

Article

Assessment of Urban Attractiveness of Port Cities in Southern Italy—A Case Study of Torre Annunziata

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to assess the strength and weakness factors of post-industrial cities located in the Gulf of Naples in order to propose the most effective regeneration strategies towards a sustainable development of the urban coastline. This paper focuses on the city of Torre Annunziata and in particular on its industrial port area and waterfront. The analysis suggests that a sustainable development would be possible through the redesign and new functionalization of the waterfront and port area, improving resilience and creativity in order to integrate economic growth, ecological preservation and social opportunities. Thus, this paper is a proposal for a participative approach to the regeneration of the urban waterfront, enhancing the creative potential of the city and developing a new image for the waterfront that could become the strategic vision for a future economic, environmental and cultural development. A comparison between the waterfronts of Torre Annunziata and La Spezia has been carried out in order to assess what are the most effective choices for the future of Torre Annunziata, followed by an applicative process based on interviews.

Keywords: port cities; waterfront regeneration; resilience; sustainable development; creativity; post-industrial city; urban competition

1. Towards a Sustainable Urban Development of Port Cities in Southern Italy

Coastal cities have always had a specific value, their particular urban landscape and convenient position has been an attractive factor for the localization of people and economic activities.

“The natural landscape of coastal areas represents an ‘added value’, it is ‘quality landscape’ that becomes the attractive factor in the local and global competition between territories” [1].

After the deindustrialization process of recent decades, the port cities of Southern Italy faced several problems related to the conversion of industries located on the waterfronts and pollution. Radical changes in the economy of coastal territories occurred and the long-standing separation of the cities from the sea is now becoming the main reason for the economic decline of such cities.

In addition, abandoned areas close to the waterfronts are turning into “places of insecurity” where criminality and social uncertainty strongly reduce the quality of life and attractiveness of these places.

Lack of physical infrastructures, shortage of specialized services, low participation of stakeholders in the regeneration processes, institutional fragility, pollution and waste emergencies are the main challenges that port cities in Southern Italy should face in the coming years. Southern Italian coasts have various cultural and environmental resources and high economic potential thanks to their location in the Mediterranean Sea. Remediation of polluted soils and waters, as well as the reuse and conversion of coastal brownfield sites, are necessary to start a regeneration process capable of transforming the disused and polluted waterfronts into areas of new opportunities.

In recent years, European coastal cities have defined long-term development strategies starting from the regeneration of their waterfronts and port areas [2]. Use of renewable energy, waste recycling and environmental protection and remediation, as well as the preservation of material and immaterial cultural heritage and social compensation, are the common factors that make port cities competitive [3].

How could port cities in Southern Italy take advantage of their resources in order to improve their economic, social and environmental conditions? This paper suggests how development projects can enhance the “resilience” of cities, starting with the regeneration of waterfronts.

“Resilience” is the ability to evolve/adapt, preserving the traditional organizational structure despite the pressures of change [1]. Coastal cities in Southern Italy will be resilient if they are able to preserve their identity and improve their cultural heritage and landscape, making them become key factors of attractiveness [4] for the localization choices of residents, traders and investors in “green” and cultural economic activities, facilities and amenities, ensuring at the same time economic prosperity and the enhancement of environmental, social and cultural values.

2. Assessing the Attractiveness of Urban Waterfront Districts

2.1. Background

Urban regeneration seeks ways to improve disadvantaged places and the lives of people who live and work there. Urban regeneration is a process characterized by the production of new economic, social and environmental relations. The task of achieving urban regeneration in towns and cities cannot be carried out with public funds alone: private capital is necessary. Studies demonstrate that real estate and developers occupy a pivotal position in the identification and creation of development opportunities, thereby facilitating the flow of long-term investment finance [5]. In order to attract private capital and reduce the investment risk it is necessary to assess the localization preferences of residents and stakeholders in certain districts. Localization preferences can encourage private

investment in run-down areas, if suitably co-located with complementary social policies and public funding initiatives.

The main research aims are:

- To explore whether and how visual features are important for the localization choices of various stakeholders in and around the waterfront districts (such as residents, retailers, entrepreneurs, associations, policymakers);
- To process a participative and transparent tool for the development of a shared long-term strategy aiming to enhance the attractiveness of waterfronts for private investments, while at the same time managing the conflict due to different priorities between public and private sectors.

2.2. Conceptual Framework

This paper seeks to address the importance of visual features for the localization choices of residents and stakeholders, trying to investigate the attractiveness of the waterfront area considering its visual quality “by studying the mental image of that city which is held by its citizens” [6,7].

Torre Annunziata is an emblematic post-industrial port city in Southern Italy. The paper explores this case study comparing it with the coastal city of La Spezia, trying to assess what the key factors are that influence the change in the perception of the attractiveness of waterfronts and more generally what could be the most effective public choices towards a sustainable development of port cities in Southern Italy.

The research was conducted in a first stage through a comparison between Torre Annunziata and the good practice of regeneration strategies in the port city of La Spezia.

