

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Agnew, J. A. (1987), *Place and politics: the geographical mediation of state and society*, Boston, Allen & Unwin.
- Barnes, T. (2005), *Culture: Economy*, in P. Cloke and R. Johnston (eds), *Spaces of geographical thought*, London, Thousand Oaks; New Delhi, Sage Publications.
- Berry, B.J.L. (1964), *Approaches to regional analysis: A synthesis*, *Annals of the American Association of American Geographers*, 54 (1): 2-11.
- Chironi, G.; Crescimanno, M. and Gino, M.T. (1989), *Le interazioni tra settori economici in aree marginali*, Rome, CNR-IPRA.
- Cloke, P. and Johnston, R. (eds) (2005), *Spaces of geographical thought*, London, Thousand Oaks; New Delhi, Sage Publications.
- Cosgrove, D.E. (1984), *Social formation and symbolic landscape: with a new introduction*, Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Craik, J. (1997), *The culture of tourism*, in C. Rojek and J. Urry (eds), *Touring cultures: transformations of travel and theory*, 114-136, London, Routledge.
- Cresswell, T. (1996), *In place/out of place: geography, ideology and transgression*, London, University of Minnesota Press.
- Cusimano, G.; Giannone, M. and Ruggieri, G. (2007), *Il sistema turistico delle Madonie tra micro ricettività e cultura dell'ospitalità*, Milan, FrancoAngeli.
- Di Carlo, P. and Moretti, L. (eds) (2004), *Nuove politiche per il mondo agricolo: multifunzionalità e sviluppo integrato del territorio*, Bologna, Pàtron.
- Dinan, D. (2004), *Europe recast: A history of European Union*, Boulder and London, Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Entrikin, J. N. (1991), *The betweenness of place: Towards a geography of modernity*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins.
- Fenneman, N. M. (1919). *The circumference of geography*, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, IX: 3-11.
- Fraiese, A. (2006), *Il recupero delle tecnologie tradizionali: un patrimonio di conoscenze per la gestione sostenibile del territorio*, in G. Quaranta and R. Salvia (eds), *Riqualificazione e gestione del territorio, lotta alla desertificazione e sviluppo sostenibile*, 180-190, Milan, FrancoAngeli.
- Freeman, T. W. (1986), *The unity of geography: introduction*, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, 11 (4): 441-442.
- Fucci, G. (2006), *Il turismo culturale come fattore di sviluppo per il riequilibrio del territorio*, in G. Quaranta and R. Salvia (eds), *Riqualificazione e gestione del territorio, lotta alla desertificazione e sviluppo sostenibile*, 173-179, Milan, FrancoAngeli.
- Fuschi, M. (ed.) (2008), *Il Mediterraneo. Geografia della complessità*, Milan, FrancoAngeli.
- Gober, P. and Brunn, S. D. (2004), *Introducing voices in the AAG's second century*, *The Professional Geographer*, 56 (1): 1.
- Goudie, A. S. (1986), *The integration of human and physical geography*, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, 11(4): 454-458.
- Graham, E. (1986), *The unity of geography: a comment*, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, 11 (4): 464-467.
- Gregory, D. (2000), *Regions and regional geography*, *Dictionary of Human Geography*, London, Blackwell Publishing: 687-689.
- Gregson, N. (1995), *And now it's all consumption?*, *Progress in Human Geography*, 19: 135-141.
- Harrison, S.; Massey, D.; Richards, K.; Magilligan, F.J.; Thrift, N. and Bender, B. (2004), *Thinking across the divide: perspectives on the conversations between physical and human geography*, *Area*, 36 (4): 435-442.
- Hart, J.F. (1982), *Presidential address: The highest form of the geographer's art*, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 72 (1): 1-29.

- Hoekstra, J. (2005), *Delivering scientific progress*, College of Liberal Arts, Minneapolis, Regents of the University of Minnesota.
- ISTAT (2009), *Popolazione residente al 1 Gennaio 2008 per età, sesso e stato civile*. Available from: [www.demo.istat.it](http://www.demo.istat.it)
- Johnston, R. J. (1986), *Four fixations and the quest for unity in geography*, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, 11 (4): 449-453.
- Latour, B. (1999), *Circulating reference: sampling the soil in the Amazon Rainforest*, *Pandora's Hope: essays on the realities of science studies*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press: 24-79.
- Lozato-Giotart, J.P. (2006), *Finalità turistica e finalità territoriale o la difficile coesistenza della tradizione e della modernità*, in G. Cusimano (ed.), *Luoghi e Turismo Culturale*, 13-25, Bologna, Pàtron.
- Marks, K. (2007), *Australia's epic drought: the situation is grim*, *The Independent*, April 20.
- Marsh, G.P. (1867), *Man and nature; or, physical geography as modified by human action*, New York, Charles Scribner & Co.
- McConnell, B.E. and Maniscalco, L. (2003), *The Sanctuary of the Divine Palikoi (Rocchicella di Mineo, Sicily). Fieldwork from 1995 to 2001*, *American Journal of Archaeology*, CVII (2): 145-180.
- Puleo, T. (2007), *An integrating model for geography: Michel Serres as the Clinamen?*, *Pacifica, Monmouth-OR, The Association of Pacific Coast Geographers*, Spring: 12-14 and 17.
- Reynolds, M.J. (2009) [1914], *How man conquered Nature*, Charleston-SC, BiblioLife.
- Serres, M. and Latour, B. (1995), *Conversations on science, culture, and time*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press.
- Taylor, P. (1986), *Locating the question of unity*, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, 11 (4): 449-453.
- Terrana, M. (2009), *Le politiche dell'Unione Europea per la valorizzazione del paesaggio in Sicilia*, *Ambiente Società Territorio*, 54 (5): 14-18.
- Verga, G. (2003) [1880], *Life in the country*, London, Hesperus Press.
- Wilkinson, D. M. (2006), *Fundamental processes in ecology: an earth systems approach*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Yu, P.Y. and Cardona, M. (2005), *Fundamentals of semiconductors: physics, materials properties*, Berlin, Heidelberg; New York, Springer.
- Zimbone, C. (1959), *La favola di Villadoro*, Torino, SEI.

**THE SICILIAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND THE TOURISM LINKED TO RURAL AREAS:  
THE CASE OF A POD PRODUCT**

**Gianni Petino**

*Dipartimento di Sociologia e Metodi delle Scienze Sociali - Facoltà di Scienze Politiche  
Università degli Studi di Catania, Catania, Italy  
e-mail: petinog@unict.it*

**Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to point out how the implementation of local governance instruments within a specific area is not often supported by the presence of provided development tools that should consider not only the economic effects but also the landscape related aspects.

This lack reveals itself as an obstacle to the development of rural areas, whose landscapes could easily attract touristic flows. In particular, we chose to investigate the case of a POD product, "Pistacchio verde di Bronte"<sup>1</sup>, for its unique landscape characteristics, such as the social results, etc.

In detail to the governance instruments, we have done an analysis of both the statutory forms and their application through the projects accomplished on the territory. This would help to check their support capacity and their efficacy in order to protect the landscape and the related local identity.

We also reconstructed the infrastructural characteristics performances, before it became a POD product but also during the transitory and the subsequent phases, then trying to point up the POD's attraction capacity which could interest everyone who is identifying himself in those strong and, after getting the POD, protected processes, in spite of not being directly involved in the economic development.

We will also try to highlight how the landscape changes because of the erosive action of time, due to the soil competitive uses or the competition between this and other cultures on the same territory.

The Sicilian territory, mainly in its inner areas, will probably maintain, in the long term, its agriculture vocation, in integrated form with other land function like tourism. This particular strong territorial characterization works like a call for the citizens coming from the most important urban areas, in terms of dimensions and functions. The area of our analysis is the South-Western Etna district<sup>2</sup>. The object of our investigation is to offer a short time-line of the culture of the POD "Pistacchio verde di Bronte". In particular we will try to get a focus on the landscape element<sup>3</sup>, in its relation with tourism and as part of the agriculture multi-functionality. Our choice is due to the high specificity of this culture, which was already considered a special Sicilian culture, even from the economic point of view. This investigation will be supported by the analysis of some integration tools, such as sustainable vectors for the mobility of tourists, local population and commodities and the relationships between the same area and the bordering ones.

**Key words:** Agriculture, Tourism, History, Local traditions

<sup>1</sup> The 'Pistacchio Verde di Bronte' PDO is designed with the publication of the Official Journal of the European Union (2009/C 130/09) in which is indicated the production area.

<sup>2</sup> The agricultural district gets its legal form with the appellations "rural" and "agrifood and quality" districts since its institutionalization with the D.lgs 228/2001 "Orientamento e modernizzazione del settore agricolo" and the Law n.57/2001.

<sup>3</sup> Agricultural landscape is described as "the shape man consciously and sistematically gives to natural landscape through his agricultural activities" (Sereni, 1961). "From a perceptive and visual point of view, landscape is the outside environment (natural and urbanized) as everyone can directly perceive visiting or using it. Therefore landscape is the environment visual aspect" (Hull, Revell, 1989) (Tempesta, Visintin, Rizzi, Marangon, 2003). This formulation has been acknowledged by the European Landscape Convention: "Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors".

### AN HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF PISTACHIO

The plant of Pistachio (*Pistacia Vera*) was brought in Italy by the governor of Syria, Lucio Vitellio, between 20 and 30 b.C., following the Roman customs to bring away all the exotic plants found in distant places; only after the Byzantines were chased away from the Arabs, between XII and XIII century, there was a real spreading of the culture. Approximately after six centuries, between XVIII and XIX century, the culture became economically relevant in the provinces of Agrigento and Catania<sup>4</sup>, regarding the number of plants and amount of product. Other species of the Anacardiaceae, genus *Pistacia*, *Pistacia Lentiscus* L.1753 and *Terebintus* L.1753 for example, to which Pistachio (*Pistacia Vera*) belongs, are present in the whole Mediterranean area in the form of "*Macchia mediterranea*", both in high and low maquis, bushy more than tree-like, along the coastal areas and in low hill areas, *Pistacia Vera* is often grafted on those species.

