

THE STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS OF THE DECLARATION PROTECTED AREAS POLICY OF CANARY ISLANDS: THE CHANGE OF PARADIGM FROM THE TERRITORIAL PERSPECTIVE

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I. INTRODUCCIÓN

The declaration of protected areas has turned in one of the public policies of best experimentation and territorial transcendence. Your rapid and significant spatial diffusion denotes it, with the consequent impact on the territorial organization and land planning. Nevertheless, your current conception and territorial materialization demands a consideration removed from the stereotypes, approaches and arguments of exclusively naturalistic nature and isolationist. Your implementation must be in coherence by the territorial sense of the Geography, the sustainability, the land management and the reinnovating philosophy raised from diverse international and national initiatives.

In this work we present a few general propositions that induce to a systematic approximation of the conceptual components and structural guidelines of this territorial environmental protection policy in the frame of a reinnovating philosophy and of a change of paradigm. For this one has proceeded to remove your basic elements, which conjunction creates the current concept, territorial structure and form implementation. In this work we defend that the declaration of protected areas strategy has turned in one of the territorial policy of major importance from the environmental subject matter. In order to contribute something of empirical content —not speculative— and to provide with a dimension applied to the different general terms of reference, this work is based on the paradigmatic evidence of the current declaration of protected areas policy of Canary Island (Spain), that presents a territorial protectionist structure formed by 146 areas that occupy 309.755,9 hectares, which supposes 41,2 % of the total extension.

II. THE BASIC COMPONENTS AND THE STRUCTURAL GUIDELINES OF THE DECLARATION PROTECTED AREAS POLICY

The first proposition.- The declaration of areas protected as one of the spatial materializations of the environmental dimension of the land planning

The protected areas constitute one of the formal and tangible expressions of the spatial and concrete materialization of the territorial environmental protection policy, to making explicit your territorial sense. From this perspective, they prove structural and basic parts of the environmental dimension of the land planning. This one is projected from the predominance of the determinations, aims and criteria of environmental character on those of economic and urban planning, that the same ones still have them subordinates and subordinated. In conclusion, the declaration of an area like «protected» constitutes a public function, and, therefore, an ideology, a will, a practice and a public administrations competition.

Second proposition.- The formal declaration of an area like «protected» needs of an administrative and legal act that, in turn, implies the institutionalization, individualization and the submission to a proper juridical statute

The declaration of protected areas policy needs the grant of a juridical regime —declaration like «protected»— to a set of territorial units —the «areas»—, which remain individualized in your territorial context. This way, the current conceptual, instrumental and territorial configuration of the declaration of protected areas policy of Canary Islands is the result of a temporary and accumulative path of juridical procedure raised from diverse spatial scales. Consequently, this territorial policy is a consequence of an institutionalization administrative process of the territory, in the measurement in which it constitutes a public decision system that works like set articulated in decisions, aims, procedure and performances lines and precise actions in this matter. The result is the spatial individualization with to the territorial context of a homogeneous units sets for your treatment and prior use.

Third proposition.- The protected areas are the result of a technician technology-policy resolution

The previous proposition turns to the declaration of areas protected policy in a mechanism that grants an own identity to this type of territorial units. This conception carries the comprehension of the areas protected as the result of a political and technical decision, proving, therefore, intellectual constructions and artificial elements. Consequently, this type of environmental protection of the territory policy is not exempt from the risk inherent in any public decision related to the decisive influence of «personal caprices », modes and interests derived from the political priorities, persons' pressures or social organizations, as well as from the trade-union ideologies.

Fourth proposition.- The protected areas constitute the spatial expression of the territorial carrying capacity

The protected areas constitute a tangible, concrete and territorial expression of the convergence the consideration the fragility or vulnerability of the environmental quality of your geographical contents and to the potential or aptitude to receive a use and economic utilization. The concurrence and integration in conformity of both elements allows to group to the areas protected according to carrying capacity to receive to a certain activity or action makes concrete. Depending on the similarities and regularities as for the carrying capacity, these they gather in crowds in «protected area management categories», shaping a homogeneous set, like coherent, complex and multifunctional everything. Each one implies, therefore, an indicator of the severity maximum level that they can support without there produces to itself a significant damage of the environmental quality to the protected areas that they include. This one ensues from the analysis and discrimination in qualitative terms of the probability from that appear such not wished consequences and adverse, with the consequent difficulty to expire with the concrete territorial management aims assigned to the same ones.

