enhancement, Management, and Sustainability of Tourism in Italian Small Villages

FUORI LUOGO

Journal of Sociology of Territory, Tourism, Technology

Guest Editors
Ilaria Marotta
Salvatore Monaco
Marina Novelli

Editor in Chief: Fabio Corbisiero
Managing Editor: Carmine Urciuoli

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Mariaclaudia Cusumano, Marco Ingrassia[1]

The UNESCO Heritage of the Aeolian Islands (Italy) Tourism, Sustainable Development and Territorial Management[2]

Introduction

Since 1950, tourism has increased all over the World. Europe is the mainland that has the most considerable increase. Tourism remains the most significant worldwide tourism market, taking 41% of international tourism receipts, with growth concentrated mainly in Southern and Mediterranean Europe, including Southeast Europe (OECD, 2016), which is the most visited area of the European Mainland. This importance is due to several factors, among them the diversification of the tourism destination. First, the prominent Cultural Heritage, a legacy that traces back to the Phoenician and Greek colonization, comprises several cultural sites recognized by UNESCO for their prominent value. Secondly, the Mediterranean area is attractive thanks to the gastronomy culture, which is recognized as Healthy and tasty; example of this cooking are the *Nouvelle cousin* and the *Mediterranean Die*t (Lo Verde *et al.*, 2023). Third, The Mediterranean area is a geographical area that is (and was) a crossroads of many cultures and societies due to a favorable bioclimate. In the past, coastal areas were attractive for settling the population, and currently, they are attractive to tourists worldwide. Its 38.000 Km of cost is ideal for tourist destinations as vacations (Lo Verde *et al.*, 2023, p.115). Touristic flows and consumption in some coastal cities in Southern Italy from 2009 to 2019 increased thanks to the ability of the *coastal landscape* to be attractive to tourist (Colloca, Lipari, 2022). Fourth, the intersection of the African and Eurasian plates occurred in the Mediterranean area, allowing high concentration of biodiversity; the geological history is characterized by *volcanic, clayey-marly, evaporitic, sandstone-clayey-calcareous, carbonate, phyllitic,* and shale-crystalline elements (Basilone, 2018).
It is possible to find all those four elements in the Aeolian Islands on the Northeastern coast of Sicily in the province of Messina, Italy.
This contribution aims to investigate how UNESCO branding has impacted the Archipelago by paying attention to the strengths and weaknesses of tourism in the Aeolians islands. This controversial phenomenon risks the sustainability of fragile territorial ecosystems and raises community concerns. The contribution aims to offer a systemic perspective of tourism on Aeolians Island by showing how both over-tourism and lack of adequate and measured management can impact the environment in the local community by tampering with the precarious eco and social system of the villages. This contribution aims to raise attention towards the tourism capacity in small towns or places with limited anthropic pressure to anticipate phenomena such as the city of Venice (Italy), where city dwellers are moving to the nearest cities (Mestre). This change resulted from the fact that Venice has become a mass tourist destination that fails to ensure proper living for the residents; on the contrary, the limited capacity due to competition for the allocating resources caused Venicean to move away. In the case of Aeolians island, this would mean the depopulation of the village in favor of Capo d'Orlando and Messina city; in other words, this would means address the prominent value of the Archipelago only for mass tourism instead of its cultural, scientific, and environmental value.
On the one hand, the visibility of tourism correlates to the growth of the local economy as the creation of jobs; on the other hand, mass tourism can contribute to conflicts between visitors/tourists and residents/locals, depopulation of the villages, mostly for new generations due to precarious working conditions." (Cristiano, Gonella, 2020).

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2 Received: 10/2/2024. Revised: 19/5/2024. Accepted: 20/12/2024. Published: 31/12/2024.

Moreover, *overtourism* can threaten the physical nature of the places and monuments, and their integrity, as well as the environment; the lack of proper communication and insufficient plans to manage tourism may lead to a deterioration of the environment. The crowd of tourists in the streets and squares may cause conflict between residents and tourists due to the limited space, as the price is in specific markets such as food or renting (Responsible Tourism, 2020).
Additional risk impacts on the environment in terms of air pollution, scarcity of water and land cover.
The Croatian Heritage is threatened by cruise ships, their enormous capacity causes long queues at attractions, large crowds of tourists, noise, and a lack of services for residents (De Villa, Šulc, 2021). In Florence, UNESCO Heritage residents are implementing survival strategies in their daily lives to defend against invasiveness by avoiding 72 streets in the center of Florence. A phenomenon that changes the perception of the space as an overlap of two populations-tourists and residents (Del Bianco, Montedoro, 2023).
The contribution is structured through the following research questions:
(i) What are the main factors that are contributing to the visibility of the Aeolian islands and their identification as a tourist destination? Has the inscription in the WHL represented a pull factor favoring an increase or a typological variation of tourist flows?
(ii) Has the inscription in the WHL favor adequate management of the Aeolians Islands as a strategy to preserve the Outstanding Natural value?
(iii) Has the inscription in the WHL contributed to promoting Sustainable Development for the Socio-economic and Territorial system at the local level, as prescribed by the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals of the UN?
The methodology employed in this study involves a multifaceted approach. Firstly, it analyzes various factors contributing to the visibility of the Aeolian Islands, such as the emergence of cinematography following the Second World War. This investigation aims to understand how cultural and media influences have shaped the islands' perception as a tourist destination.
Secondly, the study delves into the intricate process through which the UNESCO management plan was developed for the Aeolian Islands. This includes examining the strategies, policies, and frameworks implemented to preserve the islands' Outstanding Natural Value as recognized by the WHL. Finally, quantitative data is analyzed to assess tourist flows and patterns post-WHL inscription, examining if there has been an increase or diversification in visitor demographics.