Through sources such as the "Riveli del Regno di Sicilia" (1747) and the provisional land register of the "Regno delle Due Sicilie" (1833-1853) and in spite of the limitation of those survey methods<sup>5</sup>, we get some information about the landed outline, as other scholars pointed out, in which the Pistachio culture appears around the first half of the XIX century<sup>6</sup>.

According to the cartography we found, in the mid of nineteenth century there were wider crops; in particular, the landscape structure changed for the disappearance of the mulberry cultivation, partially replaced by the pistachio cultivation, up to 57.959 "*salme*" (156 ha approximately) in 1845, as mapped by De Luca. The decline of the mulberry cultivation was connected to the decline of the silk manufacture, produced in the near communes of Adernò (today's Adrano), Paternò and, above all, Biancavilla, which was one of the richest silk manufacturer centres; for the silkworm raising it was necessary to use the mulberry leaves as forage, while the fruits were differently used. Then the raw silk was sent to the near Consulate of Catania (Petino, 1942).

It is necessary to consider that Pistachio crops find their best placing on lava grounds<sup>7</sup> regarded and assessed as "*Terre inutili*" (Useless lands) in the feudal census (1706); after a lapse of time and with improved agricultural techniques, the Terebinto, locally called as "*Scornabecco*" or "*Spaccasassi*", was chosen as graft carrier of the Pistachio plant because was the only plant able to grow in such areas, otherwise doomed to economic and social decay.

Between the XIX and the XX century, with a deep transformation of the land possession, the middle class concentration came to an end turning towards an extreme fragmentation of the peasant property<sup>8</sup> which lasted two centuries, getting even worst during the twenty-year period of fascist dictatorship<sup>9</sup> and still being today.

### EROSIVE PHENOMENA OF THE PISTACHIO LANDSCAPE

The endless competition between the agricultural use of soils and all the other possible utilization caused a reduction of the agricultural and forest areas, both in provincial and municipal terms, with an increase in the urban, suburban, tourist, commercial and industrial uses, to which it is necessary to add all those areas colonized by different public infrastructures, particularly in the South Eastern side of the Etna, more than in the South Western one, as Bellia pointed out.

4 As Trischitta points out, in 1812, among the wooden cultures and on the same soils, there were minor fruit-bearing varieties, such as Pistachio.

5 The Land Register surveys were mainly based on empirical methods such as measurements by sight.

6 A survey made in 1756 reveals that pistachio plants were considered a minor culture often placed side by side with almond and olive tree. Even in 1853, pistachio plants were placed near almond crops, being a 0,71% of the surveyed soil.

7 During the XVIII century, this kind of soils weren't surveyed because they were considered barren soils.

8 In 1853, approximately the 54% of the surveyed properties were under 0,50 hectares, while the 43% were between 0,51 and 10,00 hectares wide (Lo Giudice, 1969).

9 The fragmentation of the peasant property grew more marked, mainly in Southern Italy and in Sicily, with the phenomenon known as "*Assalto al latifondo*".

A clear increase of the property values brought about a change, from agricultural to extra-agricultural uses, and those values are more consistent than any income obtained through the agricultural activity. The characteristics of the landed properties, from an analytic point of view, reduce their transparency, because of their heterogeneity.

Considering the landed property demand on the basis of an “alternative” use, it could generate few mistakes if not carefully analyzed. In fact, changing the demand on the basis of the possible extra-agricultural utilization, the used parameters will change as well; for example, technical esteems regarding structural characteristics, arrangements, facilities, etc., would be underestimated or excluded, while other not quite agricultural elements, such as the proximity to building areas or wide commercial or urban settings, would gain in importance.

Regarding the Italian background in particular, these conditions caused every research to be narrowed within a descriptive point of view, because of the difficult use of any quantitative tool; recently, it has been possible to notice the research of more appropriate tools for the landed market analysis. All the surveys regarding the soil utilization trends must consider the soil as a resource and even its lack, on the basis of the production amount, the consumption and the related processes.

In the last few years, the landed market wasn't really animated except for those areas interested by intensive or specialized farming or those ones characterized by any kind of production restrictions (POD – Protected Designation of Origin, PGI – Protected Geographical Indication, etc.). A rise in the market demand, even from the historical-cultural point of view, has been observed in those areas in which the market is characterized by a sectionalist vision, with a market demand upheld by the local population.

The landed property market could boost through specific legislative intervention, such as incentives for young farmers or structural policies to sustain agricultural activities in marginal or fragmented areas in which it is possible to notice a price drop or stagnation.

In these circumstances it's easy to understand why, particularly in the South of Italy, for a young firm it is difficult to grow and reach an optimal technical/economic size. At the same time, the opportunities for an alternative use of the land, seen as phenomenon of the landed values rising, are strictly connected to the determination and the passing of cautious political instruments for the state subsidies canalization as incentive for private investments.

Among the alternative land uses, there are the residential and recreation ones that alter the territorial set up and its organization, as happened in the viticultural zones of South Eastern Etna side reduced in consequence of the vineyards replacement.

An extreme example of the residential and recreational uses is the “second house” phenomenon. As previously mentioned, this phenomenon peaked between the Sixties and Nineties because of the rise in wages and in free time that induced people to look for the new places, other than cities, to invest in.

In particular, this phenomenon started in this area only in the Seventies, due to the emigrant return and investment of their capitals on second houses, considered a good and social relevant kind of investment. According to the Census of the population<sup>10</sup> and to the statistics of the Regione Sicilia, respectively made in 2001 and 2008, the municipal district of Bronte has second house rate equal to 25,09%, the municipal districts of Adrano and Biancavilla equal to 30,73% and 35,50% respectively; the last two data are above the average provincial rate (approximately equal to 26%).

Even if this phenomenon seems to be extinguished, it still is the cause of soil erosion, even of those soils destined to pistachio cultivation.

Regarding the regional rate instead, Bronte and Adrano are part of the sector from 21,48% to 31,31% inclusive, while Biancavilla is part of the sector from 31,32% to 39,92% inclusive, that is an intermediate trend compared to the regional one showing a relevant vitality in the whole Sicily.

<sup>10</sup> ISTAT doesn't survey second houses anymore. The lack of this kind of information clashes with the need of monitoring the territory in order to manage uses and consumption.

Besides this extra agricultural use of the land, there is the competition between crops having different productivities.

During the Sixties, some surveys pointed up how a good fraction of the lands, 25% approximately, was changing, or already changed, its utilization, mainly in the "richest" areas or where there was a more evident competition, for example the South Western Etna side, the coastal areas of Catania district or the industrial zones of Pantano D'Arci, Piano Tavola and Caltagirone.

It is a still working phenomenon concerning plain lands or light slope lands, even characterized by small landed properties.

Even if there is actually an alternation between regressive and progressive phases, there are many other reasons for the land impoverishment: some of them are related to the unfavourable physical conditions and to the weakness of landed properties, the others are connected to the market and to the public support.

Until the end of the Eighties, Pistachio cultivations were progressively replaced by citrus orchards up to an altitude between 400 and 600 meters above the sea level; not even restrained by the lava nature of the soil that characterizes the 22% of the land cultivation with citrus plants. At higher altitudes, greatest competitor is any kind of orchards. In the last few years, thanks to the POD "Monte Etna" achievement<sup>11</sup>, even the olive growing is been a good competitor, with an increase of the cultivations in the whole Etna area<sup>12</sup> on a wide range altitude, between 100 and 1.000 meters above the sea level.

Another POD production that affects the same area, even if with lower economic and market performances, is the "*Ficodindia dell'Etna*"<sup>13</sup> (prickly pear), widespread at an altitude between 150 and 750 meters above the sea level.

Pistachio cultivation is scarcely present on the national territory but offers high concentration phenomena in Sicily and particularly in the province of Catania. This cultivation tolerates unfavourable environmental conditions such as growing on dry lava grounds.

Looking at the production of the main pistachio producing countries, it is possible to notice an increase, since it was equal to 53.965 metric tons in 1975 and grew up to 490.634 metric tons in 2005; the main producing country is Iran, who produces the 45,5% of the world production, followed by USA (24,3%), while Europe affects the world average production with only 2,4%.

In particular, the Italian production represents the 0,77% of the world production and, in the period 1975/2005, it decreased from 7.068 to almost 3.790 metric tons. This production is mainly concentrated in Sicily, while it is almost disappeared in the other Italian regions. In Sicily it is concentrated in the Agrigento/Caltanissetta area, in the Bronte area and in the Adrano/Biancavilla area. The first area is located in Mid and Southern Sicily and concentrates the main part of the pistachio cultivation of the two provinces of Agrigento and Caltanissetta; here the cultivations are situated in coastal areas on clayey and limestone soils that are affected by a progressive conversion to more profitable cultures, such as orchards or vineyards. In the province of Catania is located the greater part of the cultivation, with a total of 3.300 hectares of which 2.650 hectares are part of the municipal district of Bronte, while the remaining ones are part of the municipal district of Adrano; the total territory amount slightly changed between 1995 and 2005, with a decrease of 5.7%. The pistachio cultivation in the Bronte area is situated between Bronte itself and Adrano, on a territory bounded by the River Simeto in the West, by the municipal boundary between the same communes in the South, by Etna rocky lava range in the East and by the state road Bronte - Cesarò in the North.

The pistachio cultivated area near Adrano is placed at an altitude between 350 and 800 meters above the sea level and is also extended on leaning and undulating lava soils on which it is impossible to use

<sup>11</sup> *Extra-virgin olive oil "Monte Etna POD" designed with the Commission Regulation (EC) N.1491/2003 and the publication of the Official Journal of the European Union (2003/L 214/06).*

<sup>12</sup> *The production area includes three provinces: Catania, Messina and Enna. The province of Catania, in particular, includes the following communes: Adrano, Belpasso, Biancavilla, Bronte, Camporotondo Etneo, Castiglione di Sicilia, Malitto, Maniace, Motta S. Anastasia, Paternò, Ragalna, Randazzo, S. Maria di Licodia, San Pietro Clarenza.*

<sup>13</sup> *Commission Regulation (EC) N.1491/2003, edited on the Official Journal of the European Union (2003/L 214/06).*

any kind of agricultural machine. Pistachio plants are located both on the Adrano territory and on the municipal territory of Paternò, Biancavilla, Belpasso, Santa Maria di Licodia and Camporotondo Etneo. Pistachio cultivation is very important in the Etna area because it is a relevant source of profit and employment that exploits agricultural soils otherwise destined to decay. Moreover it is relevant because of all the handicraft activities connected to the construction of specific pistachio processing equipment, to the processing itself and to the product transformation mainly made by local business whose structural characteristics we surveyed.