The comparison supported the choice of five strategic aspects that influence the attractiveness of Torre Annunziata waterfront district. A number of semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted to assess what the importance of visual features is in the localization preferences of residents, retailers and entrepreneurs, in order to encourage policymakers and private investors to cooperate in the development of a long-term strategic “vision” of the city based on real stakeholders’ and residents’ involvement.

Findings and results are shown in the fifth paragraph of this paper, while conclusions and recommendations to policymakers are processed in the last section.

2.3. Key Findings

The main findings of the paper are:

- Residents and stakeholders recognize great potential in the attractiveness of the waterfront district of Torre Annunziata. The interview shows positive answers about potential localization intentions in the waterfront district by residents and stakeholders, while the present situation is perceived as underdeveloped;
- Land and water remediation, as well as energy efficiency, are perceived as the most significant factors of attractiveness of the district;
- Cultural heritage plays a fundamental role in the waterfront regeneration. It is perceived as a strong element of identity and can support social cohesion goals;

- The improvement of entrepreneurial activities is perceived as a key element in future regeneration processes;
- Among the visual features influencing the perception of the attractiveness of the waterfront, the separation of the historical city centre from the sea is perceived as the most significant.

Community participation in the development processes can reduce the investment risk in regeneration areas, always perceived as high-risk investments especially in the field of property income and rental growth, encouraging pre-letting procedures and effective public funding initiatives [8]. Actual policies and choices influence the future of our cities and need clear and transparent tools to manage the conflict between public and private interests [9]. The proposed method is a tool to support policymakers to prioritize actions and public investments towards a sustainable development and effective waterfront regeneration projects.

3. Challenges and Opportunities of Waterfront Regeneration: The Case Study of Torre Annunziata

3.1. The Role of Waterfronts as Elements of Attractiveness in Urban Competition

Urban competition is increasing under the pressure of global changes [10]. The future of our societies “will be shaped in cities” [11]. They produce the “wealth of nations” [12] but also pollution and climate change due to uncontrolled urbanization, economic activities and energy consumption, as well as socio-economic exclusion, ethnic tension and unemployment [13]. The economic trends of the 60s–70s based on industrial development led port cities in Italy to use large port areas as industrial districts, thanks to their attractive location and easy access to marine transport routes. After this period, post-industrial port areas and waterfronts were abandoned and show nowadays the signs of environmental exploitation [14]. On the other hand, thanks to the charming presence of the sea and to the opportunity of having access to facilities and amenities, the coastline is becoming the place where environmental and social values, as well as economic values related to rental growth and real estate market, are growing and multiplying. Port cities can be “hot spots” for creative and sustainable urban development [15]. Ports have always been placed within the flows of, among other things, people, ideas and goods [4]. Port areas inside the cities are places of “identity” before being locations for trades and productions [16], and for this reason they need regeneration strategies capable of making them attractive for residents, tourists and developers thanks to their dynamic atmosphere and clean environment.

3.2. The Port City of Torre Annunziata: Socio-Economic, Cultural and Environmental Features

3.2.1. The Gulf of Naples: History and Cultural Aspects

The ancient port cities located in the Gulf of Naples have always been places rich in history and culture [17]. Since the eighth century BC they were populated by Greek colonies and after this period the Romans built in these territories various military and commercial ports as well as beautiful villas.

Today the tourism related to the landscape and the archaeological remains is the most important factor of economic growth in this region. These unique and peculiar components of cultural heritage could be elements of attractiveness capable of supporting cities in the urban competition between territories.

The area to the south of Mount Vesuvius includes the coast between the ancient Sebeto and Sarnorivers. Twelve municipalities are included in this area covering about 1333 sq. km: Boscoreale, Boscotrecase, Castellammare di Stabia, Pompei, Portici, Ercolano, San Giorgio a Cremano, Sant'Antonio Abate, Torre Annunziata, Torre del Greco, Santa Maria la Carità and Trecase. These cities, which define the Gulf of Naples waterfront, are today in a state of total abandonment, mostly due to the closure of industries during the 90s. From that period the coast developed in an uncontrolled way, with no specific urban design.

3.2.2. The City of Torre Annunziata

According to the classification of Italian municipalities for population size, the city of Torre Annunziata is classified as a medium-large urban centre (range 20,000 to 50,000 inhabitants). The population density highlights the phenomenon of a high concentration of population typical of the Vesuvian area (see Table 1). The city covers an area of about 7.33 square km and 6 km of waterfront; the industrial district located on the waterfront covers about 200 hectares and 2.5 km of beaches and is populated by more than 3000 inhabitants.

Table 1. Density of population of all municipalities in the Gulf of Naples.

Municipality	Land area	%	Population	Density
Boscoreale	112	8.42	27.381	2,444.73
Boscotrecase	749	5.63	10.538	1,420.29
Castellammare di Stabia	17.71	13.31	66.413	3,750.03
Ercolano	19.64	14.77	54.599	2,785.08
Pompei	12.41	9.33	25.751	2,075.02
Portici	4.52	3.4	58.905	13,032.08
S. Giorgio a Cremano	4.11	3.09	52.807	12,848.42
S. Antonio Abate	7.87	5.92	18.203	2,312.96
S. Maria la Carità	3.93	2.95	10.56	2,763.36
Torre Annunziata	7.33	5.51	48.72	6,645.56
Torre del Greco	30.66	23.06	90.255	2,543.74
Trecase	6.14	4.62	9,179	1,494.95
Tot.	133.01	100	473.811	3,562.22
Naples province	1,171.27		3,009.678	2.559.9

During the last few decades the city faced a slow decline, shown by the decreasing trend in resident population (see Figure 1).