1. The Aeolian Islands

The Aeolian archipelago is a constellation of seven inhabited islands: Lipari, Vulcano, Salina, Stromboli, Filicudi, Alicudi, and Panarea (figure 1). Those islands are fragile areas and small villages, primarily marine villages; Lipari was recently inscribed in the REIMAR[3] (Registro per le identità della pesca mediterranea e dei Borghi Marinari). Aeolian villages are focal points of a landscape and culture layered over time. In those villages, the relationships with the Sea and the land for millennials were crucial for local sustenance.
In addition to the seven villages, there are five uninhabited cays, and this archipelago has volcanic origins as a result of the geological evolution in the area. The islands are displaced in 1,216 *ha,* originating from a progressive historical shift of volcanic activity. Still, on the Island of Vulcano, the volcanic activity is part of this environmental context. This phenomenon is tangible not only due to the Eruption of the Vulcanic and Seismic activity but also due to an intense Hydrothermal activity that occurred in the Southern Tyrrhenian Sea in which Aeolian islands that represented a series of low-energy eruptive events (De Astis *et al.*, 2023).

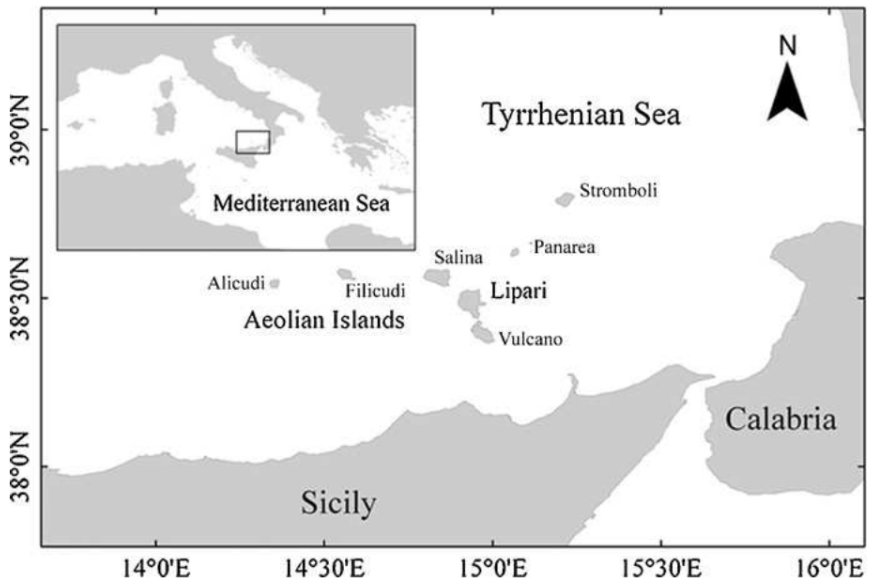
3 https://reimar.it (30th January 2024)

Those volcanic landforms of the site represent classic features in the continuing study of volcanology worldwide. Since the 18th Century, the islands have provided vulcanology and geology textbooks and have featured prominently in the education of all geoscientists for over 200 years. Still, the islands continue to offer a rich field for volcanological studies of ongoing geological processes in the development of landforms.

The Outstanding record of volcanic island-building was recognized in the 24th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 2000. The presence of Outstanding Heritage as a place for Research and Scientific relevance in terms of geodynamics, volcanology, nature, ecology, and landscape makes this vast territory, constituted by the National Park, an area of Outstanding Universal value. The relevance of the marine ecosystem, which comprises 5.5% of the world's marine fauna (Battaglia *et al.,* 2010), has been conducted in the proposal of the institution of the Marine Protected area for the protection of the marine environment and the prevention of harmful effects on the resources of the sea, providing for the formation, in agreement with the regions, of the general plan for the defense of the sea and the marine coasts from pollution and the protection of the marine environment (Italian Law 979/82, Art. 31). Mainly to protect pelagic fishes such as *Xiphias gladius, Thunnus alalunga, cetaceans, striped dolphin Stenella coeruleoalba* and dolphins. Since 1982, this proposal for the institution of the marine area has still been pending with the other 16 Italian areas.

The area is characterized by a community of artisanal fishermen, who play a significant role in providing an essential source of food for the islands (Battaglia *et al.,* 2010). However**,** they present themselves as sea stakeholders, so they refuse the implementation of the marine area. They believe that establishing the protected area may pose an obstacle to the economic activity of fishing.