Pistachio cultivation is not based on reliable foundations because of the high production costs and low market prices that determined the land decay and the excessive reduction of the business dimension with the resulting decrease of productive efficiency and final production amount, then with low profit margin. In the last decades many intervention policies have been created, both at national and at Community level, reserving a great attention to agricultural activities able to produce positive externalities such as landscape conservation and valorization; in this case, the pistachio cultivation, together with other dried fruit cultivation (almonds, nuts, carobs and walnuts), characterizes distinctly the Sicilian agricultural traditional landscape and could be considered as an historical-cultural proof. Among the intervention there was the attempt to set up associative structures that could have been improving the marketing conditions, acting proportionally to the sold amount. In the Nineties and in 2004 approximately, a Protection Consortium ("*Consorzio di Tutela*") was formed also with the aim to achieve the POD label which protects and enhances those products having specific characteristics connected to definite geographic areas, in order to obtain inimitable products due to the combination of natural factors (climate and environmental characteristics) and human factors (old traditional production techniques, handicraft procedures).

### **AN OUTLINE OF THE CIRCUMETNEA RAILWAY**

The analysis of the interaction between local development and transport systems often favour the more relevant urban contexts and the greater economic concentrations, even suggesting to modify and exchange different transports typologies that can involve sustainability. In this way, it often happens for small realities still not established or far from any kind of flows to be excluded from the planning.

In the Sicilian regional territory, the main economic, tourist and commercial flows have been concentrated along the coasts, as well as the transport networks that are characterized by great limits, leaving the inner areas aside with large problems and delay in economic and social development.

Our aim, besides having outlined a landscape excursus, is to point out the potential inner local development, searching between the inward specificities that could be supported by external sustainable factors, such as the territorial proximity; on this territory a network of public and private business should be created, helping to develop one or more bottom-up Territorial local Systems (SlOT, Sistemi locali Territoriali), even of tourist kind.

The followed method identifies a group of communes situated on the piedmont Etna side, communes crossed and connected by a railway carrier of which we analyzed the structural and social-economic characteristics.

The construction of the Circumetnea railway (FCE, Ferrovia Circumetnea) started on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May, 1889, and came to an end in 1896 with the completion of the last part between the two municipal districts of Giarre and Riposto.

Even though it was considered a great work, it wasn't part of the great railway infrastructures made in the nineteenth century to connect the wealthy North to the feeble South of Italy. It was instead meant to facilitate the mobility of people and goods between piedmont and coastal areas.

Nowadays it has lost almost every positive connotation as it is the only narrow gauge railway in Sicily, it doesn't carry goods anymore but it's not used for tourist purposes either.

Since 1953, by presidential Decree, FCE is controlled by a government management with a commissioner directly appointed by the Ministry of Transport.

The communes affected by the railway route are 18, three of which are part of the Pistachio cultivation area: Adrano, Belpasso, Biancavilla, Bronte, Camporotondo Etneo, Castiglione di Sicilia, Catania, Fiumefreddo, Giarre, Linguaglossa, Maletto, Mascali, Misterbianco, Paternò, Piedimonte, Randazzo, Riposto and Santa Maria di Licodia. In 1990 the urban section of the railway has been replaced by the underground network and, in 2008, the only working section is the one between the Borgo station and the Porto station (six stations in all).

### **APPEALING PHENOMENA AND TOURIST FLOWS**

Concerning the landscape and cultural heritage, this area has a relevant inheritance, as well as the entire Sicilian territory, with various attractive poles and a wide variety of tourist offers, often placed in inner areas and not properly communicated. Tourist flows are in fact attracted by the considerable urban cultural offers.

Besides a difficult communication between those areas (inner ones and urban ones), there's even a low mobility between the two of them. In spite of the availability of tyre means and of the FCE, it is really difficult to move autonomously. The FCE itself was created to meet local people's requirements more than to connect interesting spots between them and with potential consumers.

The tourist image of this area, that is the whole of the potentially exploitable resources from a tourist point of view, is based on different specificities of the resorts and on wider issues, such as environmental protection areas or themed roads ("*Strade Tematiche*"), such as "*Wine Roads*", that help the local community to set up new tourist relations and exchanges. In the tourist imagery, Sicily is seen as an "*unicum*", but it is important to recognize the diversities of adjacent places in order to plan right interventions and to identify lower tourist development economies.

Such economies are based on a large number of different business that are not linked together but are scattered across the territory instead.

### **PLANNING AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT**

Besides the negotiated planning, we tried to point up which and how many reclaiming, strengthening and development interventions have been carried out and by which administrations, in order to identify areas with a different approach to the landscape issue and their potential relations with the FCE.

Through the surveyed data, we got some information regarding an intensive planning on this territory and, at the same time, the target duplication that breaks up interventions, apparently involving with it a financial waste. We also tried to get information about the relationship capacity between the communes, in order to recognize hidden forms of collaboration or competitive cooperation, then to facilitate the growing of the tourist supply for a demand that could use FCE as mobility carrier.

In that way, tourism seems to be simply a consequence of other performances, not the result of a real intervention planning between the communes or superior aggregation forms. None of the foreseen interventions refer to landscape intervention or generically to landscape protection, neither to the FCE.

### **CONCLUSIVE CONSIDERATIONS**

Through the analysis of the potentiality of the local Pistachio territorial system, it was possible to see differently the local development and its planning, changing the point of view and watching the same area through its relation with a "special" railway carrier, both in terms of tourist flows or of goods mobility.



Through a first comparison and analysis, we noticed a real separation between territory, local Authorities, their interventions and the railway carrier; instead there is a tyre mobility based system and all the resources are only accessible through a superstructured management.

However considering feasible a bottom-up management of the territoriality as a series of relationships and flows, it is hard to fight the “power geography” directed more towards the appropriation of space, with the fragmentation of resources and ideas, than to its management and valorization.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Amata, G. (1975), *La distribuzione delle colture nella Sicilia orientale*, *Annali del Mezzogiorno*, vol. XV, *Università degli Studi di Catania*, Catania.
- Bellia, F. (1971), *Aspetti dello sviluppo degli usi residenziali e ricreativi della terra nelle zone viticole dell'Etna*, *Tecnica Agricola*, n.1, Catania.
- Boudin, G. (1906), *L'agricoltura e gli agricoltori nel circondario di Catania*, Catania, Ed. *Tipografia del Commercio*.
- Cucuzza, G., De Salvo, M. and Signorello, G. (2007), *Il valore della funzione paesaggistica paesaggistica del pistacchio sull'Etna*, *Atti del XXXVI Incontro di Studio del Ce.S.E.T.*, Catania.
- De Luca, G. (1883), *Storia della Città di Bronte*, Milano, Ed. *Tipografia di San Giuseppe*.
- Di Bella, S. (1974), *Il turismo collinare etneo: il fenomeno della seconda casa*, *Annali del Mezzogiorno*, vol. XIV, *Istituto di Storia Economica, Università degli Studi di Catania*, Catania.
- Di Blasi, A. (1968), *La proprietà fondiaria nella Sicilia centro-orientale*, Catania, *Edigraf*.
- Incognito, A. (2008), *Stato e prospettive del turismo etneo*, *Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana*, n. 4, Roma.
- Lo Giudice, G. (1969), *Comunità rurali della Sicilia moderna: Bronte 1747-1853*, *Istituto di Storia Economica, Università degli Studi di Catania*, Catania.
- Maugeri, G. and Pesce, S. (1978), *Produzione e mercato del pistacchio*, Ed. *Istituto di Economia e Politica Agraria, Università degli Studi di Catania*, Catania.
- Perrelli, A. and Tosi, A. (2000), *Il paesaggio agrario della Sicilia: trasformazioni storiche ed assetto territoriale emergente*, *Territorio*, n. 15, Milano, Ed. *Franco Angeli*.
- Petino, A. (1979) (a cura di), *Per la storia della struttura agricola siciliana tra il Sette e l'Ottocento*, in *Collana di Studi e Ricerche*, n. 4, *Istituto di Storia Economica, Università degli Studi di Catania*, Catania.
- Petino, G. sen (1978), *Aspetti e tendenze dell'agricoltura siciliana del primo Ottocento*, *Annali del Mezzogiorno*, vol. XVIII, *Istituto di Storia Economica, Università degli Studi di Catania*, Catania.
- Petino, G. sen (1993) (a cura di), *Carta di utilizzazione del suolo nel Parco dell'Etna*, *Cattedra di Economia e Politica Agraria, Facoltà di Economia, Università degli Studi di Catania*, Catania.
- Prestianni, N. (1912), *Il pistacchio in provincia di Girgenti*, *Girgenti*, Ed. *Premiata Stamperia Montes*.
- Prestianni, N. (1947), *L'economia agraria della Sicilia*, Palermo, Ed. *Istituto Nazionale di Economia Agraria*.
- Radice, B. (1928), *Memorie Storiche di Bronte*, Bronte, Ed. *Stabilimento Tipografico Sociale*.
- Scrofani, S. (1962), *Sicilia. Utilizzazione del suolo: nella storia, nei redditi e nelle prospettive*, Palermo, E.S.A..
- Sereni, E. (1962), *Storia del paesaggio agrario italiano*, Bari, Ed. *Laterza*.
- Trischitta, D. (1983), *Toponimi e paesaggio nella Sicilia orientale*, Napoli, Ed. *Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane*.
- Zizzo, N. and Amata, G. (1978), *Rilievi economici e sociali sull'area geografica del nord-est etneo*, Catania, *Seminario Economico*.