Despite this, a charming landscape, interesting historical remains and still active shipyards are strong factors of attractiveness. Moreover, the historic centre shows an interesting traditional urban structure and relevant historical buildings (see Figure 2).

In order to assess the economic wealth of the area, several aspects of the production structure were analyzed (entrepreneurial sector), related to the labor market and the economic outcomes. The youth unemployment level is very high, although various productive activities are present in the city.

The production system of Torre Annunziata is characterized by small businesses with an average of four employees per company, especially in the industrial sector where it amounts to 11.20 employees

per local unit, a value above the provincial average (4.29) and the entire coastal area of Vesuvius.

From the analysis of the composition of macro-economic activities, it appears that the economy is characterized by services of the third sector (restaurants, transport and communication, financial services and insurances, professional services and services provided for business and families), which represent 46.71% of the total with 844 units, and the trade sector (wholesale and retail), which is represented by 45.99% of the total with 831 units.

Figure 1. Demographics trend of the resident population in the municipality of Torre Annunziata.

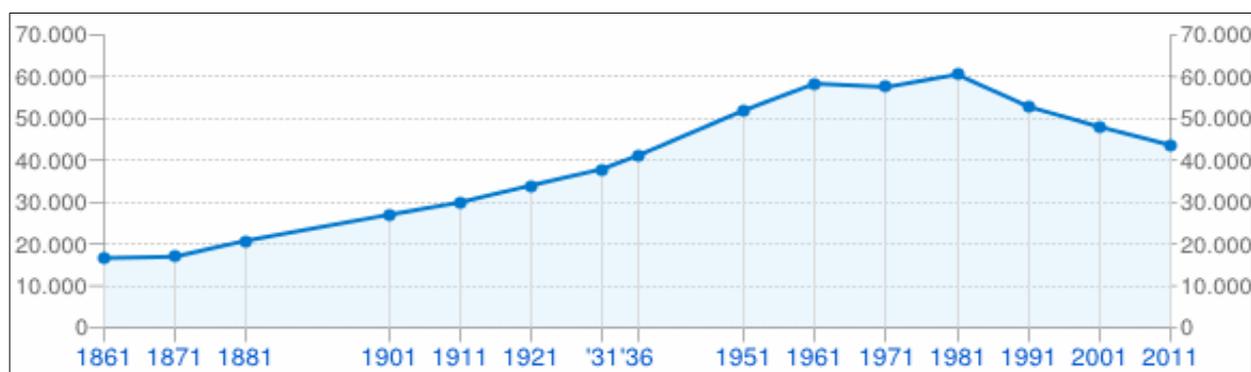


Figure 2. Torre Annunziata historic centre.



Another interesting indicator is the site density of companies in the production sector (the relationship between the number of local units and land area), which measures the spread of businesses on the territorial extent, which is equal to 246.52 in Torre Annunziata, compared with a provincial average of 118.64 (see Table 2).

Torre Annunziata is well connected with the cities of Naples and Salerno and with the rest of the region. It is served by two exits off the highway located in its municipal area, and by Pompei and Castellammare di Stabia which connect the industrial area to the same highway. The railway network is represented by the Circumvesuviana Railway which links together the cities located around Mount Vesuvius and the national ferries.

Table 2. Density of companies (n. companies/hectares) of all municipalities in the Gulf of Naples.

Municipality	Industry		Trade		Other services		Institutions		TOTAL	
	UL	AD	UL	AD	UL	AD	UL	AD	UL	AD
Boscoreale	291	959	389	592	214	552	35	743	229	2.846
Boscotrecase	97	335	141	210	112	214	16	286	366	1.08
Castellammare di Stabia	579	2.879	1.49	2.865	968	112	198	4.829	3.235	13.126
Ercolano	420	1.153	847	1.446	505	968	99	1.801	1.871	5.898
Pompei	68	721	689	1.545	659	505	50	2.102	1.466	6.855
Portici	127	523	1.3	1.872	1.36	659	169	2.476	2.283	7.958
S. Giorgio a Cremano	350	924	1.159	1.857	690	1.36	94	1.21	817	6.103
S. Antonio Abate	287	1.303	306	575	202	609	22	510	579	2.997
S. Maria la carità	170	524	284	500	116	202	9	186	1.807	1.463
Torre Annunziata	104	1.165	831	1.513	844	4.887	28	1.084	3.79	8.649
Torre del Greco	1	4.877	1.583	2.985	1.053	3.668	154	3.607	277	15.137
Trecase	49	129	102	179	94	239	32	282	282	829
Total	3.542	15.492	9.111	16.139	6.817	23.185	906	19.125	20.376	73.941
Naples province	24.802	137.159	58.676	115.78	50.559	191.036	4.911	152380	138.948	596.355

The area of Torre Annunziata is included in the Pompei-Ercolano local tourist system, identified by a study by the Camera di Commercio of Naples on the opportunities and strategies for the touristic development of the province of Naples.