Figure 1 - *Aeolians Islands*



Source: Battaglia *et al.*, 2010

On the one hand, in the contemporary era, there is an increase in the city and urban areas as tourist destinations; on the other hand, there is an increase in *niche tourism markets*, such as what occurred on the Aeolian Islands. Here, we are referring to some categories of tourism that belong to a problematic sphere, which encompasses Sustainable Tourism, Slow tourism, Eco tourism, Rural tourism, and Sports Tourism (Trekking, swimming, snorkeling, sailing), which are

intertwined with emotional, experiencing (Lo Verde *et al.*, 2023) and relational tourism but also Scientific one. The intersection of Natural Heritage, Landscape, and Volcanic is an extraordinary example of reconciling humans with natural beauty.

2. Cinematography and Tourism

Tourism arose in the Aeolians islands at the beginning of the 1950*s* when tourism became a leisure activity in Italy; in this period, thermal tourism also started to be attractive, especially for French, Holland, and Belgian tourists.
In 1949, the volcanologist Haroun Tazieff showed "Connaissance du Monde" in France and Belgium, a movie shot on Stromboli and Vulcano islands, as a strategy to promote the islands as a destination management. At the end of the 1950s, the binomial Vulcanic and Cinema became more robust thanks to two moves; the first was directed by R. Rossellini, "Stromboli, terra di Dio," while the second "Vulcano," acted by A. Magnani, both movies were presented in 1950. The film's success allowed those islands to be open to international visibility. During this period, tourists were mainly attracted by the contact with nature and local culture (Knafou, 2020) as local techniques such as Malvasia production, traditional knowledge, and handcraft, but also the value of solidarity, the usage of the square as a space of relationship and social bonds.
By 1970, the Aeolian Islands had become a thriving tourism market, leading to the construction of hotels and other tourist services. This influx of tourists significantly impacted the island's economic and social dynamics, presenting opportunities for the exploitation of local culture and environment through the tourism industry (Angelini, 2014).
In 1964, there was 31.897 presence, distributed mainly in Volcano and Stromboli islands; during those years, prominent action was taken building construction and land cover started of the territory, while the wildness and the pristine were slowly disappearing. At the end of the 70s, 80% of tourists in Aeolians were European.
A second wave of tourism was registered during the 1990s when the archipelagos was transformed into a new cinematographic set; at the beginning was "Caro Diario" by N. Moretti in 1993, shot in Stromboli and Vulcano represented poor and underdeveloped Sicilian village and then the movie "Il Postino" of Massimo Troisi in 1994. The cinematography contributed to increasing the visibility of the *Spiaggia di Pollara* in Salina Island (and the island itself)- now the bay has basically disappeared due to coastal erosion phenomenon as well as the repeated collapse of boulders coming off the ridge above, but the bay, accessible only by sea remains one of the most suggestive landscapes of the archipelago, still attractive for boats and yacht that navigate the archipelago-.
The Aeolian culture and its landscape became the subjects of the Cinema; this contributed to provide a new identity to the Aeolian Islands, as face of the "Modern World". An example is the institution of the "Casa del Postino," which in the movie is supposed to be the house of poet Pablo Neruda. (Angelini, 2014).
In recent decades, tourism has continued to arise, mainly from April to September, but since the 1980s, some islands have tried to switch to *niche tourism*, characterized by luxury hotels and élite restaurants; this change has started to attract yachts all over the Archipelagos as a destination for privileged people due to the prominent increase of the local price registered in all sectors. On the one hand, this prominent change presented an opportunity for economic development, but on the other hand, in the islands were disappearing local culture, architecture, and local production due to tourism's impact in the Archipelago as the primary driver of (over)development. The popularity of the island has continued to increase and with that, the tourism flow has increased. Currently, islands are experiencing a concentration of tourism during the months of August when the Tourism Carrying Capacity is achieved (Long *et. al*, 2022); in other words, this

occurs when "How many is too many," when the appropriate or acceptable tourism conditions are at risk. Overloading the Tourism Carrying Capacity impacts the well-being of the tourists (full reservation hotels, restaurants, berths in the port). Moreover, the pressure on tourist causes an impact on the marine ecosystem, on the territory, and on the hosting society. It is essential to ensure adequate management, which pays attention to Sustainable tourist flows to ensure an increase in the number of nights and presence during the low season; this can provide a unique experience to the tourist.

3. UNESCO Heritage and the Management Plan

In 2000, after the evaluation of the International Union for Conservation of Nature IUCN[4], the UNESCO Committee inscribed the Aeolian Islands on the World Heritage List (WHL) under the natural criterion (i) in the motivation for inscription was reported:

> «Criterion (i): The volcanic landforms of the site represent classic features in the continuing study of volcanology worldwide. With their scientific study from at least the 18th Century, the islands have provided two of the types of eruptions (Vulcanian and Strombolian) to vulcanology and geology textbooks and so have featured prominently in the education of all geoscientists for over 200 years. They continue to provide a rich field for volcanological studies of on-going geological processes in the development of landforms».