**THE “DIDACTIC FARM” AS A DEMONSTRATION OF SCHOOL TOURISM FROM A RELATIONAL POINT OF VIEW: AN AIM OF BUSINESS DEFINITION<sup>1</sup>**

**Ruisi Marcantonio<sup>2</sup> & Di Matteo Loredana<sup>3</sup>**

*Associate Professor of Politics & Strategic Management, Faculty of Economy, Palermo University  
e-mail: mruisi@unipa.it*

**1. Introduction: a relational definition of supply and demand of tourist services**

Since several years, because of the grow of society's “relational” needs (as resultant of an explicit need of relationship from supply and demand), the sector of the tourist services is assuming the characteristics of what, in another context (Ruisi, 2004), we have defined “relational tourism”. The reference is to the sector of the supply and demand of tourist services and goods, realized and used through a combination of relationships in which the producers, beyond a mere orientation to the sale, develop an attitude of deep and shared hospitality, directed to rediscover the beauty and the peculiarity of the historical, artistic, folklorist, gastronomic patrimony (goods and traditions) and above all of humanity of their own countries. In this context, the users from simple final consumers become generators of value; they are involved to actively complete the tourist offer.

If it is considered tourism as occasion of relationship that stimulates everyone *to be* rather than *to have/to possess*; if it is considered that tourism stimulates the *logos* (to think) rather than the *curiositas* or - simply - the emotional expectations of the participants; than it is understood the importance to re-conceptualize (to imagine in a different way) tourism by implementing tourist-relational occasions, with consequent benefits both social and economic. Relational tourism appears as the spring of a local and “endemic” tourist economy; this is true if the idea of the vacation doesn't implicate necessarily a long distance, the escape from ordinary life towards exotic places, from routine, but it represents the possibility to enjoy some occasions of relax, *otium* and fun, in the territories in which people habitually stay; “living” the spaces in a different way from the usual one. If all of this is possible, it derives also from a cultural change, at least in the western societies, of a rejection of the superficiality and consumer banality, that passes through a desire of one greater intelligibility of the daily life without filters and mediations, of exploitation of the genuine aspects of life to every level. How Mazzette remembers, «in other words, he is creating the cultural presuppositions through which the individual is able to develop the ability to be astonished and surprised in front of a reality that deserves to be rediscovery and recognized» (Mazzette, 1997:97). In this key of reading (following this approach), we want to interpret, from the side of the demand, the favorable comparison for the enjoyment of agro-tourist services, of the rural or naturalistic tourism and of all those forms of tourism with elevated relational potential; we report there to all the forms of tourism directed to the discovery of ourselves and of real world in opposition to the artificial experience of a typical *theme park*. «The character of the industrial society seems to move the emphasis and the center of the tourist experience from the *theme parks* and from the *tourist packages* to those complex human regions that are able to preserve, to produce and to communicate proper cultural resources, original or derived by interactive relationships with external groups, but also always enjoyable in theirs being» (Savelli, 1999:38). In similar order, we want to consider a particular kind of tourist products that need a new relational conceptualization so that to exalt more exclusively its educational value, rather than the instructive one; we report there *scholastic tourism*, a precious occasion for the young people of personal maturity along manifold dimensions. Thanks to the particular relationships that it is established with people and things, the category of relationships, to which

<sup>1</sup> This article was published in *Annali della Facoltà di Economia, Università degli Studi di Palermo*, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Author of paragraph 1,2,5. Both the authors write paragraph 4.

<sup>3</sup> Author of paragraph 3.

it refers the experience in question, favors the maturity of young people involved in such experiences, and therefore the increase in the “being” rather than in the “possession”.

## **2.The scholastic tourism: brief analysis and considerations of the phenomenon departing from an investigation conducted on a sample of Sicilian students and Sicilian teachers**

Some elaborations of data and investigations conducted in Italy on the tourist sector calculate in 2004 an involvement in the student vacations of 17.608 scholastic institutes: 11.069 secondary schools, 3.677 technical-commercial institutes, 2.267 licei, 595 other schools (i.e. schools of art, etc.). The sector had more than 9 million presences in Italy. According to the 2004 data, the value of the scholastic tourism reported by the trip's agencies is around a million euro for around 3.900.000 students, teachers and involved staff. The middle expense is 225 € for person for a middle duration of 3 days, even if usually the number of days for the superior schools is higher. The effected choices have been: 31% cultural itineraries, 17% single visits in the cities of art, 12% naturalistic and environmental trips, 11% itineraries that put together art and nature. The 20% of the Italian students directs toward the great European capitals also for twinships.

Treating of scholastic tourism, it is necessary to refer to some normative references in Italy, that is the ministerial circular 2 October 1996, n.291, “Short visits and trips of education or connected to sporting activity” and the circular 2 October 1996, n.623 that has foreseen the delegation of the visits and trips management to the single scholastic institutions without the necessity to ask for authorization to the ministerial organs. The first circular establishes that «the visits, the educational trips, also connected to sporting activity, imply a precise and suitable didactic and cultural planning that are predisposed in the schools since the beginning of the scholastic year and they are shaped as experiences of learning and growth among the integrative activities of the school. The phase of planning represents a moment of particular appointment of the teachers and the scholastic collegial organs. It is found on articulated and coherent projects that allow to define such activities as complementary activity of the school and not as simple occasions of fun».

According to the finalities coming from the mentioned norm, we have conducted a field investigation to analyze the experience conducted by some groups of students and teachers and to understand what needs are still to satisfy in comparison to the present traditional forms of offer in the tourist scholastic sector.

The investigation has been conducted in the first semester of 2005 on three samples of students of the superior schools of the cities of Agrigento, Palermo and Trapani. For Trapani and Agrigento, the survey has been conducted by considering a sample of the visitors of the second edition of the “Fiera provinciale dell’orientamento” (“provincial fair of scholastic and job opportunities”). For Palermo we have directly involved some pupils in their schools. We have submitted a simple questionnaire to students and teachers. At the end, 860 questionnaires (750 related to students and 110 to teachers) have been picked and elaborate. From the investigation a clear prevalence of daily visits has emerged for the students of primary school (over 50% of the visits and trips), in comparison to those of secondary school (around 28% of the total one of the visits and trips). The 40% of the interviewed students has appreciated particularly the cultural-educational aspects (hystorical, scientific, etc) of the tourist experience, while 35% those play-recreational (fun) and 25% those artistic-architectural. At the same time, the 39% of the students have asked for an improvement of the cultural-educational aspects in comparison to an improvement of the other aspects required by the 37% (fun) and 24% (artistic) of the students. The picked data show a particular attention from the students to consider the trip as real occasion of growth and maturation rather than as moment of fun and relax. Nevertheless it strikes that the 45% of the students declare that the visit or the trip have not been organized with a previous moment of information about the different items (monuments, etc.) of the tourist experience. These students also stress the importance of all those proposals (as the didactic farm) that emphasize the role of the practical experience and of learning by doing as tools of growth and personal learning for the students.

In the figure 1 are brought the data related to the activities that the students would desire to develop during a visit or a trip. From the data it is deduced that the 56,5% of the students are interested to the discovery of the natural patrimony; the 47,5% are interested to the cultural patrimony rediscovery, or to participate in courses of tasting; the

46% to the knowledge of local products; the 39% to the preparation of local dishes; 37,5% to the rediscovery of the country traditions and the ancient works.

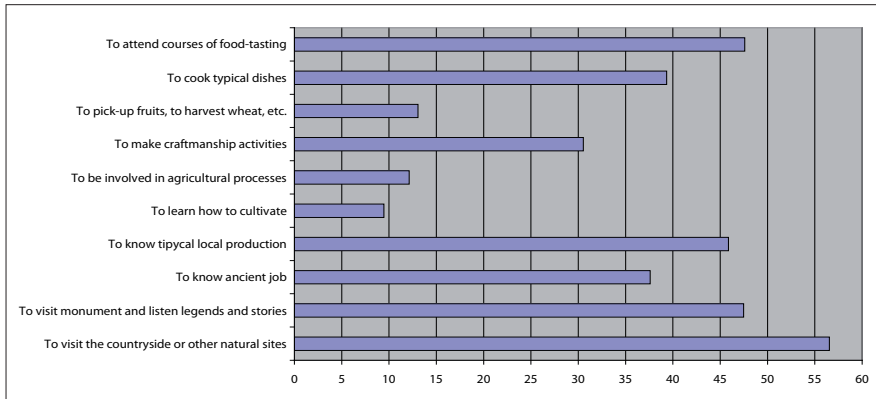


Figure 1. Activities to be included in the trip/journey - Students

Similar positions have been express from the teachers (figure 2) that would like to include in a vacation: the discovery of the cultural patrimony (63%); the natural patrimony rediscovery (62%); the rediscovery of the country traditions and the ancient works (55%); courses of tasting (41%); the preparation of local dishes (37%); the knowledge of the typical productions (27%). The picked results underline the possibility that the experience of the "teaching farm" can represent a concrete answer to the explicit requirement of direct and tangible contact with people and things of a specific territory.

The result of this first survey can constitute a precious feedback for the suppliers and the brokers (i.e. T.O. and travel agencies) of the tourist product, and for the public operators.