Accommodation of a low-medium level offered by the local tourist sector is determined by short visits to the main archaeological area. This is due to the absence of a complex and integrated touristic offer, capable of retaining the tourist flows already existing in the area or even of creating new and stable flows.

The factors of the tourism system of the Vesuvius area and of Torre Annunziata are characterized by the complete lack of social facilities, particularly culture, leisure and sports facilities, conference halls or every other space of sociality that can both attract and retain the touristic flows and improve the quality of life of residents (See Table 3).

Studies on the opportunities and strategies of cultural tourism systems identify in the area of Torre Annunziata important opportunities for local development due to the presence of the “Great Attractor” Pompei-Ercolano. Cultural heritage visitors constituted about 15%–20% of tourists in Campania in 2001, placing the region in third place behind Lazio and Tuscany as cultural destinations in the national scene, with a market share of approximately 20% of visitors and 27% of incomes.

In particular, the circuit of Pompei has the most entrances to museums and archaeological sites of Campania with 2,167,470 entrances in 2001.

Table 3. Components of the touristic offer in the Vesuvian Area.

Category	Subcategory	Number	Description
Attractors	Spa Resorts	10 Structures	Therme Stabiane (Castellammare di Stabia)
			Therme Vesuviane (Torre Annunziata)
	Tourist Harbours	940 Berths	Portici (20)
			Torre del Greco (210)
			Torre Annunziata (300)
			Castellammare di Stabia (410)
			Castellammare di Stabia (10)
	Beach Structures	21 Bathing Establishments	Ercolano (3)
			Portici (2)
			Torre Annunziata (4)
			Torre del Greco (12)
	Relaxtion and Leisure Time		
	Congressional		

3.2.3. Port System and Waterfront Visual Features

The Port of Torre Annunziata is one of the most important seaports in the Campania region, the fourth largest after those of Naples, Salerno and Castellammare di Stabia and the third for handlings after Naples and Salerno. It has numerous storage spaces and buildings including silos for the storage of grain, which were also reached by trains, loading products directly. It was served by the station of Torre Annunziata Marittima, today closed, which was connected directly to the railroad.

After World War II the south of Italy began an intensive industrialization of the port areas and Torre Annunziata became one of the largest port cities in Italy along with Naples and Ravenna. In the 70s it increased the traffic of cereals, bitumen, trunks of hardwood (coming from African, Indonesian and American forests) for furniture and scrap iron for the nearby factories of Dalmine, Deliver and Italtubi.

The gradual decline of industrial activities led to a progressive reduction in port activities. Currently the traffic is limited to ships transporting wheat to the silos. At the same time, the widespread smuggling fostered a situation of illegality and turned the port into an area of trafficking. The waterfront is now perceived as a space without identity, consisting of unpaved areas, warehouses, divested factories, disorderly productive activities and residential units (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Waterfront district.

4. Exploring the Key Factors of Attractiveness of Waterfront Districts: A Comparison between Two Italian Port Cities: Torre Annunziata and La Spezia

A comparison between Torre Annunziata and La Spezia waterfronts is proposed in this section.

The coastal city of La Spezia has been selected due to the similarities of the two port areas, both military ports during the World Wars and after this period transformed into industrial districts. Consequentially the two cities show similar urban structures in the waterfront district, separated from the city centre as a result of the military boundaries. After the industrialization period, both waterfronts were abandoned and became unused areas due to hard environmental exploitation. The city of La Spezia started in 2007 an ambitious regeneration project for the waterfront, connecting the historic city to the port area and introducing new functions related to the existing industrial activities on the seaside. The project was the result of a decade of strategic choices based on investments in the “green economy”. The impacts of this project are actually monitored by local authorities through the activities of special committees on “Sea and Seaside”, “Local Productive System”, “Tourism and Culture”, “Infrastructures”, “Environment”, “Welfare”, “Education and Employment” and “Governance and Participation” which are showing a growth in the number of residents and activities in the waterfront district, as well as an increase in the number of boats, shipyards and other marine activities located on the coastline.

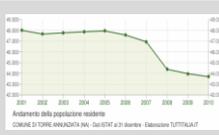
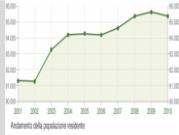
4.1. Comparison between La Spezia and Torre Annunziata Waterfronts

The city of La Spezia is located on the north-west coast of Italy, between the ports of Genova and Livorno. Its port area has a particular location in the centre of the city and it is one of the biggest commercial ports in Italy.

A comparison between La Spezia and Torre Annunziata waterfronts is proposed here in order to design both a valid view/image of the city and effective guidelines for a redevelopment project of Torre Annunziata waterfront. The table below shows differences and similarities of the two port cities (see Table 4).

The La Spezia waterfront redevelopment project is based on investments in the “green” and “culture-led” economy, aiming to make the city innovative and sustainable, attracting investments from the private sector.

Table 4. Comparative profile of La Spezia and Torre Annunziata.