In other words, the UNESCO Commission recognized the Outstanding Universal Value in terms of scientific knowledge developed in this geodynamic and vulcanology context.
To ensure the prominent value of the Natural Heritage and its integrity, UNESCO requires the adoption of a Management Plan for each site inscribed to the WHL as a strategy to preserve the Heritage and to ensure the integrity of the property; in Italy, the Management Plan has implemented accordingly the Law N. 77/2006 which provide special measures for the protection and enjoyment of Italian sites included in the "World Heritage list," placed under the protection of UNESCO; in Art. 3, related to the Management Plan, is reported that «*should be included the priority of intervention and the agreements between public entities institutionally responsible for the preparation of management plans»*; in other words, the Management Plan Should be a participatory process shared among all those stakeholders of the Archipelago.

(i) Institutions (Municipalities, Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia, Ispra, MASE (Area Marina Protetta), Guardia Costiera;
(ii) Economic actors (tourism business, traditional activity-fisher community, local farmers;
(iii) Local community.

The coordination of a strategy for Sustainable Development would have limited the impact of tourism in the Archipelago. On the other hand, the nomination in the WHL has contributed to increased international visibility; UNESCOs prestigious recognition of the serial property is a multiplication factor for tourism since the UNESCO brand acts as a "magnet for visitors" (Cusumano, 2022), The UNESCO label act as a "superstar" by exerting a magnetic role on tourists, (Panzera *et. al*., 2021) Indeed, the UNESCO branding is well-known all over the world, it provides visibility, identity (Makno, 2011) and loyalty.
On the other hand, this visibility contributes, as previously anticipated, to increasing tourism and with so, an increase in local economics, on the other hand this attractivity can be a driver for *over tourism,* as UNESCO Brand attracts visitors indiscriminately (Moreschini *et al.*, 2016).
The UNESCO Brand in the Aeolian Islands, as small villages in fragile areas, may constitute a risk of degradation of the entire Territorial Ecosystem due to the prominent international visibility.

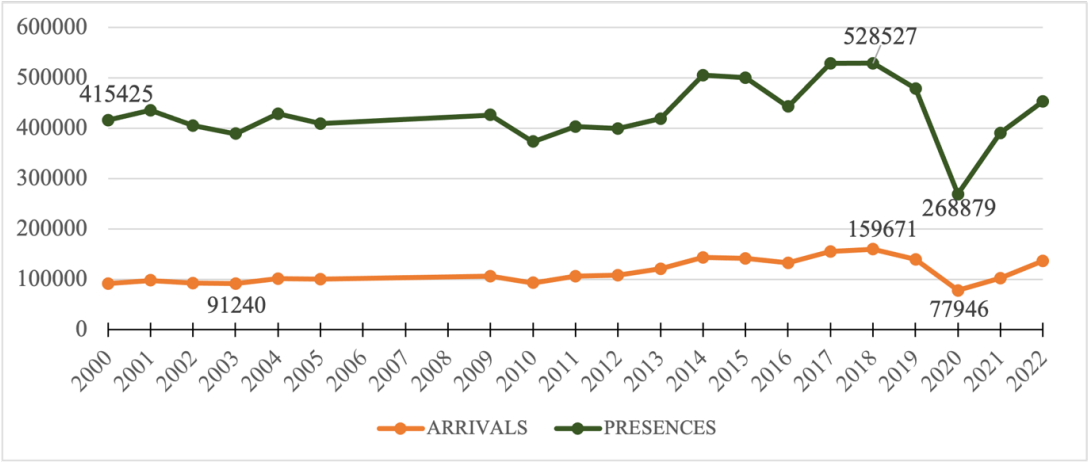
4 IUCN, 1999, Technical Evaluation Isole Eolie (Aeolian Islands) (Italy) Addendum To 1999 Iucn Evaluation https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/908/documents/

Moreover, the fruition of the Islands is mainly concentrated during summertime, as coastal tourism, instead of a constant fruition spread during all the months of the year, may rapidly cause a collapse of the tourism system.

4. Tourist Attractiveness and UNESCO brand: data analysis

The Aeolian Islands are identified by ISTAT (Italian National Institute of Statistics) as a single statistical sample. Consequently, data on tourism encompasses islands with large population centers and numerous tourist and hotel infrastructures - such as Lipari or Volcano - and smaller islands with hospitality exclusively limited to a few private residences - such as Alicudi and Filicudi. The breadth of the statistical sample therefore does not allow for a detailed analysis of the distribution of presences and arrivals in different territories and with different tourist vocations. Nevertheless, available data is valid to analysis the variation of tourist arrivals and departures in relation to the-inscription in the UNESCO WHL in 2000. Data analysis based on ISTAT[5] shows that there are no significant variations since 2000, the year of inscription in the WHL, with an annual figure for presences (number of overnight stays) ranging from 410,000 to 430,000 units, and a figure for arrivals ranging from 90,000 to 100,000 units annually (Fig 2).