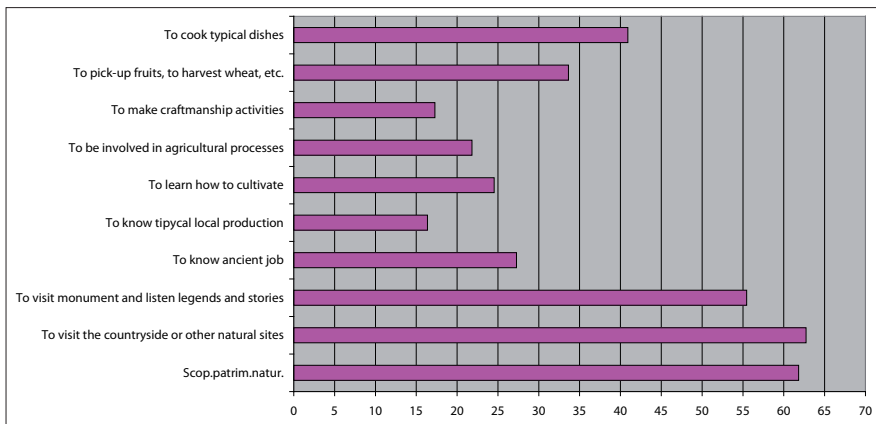


Figure 2. Activities to be included in the trip/journey - Teachers

### **3. The teaching farm: historical references, formalities of operation and distinctive characters**

The *didactic farms* have primarily origin from the experience of the *city farms*. The *city farms* were structures born since the beginning of the last century in the north Europe. They were placed in urban circle, using grounds and buildings of public ownership and managed from voluntary of non-profit associations. These structures, unlike the modern *didactic farms* didn't intend to support the activity of environmental and gastronomic education of the agricultural firms; they were "didactic oasis" inside the cities, born with the intent to approach the citizen to the values of the countryside. For these reasons, only with the birth of the *didactic farms* the agricultural firms will become explicitly the protagonists of an educational process centralized on the typical values of the rural world, on the respect of the environment and on a healthy and correct feeding.

The *didactic farm* is an agricultural firm able to entertain and to generally develop didactic and informative activities for students and other visitors. The proper activity of the *didactic farms* is really developed both from the agricultural firms and from the agricultural-tourist firms (agritourism). In both cases, the offer appears as a form of alternative tourism in comparison to the traditional offer proposed to the scholastic demand. It is necessary to specify that, despite the generic activity of the agricultural-tourist firms that are predominantly directed to offer gastronomical-recreational activities, the *didactic farms* are characterized by a meaningful interest for the rediscovery of the rural environment, of the culture and of the local traditions. The activity of the didactic farms is directed to contemporarily emphasize the educational, cognitive and cultural aspects of the tourist offer.

Some of the most important characteristic features of the didactic farms are:

- the simplicity and the genuineness of the feelings and the values transmitted to the visitors;
- the possibility of a deep and spontaneous relationship caused by the offered products;
- the connection between the tourist activities and those agricultural;
- the educational function of the offered products;
- the *learning by doing* didactic principle: usually the consumers directly and manually participate to the agricultural activities; they are involved in a practical activity under the guide of the agriculturist;
- the narrow cultural connection of the activities with the territory and its rural and gastronomic traditions.

Therefore, the didactic farms are agricultural firms; the didactic activity is connected to the agricultural one; they are set in a functional relationship, normally using the equipments and the resources employed in the agricultural activity; they are also set in a substantial relationship because the offered products cannot put aside from the business and rural context; finally they are set in complementary relationship because the agricultural activity remains the principal one.

The didactic farms normally entertain schools and groups, proposing lessons on the cultivation methods, on the transformation processes of agricultural products and, more generically, on the processes of environmental and gastronomic education. The learning methodology is *active* because both the young and the adult people usually directly participate in the agricultural activities, assimilating knowledge through their experiences.

These firms are born from a double necessity: to guarantee forms of additional income to the agriculturists, to assure a direct communication between the agriculturists and the citizen; in the last years, the predominance of the industry of the transformation gets further the producers and the consumers bringing to an underestimation of the role of whom cultivates the fields.

In the didactic farm the peasant/agriculturist establishes a direct relationship with the consumers of the service assuming the role of communicator.

The importance of this activity regards the possibility to spread a knowledge that has been neglected for years and that in the last times it assumes greater importance: the knowledge of the autochthonous crops

and the wild kinds; the characteristics of the territory; the origins of agricultural and natural processes; the transformation of the alimentary products; the traditions of the rural world; etc. The activity of the didactic farms as the other forms of tourism in the countryside, are based on the constant exploitation of the environmental, natural and cultural patrimony. "Make school" in farm means «to offer the possibility to stay close to the nature and the social, economic, politics and cultural dimensions of the environment» (Nasolini, 2002). This experience helps everyone to recognize him/her as part of the territory and to intensify the bond with the same thanks to a fruition-manipulation of the products of the earth and the connection of these products to a specific local tradition. "Make school" in farm constitutes a tool of education to the taste, to the traditions, to the identity, to the healthy feeding, to the respect of the environment, to the meeting with other things and above all with other people, stimulating the exercise of relational virtues. All of this has a fundamental importance if it is considered that the cultural, social and technological transformations have modified the alimentary habits and the relationship with the environment (Ballarini e Tagliaferri, 2003) and have caused the loss of the material and emotional dimension of the life experience and the increasing development of virtual relationships. Together with the other forms of agricultural tourism, the didactic farm can constitute an alternative and profitable economic opportunity; it can contribute to avoid the abandonment of some disadvantaged areas; it can allow the diffusion of an authentic and genuine food culture; it can finally, represent an important occasion for the exploitation, the tasting and the sale of typical alimentary products. The synthesis of our considerations underlines the affirmation of a polyvalent role practiced by the agricultural entrepreneur: he doesn't develop only the activity of cultivation and breeding of the livestock but he also furnishes other activities as those receptive, recreational and didactic connected to the exploitation of the rural patrimony

#### **4. The didactic farm's business definition**

The tourist services offered in a didactic farm is developed according to the logic of meeting and the direct contact with the real world that is usual known through books, videos or stories. The product in its core aspect is predominantly identified as a path of learning. The paths are diversified according to the season, to the typology of firm and crop and to the environmental context of the farm. The first initial footstep of the activity consists in the choice of the matters to face: the paths can be simple, concerning the discovery of the country, of the rural world, of the products of the farm, of the flowers; or they can be advanced, concerning the biological agriculture, the observation of the stars, the handicraft workmanships, the discovery of the differences among the ecosystems, etc.

Particularly, we can individualize three types of paths (Tibiletti, 2002):

- paths of agricultural-environmental education (the wood and the companion: knowledge and legends, the hedges and the secular plants, sounds and odors; the biological agriculture; the animals and the cultivations of the farm during the seasons);
- paths on the territory and the rural civilization (the old works, the museum of the utensils of the country civilization, the ancient games, the echo-museum and the history of the agriculture, the popular dances of country tradition and the feasts);
- paths of food education (cereals and bread, milk and cheese, from the bees to the honey, from the grape to the wine, the production of the meat, the herbs) through special laboratories of the taste; tastings and sensory comparisons of fruit, meats, honey and cheeses, etc.

After the choice of the path, it will be necessary to delineate the practical carrying out of each single meeting that has usually the objective to solicit the five senses of the participants; to such purpose it is preferable to introduce the practical activities in the form of a game. The path owes to easily have contained communicable and has to possess a didactic value; it must be supported from informative stuff and it must be characterized also from the history and the local traditions; the path has to be stimulating and able to fully involve the children or in general the visitors (Belgrado, 2002).

To complete the concept of business definition, recalling the model proposed by Abell (1980), we consider three dimensions: the use function, the formality of service's disbursement, the target (group of clients). Concerning to the use function of the offered service it refers us to that of relaxation, instructive / informative and educational.

With regards to the formalities of disbursement of the service, it can be considered: the direct experience; the vision that can be assisted from audiovisual stuff; the self-managed fruition supported by explanatory material.

With reference to the group of clients, it distinguishes among: students, families, groups of elderly persons, people assisted from voluntary associations, groups with a scientific interest and others. Some statistic reliefs underline that the visits in farm involve maternal schools 35%, elementary schools 45,8%, junior high schools 14%, senior high schools 4%, disabled 0,2%, adults' groups the 1% (Mari, 2002).

If the specific dimensions are considered (Fig. 3), the single firm will develop an own more articulated proposal by considering the requirements of market, its own present and future *servuction* ability, the competitors, etc.

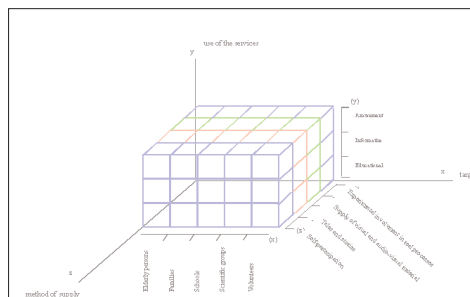


Figure 3. The didactic farm service

To make clearer the definition of the specific product of the didactic farm, we have considered opportune to compare the teaching farm with other more similar tourist products; for this purpose, we use different graphics (Fig. 4-8).

#### *Didactic farm- agricultural/tourism firm*

The didactic farm has instructive function, educational, but also relaxation and recreational. The formalities through which the service is offered are the simple narration, direct vision, carrying out of various practical activities. In fact, the different offered paths are based on the principle of the *learnig by doing* and they face educational thematic concerning the environment and the gastronomic habits. The teaching farm can offer only the didactic path, or it can offer further and complementary services as the restaurant, b&b, cultural services. The target is very various and it can include: students, families, groups of scientific interest, consumers of services disbursed by beneficent associations, groups of elderly persons, etc.

The agricultural-tourism firms primarily develop functions of relaxation and recreational, without skipping those instructive and educational but above all those eno-gastronomic, etc.

The offered services are heterogeneous and they often implicate the carrying out of practical activity (birdwatvhing, horseback riding, fishing, course of kitchen, etc.). The offer can include a lot of instructive and educational thematic but usually it is not concretized in a didactic path on predisposed and structured purpose for offering a service of rural pedagogy. The target is ample even if turned a great deal primarily to the families.



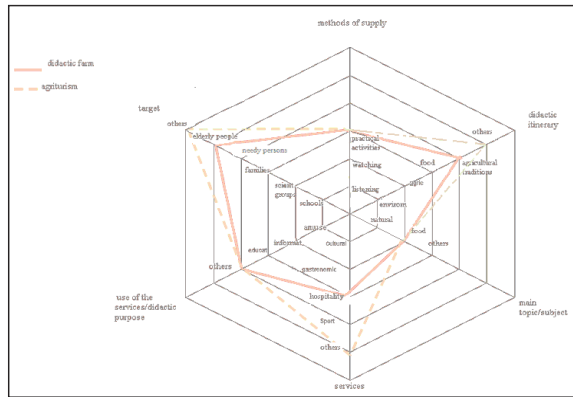


Figure 4. A comparison didactic farm/agriturism

**Didactic farm- rural tourism**

The operators of the rural tourism offer many services, first of all: eno-gastronomic ones, but also those cultural, sporting, etc. They often involves the tourist in practical activities as excursions, trekking, birdwatching, etc. The offer includes a lot of thematics also educational and cultural ones, but a didactic run is, not normally, offered on purpose predisposed for specific target. The rather variegated offer involves numerous groups of visitors.