Research Fields	Torre Annunziata	La Spezia
Demography	 <p>44,000 citizens = medium-sized city</p>	 <p>95,000 citizens = big city</p>
Shipbuilding	 <p>Apremare, Gagliotta, Maresca, Rodriquez, Aprea</p>	 <p>Ferretti, Baglietto, Cayman, San Marco, Euromar</p>
Waterfront	 <p>Coastline occupied by abandoned factories of the industrial period</p>	 <p>Coastline occupied by abandoned industrial areas built after World War II</p>
Historic Centre	 <p>Historic centre characterized by a large number of ancient villas, buildings and monuments of the 18th century</p>	 <p>Historic centre characterized by Middle Age buildings and monuments</p>
Connection Sea/City Centre	 <p>The city centre is separated from the waterfront and the port by railways and abandoned industrial areas</p>	 <p>The city centre is separated from the waterfront and the port by railways and abandoned industrial areas</p>
Coastal Landscape	 <p>The city is strategically located close to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the “Amalfi Coast”</p>	 <p>The city is strategically located close to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the “Cinque Terre”</p>
Port Area	 <p>It was a military port during the World Wars and after this period it was turned into a commercial port</p>	 <p>It was a historic military port and in the contemporary age it was turned into a commercial port</p>
Education and University	 <p>On the coastline a project has been planned for the development of a new university complex</p>	 <p>In 2002 the new Nautical Centre of the city was completed, a unique specialized centre for nautical engineering and marine design</p>

4.2. The Regeneration of the Waterfront in La Spezia

The regeneration strategy of the port area of La Spezia, promoted by the municipality, focuses on two aspects: the rationalization of spaces and infrastructures and the redesign of marginal spaces between the city centre and the port (see Table 5).

The waterfront project of La Spezia, covering an area of 15 hectares, is a relevant intervention that will change the image of the city. It involves an area of 330,000 square metres of which 40,000 will be reserved for green areas and it is planned to build a new marina, two hotels, a convention centre and

the new cruise terminal. The nautical district Mirabello is located in the centre of the city and is destined to become a marina for small and medium-size boats. The project involves different sectors of nautical activities, big and small shipbuilding and sports activities. Boating facilities provide approximately 380 berths for boats of medium and large size and over 1,000 places for smaller boats. Green spaces are planned to be expanded and new pedestrian routes will be created in order to connect the historic centre with the waterfront through a green walk. The photovoltaic docks used in the project are an example for the reduction of CO₂ emissions while at the same time serving to clear the area of acoustic pollution and to save energy to recharge the boats anchored in the port.

Table 5. Objectives of the La Spezia regeneration project.

Present Situation	La Spezia Objectives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil remediation and green berths • New functionalization • Reintegration of the seafront with the city and reorganization of the road system • Redesign of the coastline aiming to improve the quality of spaces and to make of this place a scenario of great impact and suggestion

The process of recovery and redevelopment of disused areas aims to promote new industrial, commercial and residential projects that should improve the potential of the region. The overall project aims to redevelop the eastern areas of the city, mainly occupied by outdoor storage, introducing services and production activities connected with the nautical sector.

The project aims to make La Spezia a centre of excellence for shipbuilding and yachting, exploiting the presence of international companies that imported their know-how into this territory over the last ten years (Ferretti-Baglietto, Cayman). The naval sector relies on a local network of small and medium enterprises with a high level of technological know-how in the fields of construction, installation and repair of both military and merchant ships.

A culture-led regeneration process has been promoted thanks to the presence of a unique university centre highly specialized in marine engineering and design. This culture-based strategy created in recent years a connection between the education and employment needs of companies. Private investments and scientific research created the conditions for the redevelopment of the city. It is an ongoing process of transfer of skills from the military to the civilian sector, with excellent financial results for the territory.

La Spezia is an example of how a green economy and culture-led economic strategies can be realized in port cities in order to enhance their economic attractiveness. Shipyards and the overall nautical sector are the most significant economic fields of activities in the city of Torre Annunziata. For this reason the La Spezia project represents “good practice” of urban renewal, taking into consideration a new image of the waterfront of Torre Annunziata. The proposal of new functions and a new identity for the waterfront area, based on “green” and cultural strategies, is processed in the next section.

5. Towards a New Port Area Image for Torre Annunziata

5.1. Structure of the Interview and Choice of the Stakeholders

Visual features can influence the economic attractiveness of places. This paper aims to identify a “bridge” between the physical/visual quality of port areas and their economic attractiveness. Multi-criteria evaluation methods have been chosen as proper tools to assess how perceived visual features can influence urban economy and attractiveness.

The stage of cognitive analysis and comparison of the case study with a good practice of sustainable urban renewal led to the choice of five strategic aspects that influence the attractiveness of waterfronts: architecture and urban design; cultural and relational aspects; energy and environment; economic activities; transports and services.

To assess the perception of residents and stakeholders about the visual features that characterize the attractiveness of the district [7], a total of 48 semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted.

The interviewees were representatives of all social subjects and associations in the city: residents, retailers, professionals, urban planners, entrepreneurs, public officials and policymakers. They were asked to rate the present visual features of each aspect through pictures and specific questions and then arrange the five aspects in a priority list.