Figure 2 - Arrivals and Presences in the Aeolian Island from 2000 to 2022

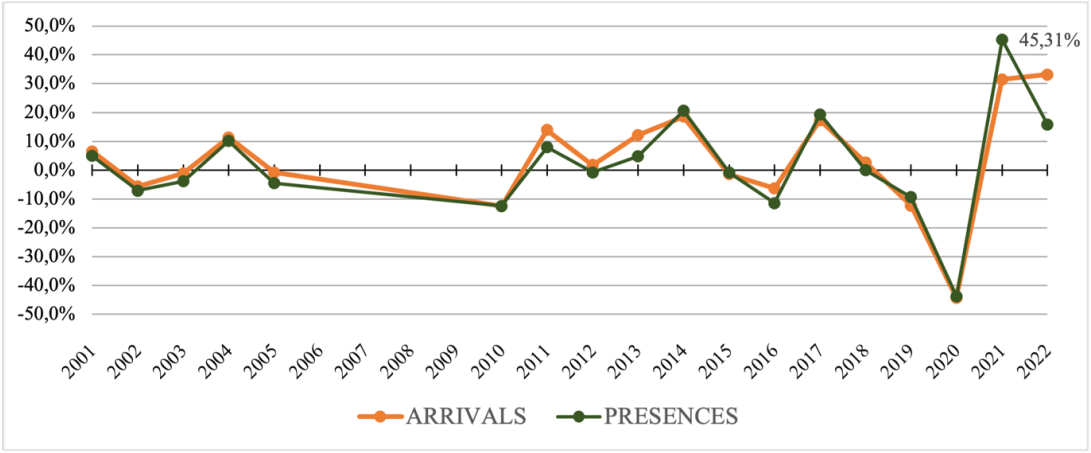


Source: Elaboration of the authors

A significant variation is instead observed starting from 2012-2013, during which there is an increase in both presences and arrivals. The analysis of the growth rate of arrivals and presences (Fig. 3) shows a coupling between the two indicators, with fluctuations ranging between +10% and -10% from 2000 to 2011, whereas from 2012 and 2019, it ranges between +20% and -10%. Therefore, the data suggests a non-linear trend, which is associated with a greater tendency towards growth starting from 2012. In both cases, the variation cannot be directly attributed to the UNESCO brand, as specific variations related to the brand's tourist promotion have not been recorded since 2012.

5 ISTAT data: Aeolian Islands and Sicily - Arrivals and Presences
http://pti.regione.sicilia.it/portal/page/portal/PIR_PORTALE/PIR_LaStrutturaRegionale/PIR_TurismoSportSpettacolo/PIR_Turismo/PIR_Areetematiche/PIR_Linkutili/PIR_7338501.618136477

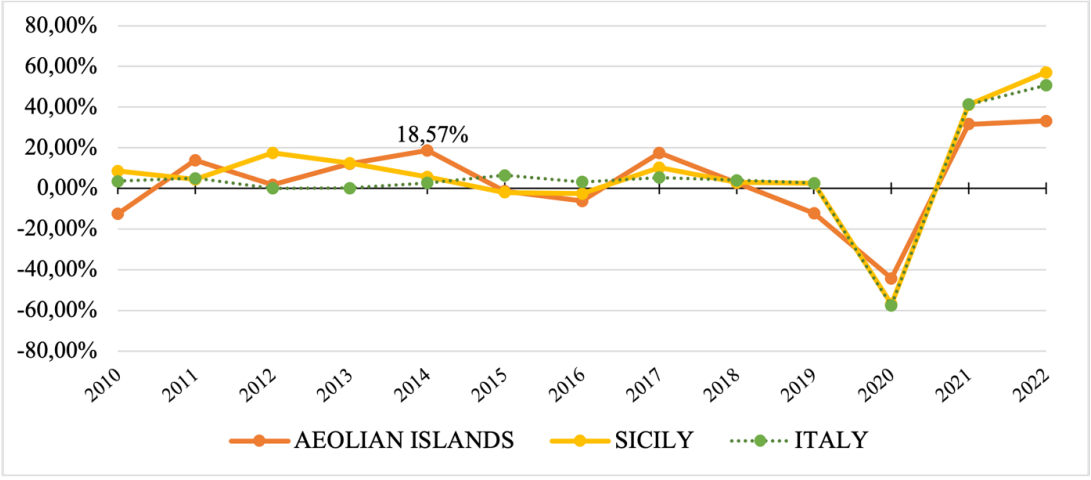
Figure 3 - Growth rates of arrivals and Presences in the AI from 2000 to 2022



Source: Elaboration of the authors

The statistical variation after 2012 may depend on specific factors capable of increasing the attractiveness of the Aeolian Islands or on a greater attractiveness of the geographical area in which they are located, a comparison was made between the growth data of arrivals in the Aeolian Islands and other statistical samples. Figure 4 compares them with data from Sicily and Italy, while Figure 5 compares them with data both Italy and Italian coastal areas (data recorded by ISTAT[6] up to 2017). In both cases, the analysis covers the period from 2009 to 2022.
In Figure 4, it is observed that the trend of the Aeolian Islands is almost analogous to that of Sicily, and excluding the pandemic period of 2020-2022, Sicily shows fluctuations ranging from -12% to 19%, with only three negative years. The growth rate is significantly higher than the average Italian rate, whose maximum value is 6.42% in 2015. In Figure 5, on the other hand, it is observed that the growth rate of Italian coastal areas is almost identical to that of Italy, thus falling within a range lower than that of the Aeolian Islands.