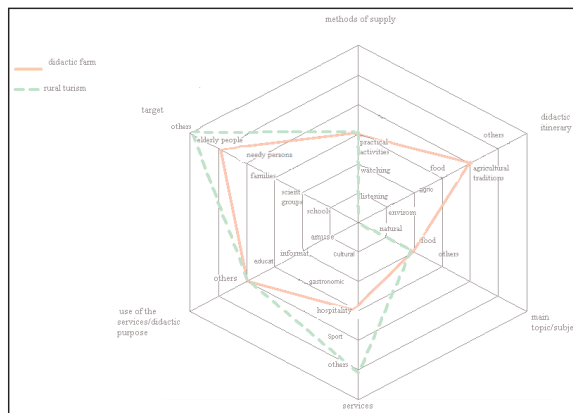


Figure 5. A comparison didactic farm/rural tourism

**Didactic farm-echotourism**

The echo-tourist operators offer many services (cultural, gastronomic, b&b, sporting) and they also develop an educational function. The offered didactic paths are predominantly naturalistic-environmental. The groups of involved visitors are smaller in comparison to those of the didactic farms, because they involve groups of elderly people or people with physical handicap.

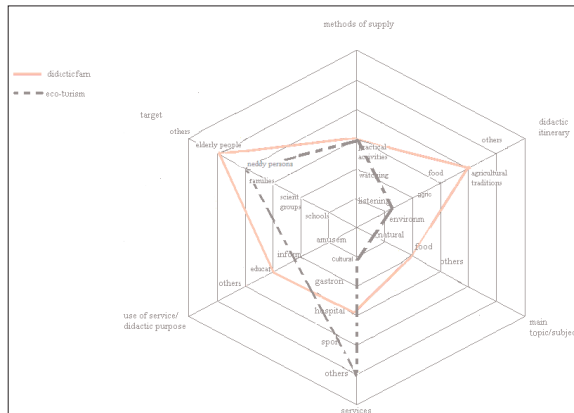


Figure 6. A comparison didactic farm/echo-tourism

#### Didactic farm- agricultural and ethnographic museum

The agricultural and ethno-graphic museum offers some didactic paths specifically projected for groups of students. These paths include thematics close to those of the teaching farms, but don't include practical experiences inspired to the principle of the learning by doing. The offered services are not so wide, they can be mainly considered as places of exhibition; the groups of clients are ample and however heterogeneous.

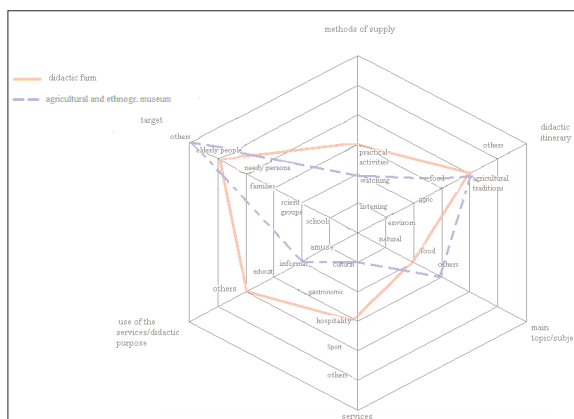


Figure 7. A comparison didactic farm/agricultural and ethnographic museum

#### Didactic farm- search and scientific experimentation center

The search and scientific experimentation centers generally involve a meaningful number of groups of consumers (potentially greater in comparison to the teaching farms) and they treat ampler thematic. They offers nevertheless a meeting place number of services and they essentially develop instructive functions tied up to the activities of search and scientific experimentation.

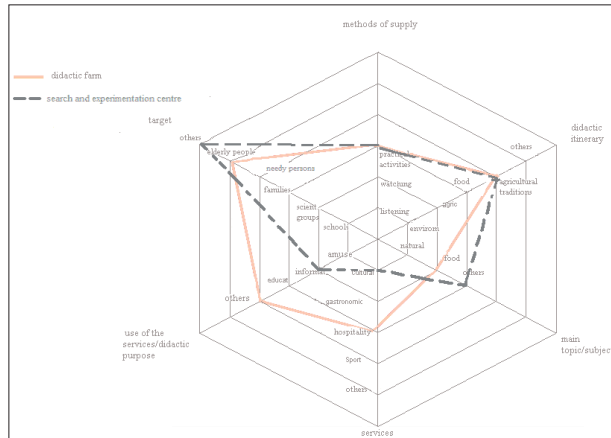


Figure 8. A comparison didactic farm/search and experimentation centre

## Conclusions

Although the trends of the demand of tourist services are always oriented toward the binomial sun-sea, they are directing themselves toward forms more involving in which people put in game him/herself and in which tourist experience contributes seriously to the relational-educational trial of the tourist and the people employed in the business realities that offer the service.

A *didactic farm* is a product that should be used in a relational way considering the interpersonal relationship that is developed through a contact with the agricultural world and the territory. In fact, direct experience facilitates a deep horizontal exchange among the students and an informal vertical exchange with the teachers companions. For all the analyzed reasons, the experience in farm can certainly contribute to the personal growth of the young tourists. «According to the philosophical paradigm of the antropological personalism, a person grows towards his/her self-realization by respecting – or better – by improving the dignity of another person» (Chalmeta, 1997:78).

The didactic farm can become a true school of values and virtue; it can represent an unique experience in the formation of the boys and girls and through them to induce a civic *metanoia* (changing mentality) and a deep change of the common feelings. The didactic farm could be considered as an antidote to those that Taylor (1999) defines inconveniences of the modernity: the supremacy of the “instrumental reason”, the individualism and the disaffection towards the public life. In other words, the teaching experience in farm could favour the search of the “ability to be” rather than “to know” or “to know how to do”, therefore it could be able to valorize the thought before the action; to foment the search of the common property and the native idea that the fullness of the being cannot put aside from the other; to sustain rediscovering of the sense of responsibility of the man in building a better society. For all these reasons it seems opportune that the experience of the didactic farm should be introduced in the scholastic formative curriculum.

## References

- AA.VV., *Il divulgatore*, Centro Divulgazione Agricola, Bologna, settembre 2002.  
 Abell D. F., *Defining the business: the starting point of strategic planning*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1980.  
 Ballarini G. e Tagliaferri E., *Educazione alimentare e fattorie didattiche dall' innovazione all'azione di sistema*,

- Convegno "Educazione alimentare e fattorie didattiche", Bologna, 24 Febbraio 2003.
- Belgrado E., "Guardare poi toccare: questo sì che è da imparare", in AA.VV., *Il divulgatore*, Centro Divulgazione Agricola, Bologna, settembre 2002.
- Chalmeta G., *Etica applicata. L'ordine ideale della vita umana*, Le Monnier, 1997.
- Mari R., "Porte aperte ai consumatori", in AA.VV., *Il divulgatore*, Centro Divulgazione Agricola, Bologna, settembre 2002.
- Mazzette A., "Reimmaginazione della società e turismo", in Guidicini P. e Savelli A. (a cura di), *Strategie di comunità nel turismo mediterraneo*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 1999.
- Nasolini T., "Un movimento che viene da lontano", in AA.VV., *Il divulgatore*, Centro Divulgazione Agricola, Bologna, settembre 2002.
- Ruisi M., *Turismo relazionale. Logiche di sviluppo reticolare ed etica dell'ospitalità per le aziende turistiche di piccola dimensione*, Giuffrè, Milano, 2004.
- Savelli A., "Strategia di comunità nella relazione turistica", in Guidicini P. e Savelli A. (a cura di), *Strategie di comunità nel turismo mediterraneo*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 1999.
- Taylor C., *Il disagio della modernità*, Laterza, Roma, II, 1999.
- Tibiletti E., "L'azienda diventa fattoria didattica", in AA.VV., *Il divulgatore*, Centro Divulgazione Agricola, Bologna, settembre 2002.

**WHAT PERSPECTIVES FOR LOCAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT? TWO CASE STUDIES  
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION<sup>1</sup>**

**Francesca Spagnuolo**

*PHD in Geography, Salento University, Lecce, Italy  
e-mail: francesca.spagnuolo@gmail.com*

**Anna Tanzarella**

*PHD in Geography, Trento University, Trento, Italy  
e-mail: anna.tanzarella@libero.it*

**Abstract**

**Purpose**

Integrated relational tourism is the subject of growing interest among local development studies and territorial policies. This paper presents two case studies that can be considered potential experiences of integrated relational tourism. The aim of this paper is to argue about territorial advantage of an integrated approach to tourism, starting from an accurate analysis and a report of case studies.

The final purpose is to provide new information on practices, activities, forms supporting the framework. This information allows to come up with a model, as supporting in the case studies, able to explain a system approach to tourist offer configuration in the Mediterranean region.

**Material and Method**

The framework of integrated relational tourism is considered as a capability of tourism offer to organize its activities and services around network configurations, based on community involvement processes. The idea is that a collaboration among local actors and players represents a best condition to generate a consequent integration of tourist offer configuration. In this way, local actors are considered as the real protagonists of production and management of local resources. In fact, complex issues of participation and inclusion remain central to the creation of a sustainable and integrated tourism. This involves a different relationship between tourism demand and supply, in terms of a direct contact that, by an active involvement of local actors, is based on local tradition and territorial identity.

This assumption gains more value if applied to tourism region of the Mediterranean area, where coastal areas offer consolidated tourist products and, in addition, suffer for a strong human pressure. Therefore, deseasonalization strategies supporting the inland areas and promoting creation and development of new types of tourism are required.