The choice of priorities is a fundamental step [18] to assess which should be the most significant goals for funding and public policies in order to attract private investors and secure a guaranteed minimum return of property income to developers.

The interview concludes with the strategic choice of five proposed “visions” for the waterfront of Torre Annunziata 2050, each one connected to one of the analyzed aspects of the district.

5.2. Analysed Aspects

5.2.1. Architecture and Urban Design

This aspect refers to the visual features of the urban waterfront. Public spaces are areas in which everybody can walk, stay, relax, go shopping, go cycling and meet. They should be safe, clean and well lit. They should give identity to the place. The waterfront is the part of the city that is directly connected with the sea. It should include facilities and services. It should be vital and beautiful and give the city a sense of freedom.

5.2.2. Cultural and Relational Environment

This aspect refers to the cultural life of the district. Festivals, celebrations and other cultural events represent an opportunity for citizens to share feelings, traditions and all kinds of activity with other people living or visiting the district. A cultural district should offer different facilities in order to allow people to enjoy concerts, go out for sports and gather for traditional celebrations. People should feel safe walking around the district and trust other visitors. Associations should cooperate with institutions and residents to build trust and participation.

5.2.3. Energy and Environment

This aspect refers to the use of renewable energies and to clean air, water and soil. An attractive district should take care of the environment and avoid pollution, separate wastes and using renewable energies, recycle materials and water. Buildings should be energy-efficient and urban greenery should create a comfortable microclimate.

5.2.4. Economic Activities

This aspect refers to the vitality of tourism, trade and the entrepreneurial climate. A vital district should revalue traditional productions and create the opportunities to develop them towards innovation and creativity. Shipbuilding could attract investors and create employment. The district should offer a lot of shops and markets with a large variety of goods. Welcome and tourist activities should be well organized and people who come to the port should find all the goods they need, fresh foods and all information about the territory.

5.2.5. Transports and Services

This aspect refers to transport and accessibility of the district and to the services offered to citizens (See Table 6).

An accessible district should be reached and visited through private and public transport; it should offer an efficient, green and inexpensive public transport system (buses, trams, trains, boats, car sharing) and a network of bike/pedestrian routes.

Health, education and administrative services and offices should be easily reached through public transport and pedestrian/bike routes; their public buildings should be clean and well kept.

Table 6. Priority list table.

Analysed Aspects	Priority from 1 (max. priority) to 5 (min. priority)	Priority—Components Please choose one component for each analysed aspect	Suggestions, Drawings, Ideas
Architecture and Urban Design		Identity/public spaces	
		Urban design	
		Pedestrian	
		Green areas	
Cultural and Relational Environment		Waterfront	
		Enjoyment and cultural events	
		Sports facilities	
		Enjoyment and cultural facilities	
Energy and Environment		Perception about safety	
		Social cohesion	
		Renewable energies	
		Pollution	
		Buldings energy efficiency	
		Waste recycling	

Table 6. Cont.

Analysed Aspects	Priority from 1 (max. priority) to 5 (min. priority)	Priority—Components Please choose one component for each analysed aspect	Suggestions, Drawings, Ideas
Economic Activities		Traditional/innovative productions Vitality of trade climate Vitality of entrepreneurial climate Welcome and tourism Wellness and SPA Vitality of waterfront activities	
Transports and Services		Health and education Administrative services University and apprenticeship Transports Big infrastructures (port)	

5.3. Priority List

In the first step of the interview, stakeholders were asked to rate the performances of the district through analysis of the above aspects. Specific questions relating to significant pictures of the district were proposed to interviewees for each aspect. A Likert scale from 1 to 5 was chosen for the evaluation of performances (1. Very bad; 2. Poor; 3. Sufficient; 4. Good; 5. Excellent). After this step, a priority list table was proposed to the interviewees to prioritize the fields of interventions for a future urban development strategy.

5.4. Urban Images of Torre Annunziata 2050

Five “urban images 2050” were proposed to the stakeholders to improve the city’s attractiveness. The images, or “visions”, of the city were processed considering the urban trends in European city development [19] and the five factors of attractiveness of waterfront regeneration.

5.4.1. City of Identity (Architecture and Urban Design)

The image refers to a city that valorizes its material and immaterial cultural heritage, connecting the waterfront area with a renovated historic centre and connecting the archaeological site of Oplontis to the port and the waterfront, making streets and public spaces clean and safe and promoting their image in the touristic circuits.

Special transport systems are improved connecting the Roman remains with other internationally well-known archaeological sites such as Pompei, Ercolano and the Vesuvian Villas nearby to the city. Traditional products, such as “pasta”, are also internationally promoted through festivals and special events combining them with local wines from Vesuvius and other gastronomic specialties. The waterfront is connected to the city and offers a lot of entertainment on the characteristic black volcanic sand of the beaches.

5.4.2. Creative and Cultural City (Cultural and Relational Aspect)

This image refers to a city where the waterfront district offers a lot of cultural activities and facilities (concert hall, cinema, exhibition areas, *etc.*) and traditional events are enhanced.

New water sport facilities will be built on the waterfront and there will be lots of public places and green areas with sports facilities. Streets and squares are well kept and well lit, a lot of different entertainments are located near the port and the whole area is perceived as vital during both night and day. The waterfront is the place where people meet at any time; it offers spaces to study and work and is attractive thanks to its creative atmosphere.