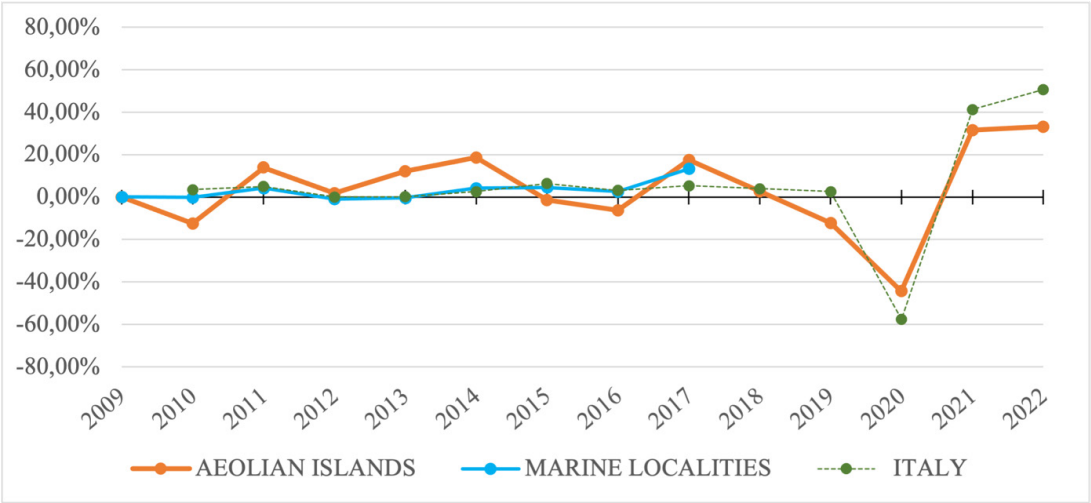
Figure 4 - *Growth data of arrivals in the Aeolian Islands, Sicily and Italy*



Source: Elaboration of the authors

6 ISTAT data: Italy and Maritime Localities arrivals
https://esploradati.istat.it/databrowser/#/it/dw/categories/IT1,Z0700SER,1.0/SER_TOURISM/DCSC_TUR_OCCYEAR/IT1,122_54_DF_DCSC_TUR_10,1.0

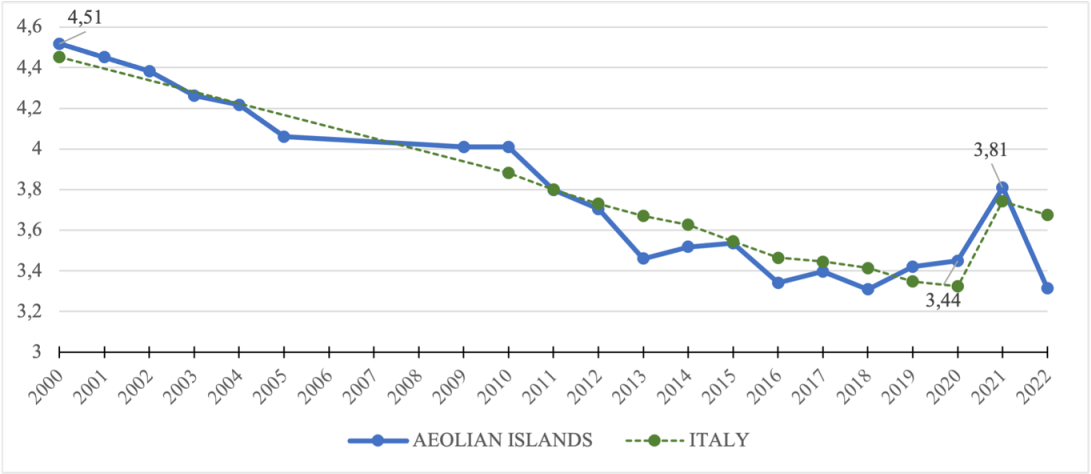
Figure 5 - *Growth data of arrivals in the Aeolian Islands, Marine localities, and Italy*



Source: Elaboration of the authors

From this comparative analysis, it is evident that the growth recorded in the Aeolian Islands starting from 2012 cannot be correlated with a greater attractiveness of the islands but rather to macro-trends occurring in the entire Sicilian region. This growth in arrivals can be attributed to the increased tourist attractiveness of the Mediterranean regions of the European Union in the decade from 2011 to 2020, and, consequently, according to some researchers, to the crises in competing tourist destinations in the Arab Mediterranean - Tunisia, Egypt, Syria - due to the upheavals triggered by the Arab Spring (Zambon, 2017).
In terms of the *quality* and *typology* of tourist flows, two factors under analysis are the average duration of stays and seasonality. Figure 6 shows how there is a progressive decrease in the average length of stay in the Aeolian Islands, similar to the trend in Italy, with a decrease from 4.51 nights in 2000 to 3.44 nights in 2019.