The concepts and juridical definitions to the eight management categories of the net protected areas net of the Canary Islands establish differences as for the environmental protection objects and management objective, answering to an internal hierarchy continuing a dependence degree defined according to this proposition: whereas the Natural Integral Reserves are not suitable and the Natural Special Reserves do it in a determined, exceptional and punctual way spatially, the rest of figures are capable of receiving it, coming, even, it is necessary to be conceived expressly for it happens with the Rural Parks and the Protected Landscapes, for those that, even, it recognizes formally such a vocation in your legal definition; likewise, whereas a few management categories are not ideal for a concrete plan, program, project or activity, other one receive adequately without damage of the environmental quality. This diversity as for the protected area carrying capacity is the one that grants a heterogeneity degree to the territorial structure composition resultant of the application to this type of territorial environmental protection policy.

Fifth proposition.- The purpose of the declaration of protected areas policy is the reduction of the deterioration or destruction risk of the territorial environmental quality

The purpose of the declaration of protected areas policy is achieves the indefinite perpetuation of the environmental quality integrity of the geographical contents. It is a strategy directed to avoiding the destruction, or at least, to reducing to «acceptably» the deterioration of the quality, merit or excellence degree of the elements constituent of the same ones, as well as the processes that relate them, facilitating, even, your improvement and increase for restoration and recovery actions. For it, besides the commented consideration of eight management categories, raised in two types of reduction strategies of the situation risk the environmental quality destruction, that we have named like «prevention» and «mitigation», the current the declaration of protected areas policy of Canary Islands has incorporated

two basic elements: the delimiting of Protection Peripheral Zones and the designation of Ecological Sensibility Areas by virtue of the Law 11/1990, of 13th July, the Ecological Impact Prevention.

Sixth proposition.- « The protected areas are not naturals»: the declaration of protected areas supposes the environmental protection of a high diversity of geographical contents that do not limit themselves only to those of natural areas

The understanding of the areas protected as constructions created «socially» induces to think that «they are not naturals». This way, the current the declaration of protected areas policy of Canary Islands does not limit himself only to the safeguard and improvement of the environmental quality of the physicist-naturals factors and processes, but also considers the economic, social and cultural characteristics, conditions, requirements and perspectives. The result is the configuration of a heterogeneous mosaic in which every management category receives to a concrete type of sizes and abundance to territorial units protection in the relation with the diversity of geographical contents and the complexity of your spatial relations.

Seventh proposition.- The declaration of protected areas does not constitute a defensive strategy; on the contrary but, it's a mechanism to assignment of new territorial functions from the environmental perspective

The declaration of protected areas policy is an operative and instrumental mechanism to granting a new territorial functionality so much to those differentiated, exempt and isolated territorial —volcanic cones and lava flows, vegetable communities, etc.— or with geographical areas that gravitate to the qualification like «rural», especially, those that have lost your relative importance and functionality in the territorial schemes to the economic agrarian traditional model or that they were considered to be like «marginal». In this respect, there has been refuted the conventional and widespread thought that the protected areas constitute «marginal» or «peripheral» areas in the current territorial development models or defensive spatial strategies; on the contrary, this territorial policy is a strategies to assignment of new functions from the environmental perspective. In agreement with the eloquent mottoes of « Parks for the Development « and « Parks for the life « to the Third Congresses and Fourth World of Parks of the UICN celebrated in Bali (1982) and Caracas (1992), respectively, this perspective adds an instrumental utilitarian, and even, «mercantilist» dimension to the intrinsic value of the protected areas, in the measurement in which they satisfy needs relative to the public use, the activities and traditional practices, environmental services, etc.

Eighth proposition.- The areas protected as stable and structural elements of the territorial organization

In an analogous way to other structures and territorial systems like the cities or the transport and communications nets, the sets of protected areas have acquired a high significance, transcendence and importance as key, solid and stable pieces of territorial organization. They are formed not only as a concrete type of formal organization space, but

also as joint element of the physical schemes and the functional logic of the geographical spaces where they are inserted. In this respect, this proposition remains demonstrated in case of Canary Islands, where the protected surface percentage overcomes 50% and 40% of the total extension in one and three of seven islands, respectively.