The methodology used to analyze management experiences in tourism offer, including not only tourist aspects but also all territorial components, such as national law and socio-economical context.

*Results*

The paper reports two different experiences of management tourist offer represented by *Esterel Côte d'Azur Centrale de Réserve*, in French Mediterranean Riviera, and *Sulcis-Iglesiente STL*, in Sardinia, the Italian island.

*Esterel Côte d'Azur Centrale de Réserve* (ECA) is a service agency for promotion and commercialization of tourist offer of 14 villages in the Var Region, a territory including coastal and inland areas among Cannes and St. Tropez. It is a public organization that handles 170 accommodation possibilities and over 70 leisure

---

<sup>1</sup> The work reported on here is a collaboration of the two authors; however, Spagnuolo was responsible of *Stl Sulcis Iglesientes* case study and Tanzarella was responsible of *Esterel Côte d'Azur* case study.

activities offered by local community. It involves internal areas in tourism processes and generates a diversification of local offer, targeting on common values such as hospitality, quality of life, handicraft, agriculture production, in order to obtain territorial added value.

*Sulcis Iglesiente STL* is a formal association provided for national law, supporting the activities of actors operating in 23 villages of South West Sardinia, including both coastal and inland areas. It's a public form that promotes different types of tourism, increasing the value of attractive potential of territory through a strategic planning of territories concerned.

### Conclusions

The aim is not to carry out a comparative analysis between the case studies, but insert the information collected inside the framework of integrated relational tourism.

The evidences will be employed to talk about best practices formula for realizing relational tourism, able to respect Mediterranean identity and promote, among other things, sustainability actions, local development, interaction between coastal and inland area policies, collaboration and participation of local actors.

**Key words:** Tourist local development; management models of tourist offer; community involvement; Esterel Cote d'Azur; STL Sulcis Iglesiente

### INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to adopt a systemic approach to tourism, considering socio-geographic components originated, developing and coexisting in a certain territory.

Adopting a systemic approach means, on one side reconsider all the components (economic, social, cultural, natural and human) that, directly, contribute to create the system offer; on the other side, use a complex framework where territory is considered as a "subject", in which developing relationships and involving processes as bases for a local tourist development.

In fact, sector-based point of view for studying tourism allows to re-building tourist chains based on vertical integration, but in this terms territory is not considered as a protagonist and subject of territorial processes. We think that a territorial reading gives importance to local development, introducing the concept of integrated relational tourism as solution also to tourist demand changing.

Integrated relational tourism is an evident opportunity to rethink tourism logical towards concept of participation and shared practices, allowing to local actors a sustainable management of tourist activities.

Integrated relational tourism gives value at local scale, and not "*localism*", but endogenous and bottom up processes, developing systemic actions and overcoming offer standardization.

This paper highlights the importance of a balance between local and global and for a creation of a tourist system, internally integrated and externally opened. Process-based view (Teo and Li 2003) prefers not to reify space, as global or local, and instead suggests that space is "perpetually redefined, contested, and restructured" (Swyngedouw 1997), confirming necessity to ride local and global conflict out (Jessop 2001; Murdoch 1997), in tourism too.

In using the term of integrated we intend also cohesive; a cohesion that is based on collaboration between local actors, who are interpreters of a dynamic relationship, impact positively on configuration offer. An offer that appears to tourist demand more integrated, opened and global, enjoying communicative advantages coming from network. Local actors are considered real protagonists of local development, joining professional and personal skills in order to become a strong actor in tourism strategical choices. In fact, "there are many potential benefits when stakeholders in a destination collaborate together and attempt to build a consensus about tourism policies" (Bramwell, Sharman 1999, 392).

The participation of local community is necessary in order to guarantee a sustainable tourism, in fact requests of responsabilization necessary to a sustainable management of resources, arise from a continue riappropriation processes of spaces. From identification process to endogenous specificities accrues tendency to start "patrimonialization" processes, so put in value resources, knowledge, vocation and attestation good.

The transcalarity of different planning and tourist system operating in a certain area allow to talk about "tourist region". A concept refers to a "geographical area in which takes place systemic interaction processes between different tourist components and in which tends to limit travel flows movement attracted from tourist offer" (Pollice 2002, 111). The application of this concept to Mediterranean countries allows to talk about "Mediterranean region", showing a geographical area that, despite differentiations in processes and basic conditions, is considered "a systemic interaction space"; a resultance of a mixture, processes and common flows. Nowadays, tourism is composed by complexes features, make Mediterranean region to adopt relational tourism formula in order to "territorialize" tourist practices, valorize local resources and re-establish a direct relationship between host and guest. In fact, "collaboration is a prerequisite for relationships marketing" (Fyall et al. 2003, 657), if there is collaboration "destination is understood by its tourists as a unique entity, with political and legislative framework for tourism marketing and planning" (Buhalis 2000, 98).

In this paper case study analysis follow theoretical approach as so described, the analysis are not limited to tourist component but are extended to contest conditions, such as socio-economic, legislative and cultural dynamics, aiming to territorial process in a certain point of time.

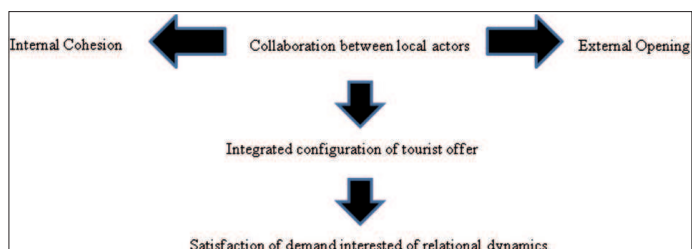
### **THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

In this paper we suggest a methodological approach based on geographical reading as a best manner to understand new ways to make tourism and to analyze relational ties of territory's actors. The "territorialist approach" becomes the method able to discover the central role of the territory that is considered, at the same time, as engine and as result of relationships among local actors. On one side, the territory is the engine because it is the best condition to come up integrated networks in which actors, joined by a common sense of belonging (to the territory), appeal to resources and local specificities to active virtuous and relational exchanges. On the other side, the territory is the result of networks because the effects produced by collaboration enrich territory and carry out a territorial add value.

Therefore, territory is considered the key element of strategic action and the cornerstone of local development, because it expresses "active territoriality", promotes interactive and collaborative behaviors among players that, through positive relations with local resources, generate planning, innovation, development, value (Dematteis 2001).

Local community, directly or indirectly involved in the tourist offer, takes part actively to decision-making processes, exploiting owner "relational capital" for activating sustainable and virtuous cycles and for obtaining add value. In using the term "relational capital" we make reference to relational assets (Storper 1997) "incorporated in local human capital, as local cognitive capital, social capital, cultural differences, institutional capability"; that together other geographical, historical, artistic and infrastructural components contribute to form the territorial capital (Dematteis and Governa 2005, 27).

In integrated relational tourism approach, the collaboration among local actors feeds internal cohesion and external opening of the territory, generating network configurations aimed to make satisfaction for current tourism demand. This pivotal approach is necessary if we consider the features of current demand that requires increasingly a direct contact with destinations and local communities and is more attentive to quality of services that are able to tie together tradition, identity and local culture. By this way, the research perspective to adopt is a cross combination of diachronic and synchronic dimensions (Figure 1).



Diachronic because, starting from discover of traditions and identity-making values of the territory, local actors aim to future planning (vertical process); synchronic because it is based on an integration among players, resources and activities that takes place in a certain territory in a specific moment, bringing to internal cohesion (horizontal process).

The organization and management of tourist offer, when entrusted to local community, meet logics of systemic integration and spread an atmosphere of mutual trust that improves accessibility and usability of services from visitors, guarantying satisfactions levels of territorial sustainability (Magnaghi 2000).

Relationships among local actors are considered as "bridging ties" (Costa 2005), not impositive but rather negotiation and collaborative that leave aside individual interests to meet network logic. Many potential advantages are connected to the formation of relational synergies, starting from sharing of ideas, problem solving, innovation opportunities and opening on global scale. In fact, the "connectedness gives rise to opportunities for the transfer and sharing of knowledge, which are important attributes for developing innovation and competitiveness" (Dredge 2006, 270).

However, formation and development of relational synergies have to be accompanied by favourable conditions of the territorial context. For this reason, in the territory reading we investigate some territorial components (legislative, socio-cultural, economic, geographic), therefore, not only touristic, as "determiner" for the development of integrated relational tourism. These components can be a constraint rather than an opportunity for developing integrated relational tourism. For example, a legislation that legitimates and supports agreements among the parties can be considered a formal basis for promoting collaboration of local actors. Tools used for developing integrated relational tourism have to be well-utilized, it means that they don't have to be a simple label but develop more complex relational processes. In using the term "process" we convey the idea of a dynamic exchange of relations that are aimed to the future and are able to renew themselves over the time. In this paper we consider a double prospective based on a valorisation of resources, tangibles and intangibles, embedded in a determinate context and a continuous orientation to new requalification processes that arrange to "patrimonialization logics" that we have just said. It means that functions and using values of an heritage are always dynamics, taking into account market evolutions, for both tourist demand and offer.

Another tool to promote integrated relational tourism is considered public and private partnerships that guarantee a collaboration between private and public actors that participate in the same manner to local tourism development. Public sector have to participate to these processes, support sustainable behaviours and allow that tourism become an important development factor. Tourism is very often characterized by an high level of fragmentation, while is increasingly shared that "no single organization or individual can exert direct control over the destination's development process" (Jamal and Getz 1995, 193).

In this paper integrated relational tourism is explored and evaluated as a best condition for tourism local development because it is required from both demand and supply. The issues of socio-cultural and economic evolutions carry out, on the hand of demand, to different features respect to the so-called "standardized tourism".



In fact, the trend is to live territory in contact with local that has to propose a systemic offer, not disjointed or separated. On the hand of supply, strong competitive dynamics, new features of tourism as a development factor, the necessity to meet demand processes, have brought to attempt of tourism organization forms more integrated and flexible.

In conclusion, these evolutions require that local scale turns to global scale, and catch up with an internationalization levels in order to react to external changes and guarantee large tourist flows and middle-high spending power. The creation of networks, therefore, is the opportunity for local territories to become protagonists of dynamics and processes on global scale.