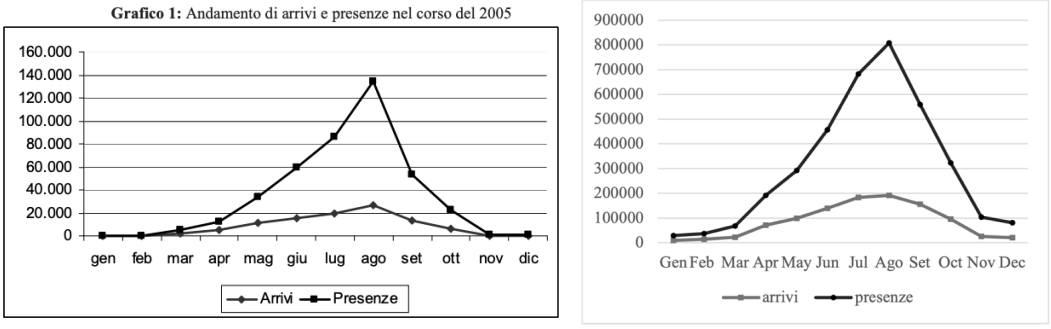
Figure 6 - Average permanence in Aeolian islands and Italy from 2000 to 2021



Source: Elaboration of the authors

On the other hand, data regarding the seasonality of tourist flows it is difficult to obtain, and it is not possible to assess the impact of the UNESCO brand on attracting tourist flows beyond the summer period. Figure 7 (left) compiled in the UNESCO Management Plan based on data from "AST[7] Eolie" data from 2005, shows a peak in visits during the period between June and September. This is in line with the Sicilian trend, as recent data from the province of Messina in 2022 indicate (figure 7, right).

Figure 7 - *Seasonality. On the left data referred to Aeolian Islands in 2005 - from UNESCO Management Plan On the right data referred to Messina Province in 2022*



Source: Elaboration of the authors on ISTAT data

5. Evaluating the role of the UNESCO Management Plan as a driver to ensure the integrity of the Heritage

Among the main phenomena of mass tourism and *overtourism* is daily tourism. This type of tourism is characterized by a generally negative impact on territorial systems, as it exerts intense anthropogenic pressure without generating income through the tourists prolonged permanence in the area - for example, staying in hotel or private residences or purchasing products and services. The condensed timeframe of visits to the islands also results in peak presence phenomena in delimited areas of the territory, predominantly in zones near the port of landing: among these are the small island villages and the beaches close to them. In recent years, the popular press has registered the dissatisfaction of residents of smaller islands, such as Panarea or Vulcano, in the face of these phenomena, highlighting the emergence of conflicts related to the islands' development model.

Similarly to what happens on the mainland, the daily tourist, mainly from Messina and Capo d'Orlando ports for a daily cruise, is drawn to rapid consumption of the main "iconic" places of the territory, often without a deep understanding of the Cultural and Environmental Heritage characteristics. UNESCO brand, therefore, represents a neutral attraction phenomenon. On the other hand, it is necessary to understand how inscription in the WHL, and the consequent presence of the Management Plan, can act as a tool for protection against excessive mass tourism flows, especially daily tourism.

The data described in the previous paragraph (tabs. 1-5) refer to the presence of tourists who stay overnight on the islands and do not include daily tourism, which occurs through landings from private or collective carriers. Regarding landings on private carriers, we refer to boats coming mainly from the Italian coasts, for which data is unavailable.

An orientation regarding data on daily tourist presence through landings from collective carriers - hydrofoils or ferries - can instead be inferred from ISTAT data[8] (see fig.8), which, however, in-

7 "Azienda Soggiorno e Turismo"

8 ISTAT - Maritime transport: Passengers by port of embarkation and disembarkation http://dati.istat.it/index.aspx?queryid=25765

clude both tourists and residents. Net of residents' movements (there are approximately 15,000 inhabitants), data shows a significant number of daily tourists. A notable case is that of 2020, the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, when there were over 542,000 landings compared to approximately 77,000 arrivals.

Figure 8 - Landings and arrivals in the Aeolian Islands

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Port	**Landings (thousands)**							
Aeolian Islands	..	..	..	..	..	241	542	287
Island of Lipari	307	201	142	156	100	..	..	..
Island of Vulcano	164	134	288	189	247	..	..	..
	Arrivals (thousands)							
Aeolian Islands	143	141	132	155	159	140	77	102