Ninth proposition.- «From disconnected areas to systems»: The integration of the areas protected in your territorial context

The current form to territorial implementation of the declaration of protected areas policy of Canary Islands is characterized by a systems conception. The idea is to guarantee the joint of the territorial system in which the protected areas are inserted and, therefore, the synergies derived from the interactions with what it happens out of your limits. For it, the protected areas appear like «system» from a double geographical scale, that of the own set and the territorial context in the one that is inserted. The result is that the current scheme of protected territorial organization of the of Canary Islands is based on a new paradigm that places in a much more general process on the basis to the «coherence of the territory» concept, that coincides with the «ecological coherence» global needed by the Habitats Directive, and, therefore, with the configuration of a territorial units set directed the achievement of the necessary physical and functional-instrumental connection from a double perspective. The first one refers to the «administrative coordination» and, therefore, senseless spatially (Múgica et al., 2002; De Lucio et al., 2003). The second one is a territorial perspective, which supposes an approximation to the «system» conception in detriment to that of «net». The idea is the protected areas not only they shape for very unequal nature elements, with a functioning unitary and integrated for functional connections, but also they constitute dynamical constructions of different types units with certainly seemed, that are joined for physical relations or flows so much between them and the territorial context where they are inserted (Gonzalez Bernáldez, 1989).

Tenth proposition.- The declaration of protected areas policy is a strategic mechanism of territorial arrangement

The protected areas are an object of territorial planning, with the consequent uses and activities regulation. In case of the Canary Island policy, this aptitude does not limit itself to the protected areas, but also it spreads out of your borders, affecting on the land planning of the insular spaces.

As for the territorial planning out of the protected areas, this one makes concrete in the mentioned operations of delimiting of Protection Peripheral Zones, the designation of Socioeconomic Influence Zones, as well as the integration of your plans in the integral territorial planning system in the Law 9/1999, of Land management of Canary Islands. Your existence supposes an implicit recognition of the idea of that « what happens out of the protected areas affects what happens inside the same ones », as well as the overcoming of the premise of concentrating the environmental protection in territorial concrete units, in favour of the insertion of the planning and management of the parts of the territorial system that contains them in the requirements of the set of the same one. It is a question of an implicit

recognition of the fact that «what happens out of the protected areas affects what happens inside the same ones», as well as the overcoming the proposition to concentrating the environmental protection in protected territorial units, for the insertion to the planning and management of the territorial system parts in your environmental protection requirements.

The territorial management of the protected areas is achieved for means of the elaboration, processing and legal approval the territorial planning instruments

III. CONCLUSION

In this work we have tried to offer a review of some of the reinnovating contributions of the declaration of protected areas policy raised from the Canary Islands doctrine. This one isolationist has been liberated from the subordination to the isolationist, restrictive and naturalistic dimension, in the measurement in which one has left the pure theory and, therefore, your virtuality, circumstance that has made possible that it acquires all your fullness and maturity. This way, your current understanding and territorial implementation supposes your consolidation as one of the functions of the public action with major impact in the islands. Hereby, this type of territorial environmental protection policy is adapted at the rate of paradigm proposed by Phillips (2003), which answers to the advances of the scientific knowledge and the acquired experience.

In relation with this question, we think that the protected areas are not simple and static elements of territorial organization, but, on the contrary, they are complex and strategic structures immersed in territorial counterfoils. Hereby, the protected areas cannot be qualified, in any case, as territorial units of «marginal» or «peripheral» position in the current schemes of territorial organization. In this regard, the current declaration of protected areas policy of Canary Islands is projected from the government of every insular area, in the measurement in which these are conceived as the quite continuous one, like system shaped for elements interrelated with different carrying capacity to receive economic uses and activities. In the same sense, the protected areas constitute territorial planning instruments, which does that they should be fully integrated to the frame of the political public ones that affect or reverberate in the territory; in this regard, it is a question of inserting to the areas protected so much in the processes of Land Planning as in the process of capture of strategic decisions on the part of the political- administrative organs from the proposition to eliminating the dichotomy between the protected one and not protected.

Definitively, the raised argumentations constitute the arguments to consider more suitable the term of «protected area», which, with an evident geographical connotation, assimilates the expression of current use international scale, instead of «natural protected space», of habitual use in Spain. This change of denomination encloses a change in the understanding as public policy with territorial effect.