5.4.3. Liveable City (Energy and Environment)

This image refers to a clean, safe and green city, where the beautiful landscape and the investments in the green economy attract workers and residents.

People living in the city can go everywhere on foot or by using the new bike paths. Students and young people can choose between several entertainments and a lot of green areas to go to for sports or just to relax. Waste and water are recycled and the streets are always clean; public and private buildings use renewable energy sources, including all the new buildings on the waterfront. Historic buildings are restored, improving their energy efficiency and opening them up as public spaces.

5.4.4. Entrepreneurial City (Economic Activities)

The image of an entrepreneurial city is connected to a vital entrepreneurial climate, a city that produces innovation and gains access to the markets outside Europe thanks to its high-quality products (e.g., shipbuilding) and the high professionalism of workers and managers.

An entrepreneurial city gives young people the opportunity to enter the global market thanks to its commercial and touristic port. It offers a lot of services for young entrepreneurs who want to realize their projects and offers a high level of education in the fields of economics, engineering and marine design. This is a city where the local institutions offer a low level of bureaucracy, gain access to several funding initiatives, and keep a legal and democratic entrepreneurial climate where everyone has the same opportunities to realize their projects.

5.4.5. Connected City (Transports and Services)

The image of a connected city refers to the development of advanced transportation infrastructures, starting from the existing port and railways and developing smart logistic systems and accessible communication systems through which the city becomes the main trade hub of the whole territory. The city can develop as a node of commercial transfers, capturing the flows of trading goods in the Mediterranean Sea, and connecting them with Europe through fast railways.

This is a city where the administrative services are efficient and well located and the pedestrian/bike access to the many offices is improved. Innovative information technologies are developed in order to make the administrative interactions easy and fast. This image refers to the innovation in all the administrative services and the city is a model of these types of services for other cities in the territory.

6. Results and Recommendations

In fragile property markets, of which urban regeneration is an example, the private sector is cautious about investing, particularly where the levels of income and capital growth are perceived to be limited. Whilst the planning process has often been used to prevent or curtail peripheral urban expansion, more positive policies are required if the risk factors of developing in urban regeneration locations are to be overcome. Traditionally such areas have been considered by the private sector as zones of risk and uncertainty. Urban regeneration needs to demonstrate a positive return on private sector investment and through the use of public resources pump-prime much larger sums of investment [20].

The proposed method is a tool for assessing and developing appropriate policies for cities and regions, involving residents and various stakeholders.

Decision-makers (e.g., responsible representatives, politicians, stakeholders and other actors) are the target of the research. They can influence the constellation of socio-economic characteristics of cities, making them competitive and resilient [13].

The first results show that the attractiveness of the waterfront of Torre Annunziata is strictly connected to the economic performances and environmental features of the district (see Figure 4).

The choice of the most desired “Urban image of Torre Annunziata 2050” shows a predominance of the “Liveable city”, again related to energy efficiency and environmental aspects (see Figure 5). The enhancement of environmental features in port areas has been the core of urban policies in La Spezia, and this paper confirms that stakeholders in Torre Annunziata consider environmental remediation as fundamental to making the waterfront attractive.

Figure 4. Priority list.

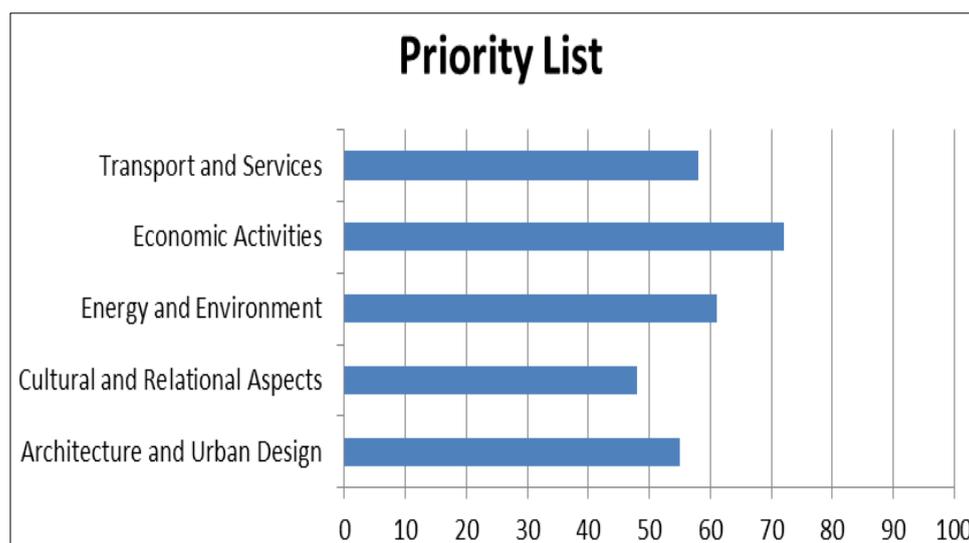
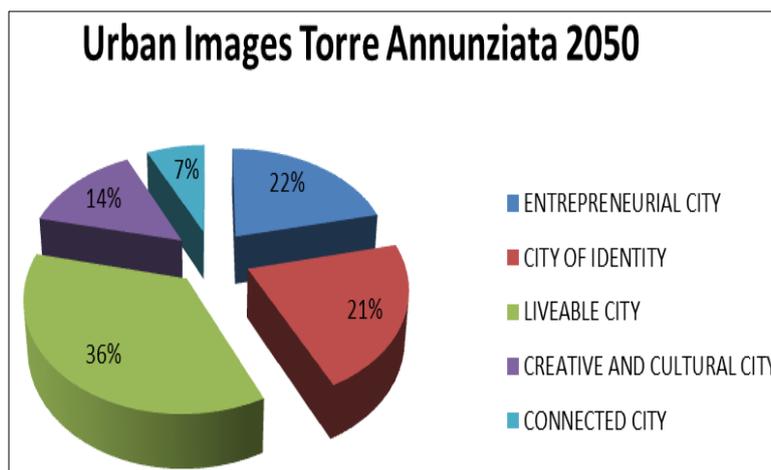