Source: Elaboration of the authors on ISTAT data

As previously observed, the UNESCO Management Plan requires administrations to establish a series of restrictions capable of reducing the impact of mass tourism on territorial systems. Nevertheless, the path from the inscription in 2000 has been marked by conflicts between different development models for the archipelago: a sustainable one, and an economic growth centered one. The Management Plan was only implemented between 2008 and 2010 following a UNESCO World Heritage Centre/IUCN mission and the UNESCO decision adopted in 2007, which anticipated the possibility of the inscription of the property on the *List of World Heritage in Danger* in case the State does not take adequate measures to address the key recommendations.
In the decision, UNESCO identified three threats:
(i) the lack of a management plan;
(ii) excessive tourist development;
(iii) the extraction of pumice from the quarry in Lipari.
The report expresses serious concerns about the conservation and management issues affecting the property's Outstanding Universal value and integrity due to the lack of a management pavement structure.
The prescriptions of the Management Plan, from 2010 to the present day, have in turn been largely disregarded. An example is represented by the case of the Marine Reserve, mentioned earlier, but also the lack of synergies among the different municipality of the Archipelago.
Regarding tourism in particular, the Management Plan proposed (i) the establishment of a local tourism governance system, (ii) the systematization and organization of tourism in apartments through the Integrated Relational Tourism (IRT) offer model, (iii) the systematization, organization, and control of nautical tourism in the Aeolian archipelago, and (iv) the strengthening of basic education: the establishment of a vocational institute for tourism and foreign languages with specialized technical training. Since these indications have not been respected by local administrations, the UNESCO Management Plan has not effectively served as a decisive tool in protecting against *overtourism*. Over 13 years since the extension of the Plan, a regular update - and subsequent implementation - as prescribed by UNESCO and law 77/2016, is now necessary to address new forms of emerging tourism, such as the growth of tourist apartments facilitated by digital platforms like Booking or Airbnb.

Conclusions

Italy has long shown struggle to develop coherent and lasting tourism policies and strategies on; this circumstance is linked to the lack of a strategic vision capable of linking tourism to other relevant sectors and allocating responsibilities to different levels of government (Banca d'Italia, 2018). Those difficulties have emerged in (i) the adoption of the UNESCO Management Plan (MG) and (ii) the implementation of the MG.

The inscription of the Aeolian Islands in the WHL and the other 58 UNESCO sites in Italy represents challenges and opportunities for Territorial development and the local community. Enforcing an integrated and participatory approach, as prescribed in the Management UNESCO Plan, is necessary to activate territorial synergies for promoting Sustainable Development and Sustainable Tourism to ensure the integrity of the Heritage.

The UNESCO nomination contributed to increasing the visibility of the site, but this increase is not so prominent in terms of touristic attractivity; on the other hand, the nomination impacts mainly the local community and, on its traditions, as it increases the risk of congestion that may put in dangerous the authenticity of the site (Panzera *et al.,* 2021). In terms of fruition, we are assisting in slow growth in the long term. The prediction of the Sicilian flow suggests an increase in tourism flow of tourism in the Aeolians Islands continues to grow due to the unique touristic experience or immersive experience, as fragile areas and small villages with limited carrying capacity, the over-tourism will impact the Heritage, Ecosystem of small villages shortly. To avoid the risk it is necessary to make a joint effort to ensure the Sustainability of the Aeolian Islands in the light of promoting Sustainable Tourism for the community, Protecting the Ecosystem and the local community in the perspective to avoid conflict among inhabitants and tourists but also to ensure the integrity of the UNESCO Site as a privileged area for the Scientific Research on the geological and volcanological transformation of our living Planet that still occurred.

To ensure long-term and Sustainable tourism development, village dwellers should have a role in the tourism strategy as ensuring life-quality of residents. Supporting and encouraging youth aspirations to avoid depopulation, and local tradition should be preserved as the Heritage of the specific area. Moreover, strategies for supporting sustainable tourism, such as denationalization and Scientific tourism, should be encouraged to give value to the geographic Heritage. Tourism required the conceptualization of an integrated description of the tourism urban system to ensure livability in the villages and to favor tourism in the next generations. Limits of this research consisted of having analyzed partially tourist data on tourism, for instance, the lack of data related to:

(i) marine traffic;
(ii) difficulties in monitoring the number of boats yacht effectively.
(iii) difficulties in calculating effectively the number of tourists in the Archipelago that spend nights on the boats and yachts;
(iv) difficulties in tracking passengers of daily cruises, which elude the official data recorded.

Additional limits are due to the lack of reports and monitoring assessment of the area (both land and Sea) that the Archipelago should provide and update regularly. Moreover, the lack of institutional reports complicates the general framework of the Archipelagos. Furthermore, the existence of islands that belong to different municipalities, where each one has its own idea of "development" or "tourism development," does not allow for intercepting the specific needs of each island nor provide a general framework of the Impact of UNESCO in the Archipelagos.

Further research on the Aeolian Islands may be conducted to evaluate the impact of the maritime fleet and daily visitors. Additional suggestions consist in reducing the area of interest in each Island by focusing on the Island Level instead of the Archipelago to investigate, among other the perceptions of tourism and over-tourism in the Islands.

This research strategy would require close collaboration with the *Guardia Costiera* and other institutions to monitor visitors and tourism flow effectively in the Aeolian Islands to ensure the well-being of inhabitants, visitors, and UNESCO Heritage for the future.

In conclusion, UNESCO sites (but not only) should look after their attractivity to ensure the future of tourism by preserving their Environmental Heritage. Some cities, such as Venice, are experiencing limited access to the city, but the challenge is finding solutions to ensure Tourism for future generations.

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