Figure 5. Urban images of Torre Annunziata 2050.

Therefore, contaminated land is a high-risk factor in terms of liability to developers and short-term financiers [21]. Its remediation is critical to the reuse of brownfield sites and the leverage of investment into urban regeneration locations. Thus, effective strategies for the urban regeneration of post-industrial districts of port cities are essential to the long-term redevelopment of depressed, derelict or otherwise disadvantaged urban places.

Specific questions about the role of public spaces and cultural heritage in the attractiveness of the district show the awareness of residents and other stakeholders of the importance of a regeneration process based on the improvement and preservation of the identity of the city. “Economists have argued that individuals choose locations that maximize their economic position and broad utility. Sociologists have found that social networks and social interactions shape our satisfaction with our communities. Research, across various social science fields, finds that beauty has a significant effect on various economic and social outcomes.” The perceived aesthetic beauty of places has a significant influence on the localization choices of various economic and social actors. It is “one of the most significant factors alongside economic security, good schools, and the perceived capacity for social interaction” [22].

A dynamic and vital entrepreneurial climate is fundamental as well as an urban environment that valorizes the design of public places. The connection of the seaside with the city centre and the archaeological remains should be a significant aspect of a future project of waterfront regeneration.

Another interesting finding was the willingness of stakeholders to become involved in tourism and cultural activities. This is strongly connected to the need for new jobs inside the city, shown by the negative demographic trends of the last decade and in the choice of the “economic” aspect in first place on the priority list. Improvement of tourism activities and a regeneration project based on quality architecture [23], energy-efficient building and the connection of the waterfront area with the touristic routes can be the guidelines for immediate actions and long-term strategies for the city.

7. Conclusions

The results of this paper emphasize the role that a “green” and “cultural” economy could play in the regeneration processes of port cities in Southern Italy.

“Vital cities have marvelous innate abilities for understanding, communicating, contriving, and inventing what is required to combat their difficulties (...). Lively, diverse, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration, with energy enough to carry over for problems and needs outside themselves” [24]. This paper shows that port cities in Southern Italy potentially have the necessary vitality to overcome their present economic and environmental difficulties.

Changes in the economic attractiveness of waterfronts depend closely on the perceived visual quality of these districts. Projects for these cities should improve the conditions of port and seaside areas encouraging the enhancement of urban design of public spaces. The paper shows that visual features play an important role in the perceived attractiveness of waterfront areas: they can influence investment risks as well as perceived quality of life.

Multi-criteria evaluation procedures occupy a fundamental place in this research; they are essential tools to find optimal solutions that make urban waterfronts more attractive, considering that “optimality is an essentially multi-criteria concept” [25]. The richness of values in port areas allows multiple interpretations by different actors and users. Thus, prediction and comparison become very complex [1,26].

Evaluation methods should be opened to participatory procedures [13,14]. The value of the proposed method remains in the ability to involve all categories of residents: associations, administrators, professionals, retailers and policy makers. Urban research can help to make urban choices more transparent [27]. The aim is to lead citizens to an active participation in the strategic choices of their hometown, allowing them to be part of the planning processes in their own districts, collecting their ideas, feelings and wishes. This allows a “conceptual map” to be elaborated which expresses the expectations of the community and the desired “vision” for the waterfront and the entire city to be finally fulfilled.

The analysis of stakeholders’ perceptions emphasizes the importance of cultural heritage as a key factor of urban identity and social cohesion. A proper balance between the transformation of disused areas and the preservation of cultural heritage is needed in order to improve the economic vitality while preserving the traditional structure and identity of the city. Thus, long-term strategies for the redevelopment of port cities should be based on the principle of “resilience”. Cities in Southern Italy will be “resilient” if they are both creative and sustainable from the ecological and economic point of view, guided by strategies of reuse and energy efficiency [28].

In conclusion, the results of this paper suggest, more generally, that the wise combination of a “green” economy and a “knowledge-led” economy could be the answer to the crisis of southern port cities in Italy [14], where the preservation of the landscape and the enormous cultural heritage require innovative approaches based on the circularization of economic, social, cultural and environmental processes [15].

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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