### FINDINGS

This paper presents two case studies of management tourist offer that can be considered potential experiences of integrated relational tourism, represented by *Esterel Côte d'Azur Centrale de Réservation*, in French Mediterranean Riviera, and *Sulcis-Iglesiente STL*, in Sardinia, the Italian island.

*Esterel Cote d'Azur Centrale de Réservation* (ECA)

*Esterel Cote d'Azur Centrale de Réservation* (ECA) is the first case study proposed as an organizational model having reference to integrated relational tourism framework. It is a service agency with private/public economic involvement<sup>2</sup>, arise from the local Tourisme Office. Since 2000 it manages communication activities and reservation services (accommodation, transports, leisure, shows and events) embedded on a territory of 14 municipalities (Saint-Raphaël, Fréjus, le Pays de Fayence, Roquebrune-sur-Argens, les Adrets de l'Estérel, Bagnols en Forêt, Puget sur Argens) from coastal to inland in the Var region and situated between Cannes and Saint Tropez.

French legislation encourages and supports public and private partnerships at local scale thanks to a regulation that entrusts to municipal offices of tourism, besides to information and promotion services, commercialization of tourist products too. In fact, the national law of 13 July 1992 allows to Tourism Offices to exercises "*la réservation et la vente de tous types de prestations, de loisirs et d'accueil d'intérêt général dans leur zone d'intervention. Ils facilitent la démarche du public en lui offrant un choix de prestations*"<sup>3</sup>.

These favourable conditions have determined for this territory the formation of collaborative relations among local operators to improve integration and quality offer, through ECA intermediation. In fact, it executes its functions as a "Meta-manager"<sup>4</sup> in the planning of tourist offer, entrusting to local actors the task to manage directly territorial components in a play of collaboration/competition that involves the community as real protagonist of local tourism organization processes. The participation in ECA system by local suppliers is submitted to the reaching of a quality standard in the level of services and in obedience to rules defined by agency, rules oriented to improve quality, accessibility and usability of services from visitors. Visitors live an integrated and flexible tourist offer and have the opportunity to discover territory and to relate with local community thanks to many promotions and discounts given for services, accommodations and leisure.

With the ECA intermediation, these municipalities have overcome the idea of holiday destinations exclusively based on beach tourism and on elite visitors for proposing a new image of the territory targeted on diversification and deseasonalization of tourist offer.

<sup>2</sup> ECA borrowing sources public aid, tourist taxes, products sale (guided visits), commissions given by suppliers and deriving from booking contracts (while service is completely free for visitors).

<sup>3</sup> Article 1 - Conditions particulières de réservation conformément à la loi du 13 juillet 1992, types de vente de la Fédération Nationale des Offices de Tourisme et Syndicats d'Initiative.

<sup>4</sup> The "Meta-manager" is a term used in managerial field by Richard Normann (1977), but it has been used in other disciplinary sectors, like tourist field (Costa 2005), with the aim to define a particular type of leadership. The Meta-manager executes, besides to operative and managerial skills, a pro-active and constructive role too, generating conditions to solve struggles and foster learning and development processes.

They have suggested multiple thematisms (rural, sportive, beach, mountain, cultural, naturalistic) turned to an heterogeneous demand (individual and groups, and among these, young people, families, sportive people, convention participants) that involve inland areas in a successful attempt of renewal of local economy, rediscovery of endogenous traditions, involvement of local community. By this way, territory is explored and evaluated as an integrated and open system that intercepts tourist dynamics and demands come from global market. Local tourism offer, based on over 240 services and activities (170 among hotels, camping, bed&breakfast, farm holidays, etc, for a total of 40 thousand sleeping accommodation; and 70 suppliers of free time activities and leisure) promotes service networks in the field of hospitality, quality of life, wellness, entertainment, sustainability that appeals to resources embedded in these territories in order to obtain real chains of local development (Faccioli 2009). Therefore, new ways of management offer are examined in order to foster virtuous cycles of integrated relations among territorial contexts (coast/hinterland), local operators, and among these and visitors and with the objective to propose new forms of local development. The connection way just described, defines a specific image of the territory and an internal cohesion. In a future sight, ECA wants to extend network to other service suppliers and other municipalities of the Var region. The primary aim is to obtain a quality mark for suppliers involved, guarantying to the visitor a widespread and share quality in the services level.

In this paper *Stl Sulcis Iglesiente* has been suggested as case study, because its strategical aim showing the intention to create an integrated tourist offer based on collaboration between actors, operating in territory, and participation of local community. In fact the idea is that management of territorial resources activate the relational component of public and private actors, showing collaboration as a pre-requisite for resources integration.

The acronym STL stands for Tourist Local System, and is a development form provided for Italian law. In fact, National law 135/2001 provides institution of Tourist Local System defined as:

*"homogeneous and integrated tourist contest, involving territorial area, also in different Regions, characterized by an integrated offer of environment and cultural attraction, including agricultural typical products and handicrafts, or spread existent of tourist enterprises single or associated"*

The definition of more detail is entrusted to single Region, as administrative division of Italian state. Sardinia region has recognized Tourist Local System with decision of regional commission n. 34/11 in 19 July 2005 saying: "for tourist local system intend the association between public and private subjects, operating in a certain territorial area, in order to realize program of action orientated to valorization of resources and promotion of tourist offer".

*Stl Sulcis Iglesientes* was born in 2007, when was presented the three-years development plan. *Stl Sulcis Iglesientes* includes territorial area of Carbonia Iglesias Province, founded in 2005. Stl was born as an agreement between local agencies, such as 23 Municipalities, Carbonia Iglesias Province, Chamber of Commerce; therefore as a top-down process, and a public process unable to involving private actors for a lacking tourist tradition and a few level of tourist structuring.

Stl gives a promotional and communicative support to private actors, and specifically to 230 accommodation (110 B&B, 53 hotel, 4 camping, 10 residence, 33 farm holidays, 16 landlords, 4 other accommodation), services, transports and incoming actors.

Geographical features and historical-artistical resources allow to arrange of a tourist offer differentiate in activities and landscape, as a resultance of integration between coastal and internal areas; from sea to mountain, from seaside activities to trekking, from archaeological sites to mining heritage valorized to touristic aim and declared an Unesco Word Heritage site.

Tourist development of mining heritage represents a patrimonialization process, able to recall territorial vocation, historically determinate, in which local actors plan centered on capability to create territorial added value. In fact, in the past mining heritage has determined culture and community behavior and now offer the opportunity for a sustainable touristic use, crossing dynamic and needs at global scale.

Local community becomes an important element of this tourist planning because harbinger of past values and functions use resources, generating different productive processes, new chains connected to tourism, becoming themselves new culture for territory (Faccioli 2009).

Creating a tourist integrated and flexible offer is STL Sulcis Iglesientes's intention. Infact, Stl web site<sup>5</sup> used as promotional tool in order to communicate territory as a unique entities, shows the intention between integration and flexibility; on one side, providing thematic information as the meeting between offer features and demand motivations, on the other side, providing to tourist opportunity to personalize travel, on line with "Your bag" section. The intention to integrate offer is visible also in tourist card, that allows to entrance in some attractions with a forfeit price, facilitating tourist in territory fruition.

Stl uses external and internal communication strategies. As to internal marketing, supporting actor collaboration, Stl gives to local actors information about events, trade fairs through on line communication, as mailing list, and a forum organized every years in order to explain Stl's activities performed and in program. Instead promotion in local radio, Tv or newspaper is used to create local community consensus and awareness of tourist process.

External communication strategy is based on emotional aspects, in order to create an image recognizable out of Sardinia, showing a wide range of intangible value, historically present in territory, such as tradition, social practices, rituals and festive events, traditional craftsmanship, productive heritage.

Particular in involvement of local community, Stl has to compare with a culture historically often not so participated, at least at the beginning of local development but following involved. This behavior has been stratified during the years and has carried out, often for productive reasons, a public intervention, and a dependency by national and international changing and decisions, but that in new planning can direct on qualitative and eco-compatible processes (Boggio, Sistu, Stanzione, 2003)

### CONCLUSION

In this paper we have shown the utility of social networks in the tourism field as a tool that allows to actors to share their activities and interests into tangible tourism products. We have also illustrated the validity of organizational models proposed and their inclusion in integrated relational tourism approach. Case studies described in this paper explain some experiences of systemic integration of tourist resources. However, the methodological approach shows advantages coming from belonging to network. For Mediterranean region the network approach is necessarily a "transcality approach" because of differentiations within its. Starting from local scale so as applied in case studies means arrange an integrated offer based on territorial needs, following its involvement in transnational network. The latest will offer opportunities to Mediterranean basin but coherence, integration and sustainability of tourist processes are guaranteed by local scale principles.

The endogenous specificities expressed at local scale do not allow to imagine a unique tourist development for the Mediterranean region because it is a melting pot of diversities and it needs differentiate logics and approaches, applied to each local context.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Boggio, F., Sistu, G., Stanzione, L. (2003), *Beni culturali e aree minerarie dismesse: il caso del Sulcis-Iglesiente (Sardegna sud-occidentale)*, in E. Dansero, C. Emanuel, F. Governa (Ed.), *I Patrimoni industriali*, Milan, FrancoAngeli

Boggio, F., Memoli, M. (2006), *Vecchia miniera e nuova industria nel paesaggio dell'Iglesiente-Sulcis*, in E. Dansero, A. Vanolo, (Ed.), *Geografie dei paesaggi industriali in Italia*, Milan, FrancoAngeli.

5 [www.sulcisiglesientes.it](http://www.sulcisiglesientes.it)

- Buhalis, D. (2000), *Marketing the Competitive Destination of the future*, *Tourism Management*, 21(1):97-116.
- Bramwell, B., Sharman, A. (1999), *Collaboration in Local Tourism Policymaking*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(2):392-415.
- Bramwell, B., Meyer, D. (2007), *Power and tourism policy relations in transition*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(3):766-788.
- Britton, S. (1991), *Tourism, Capital and Place: Towards a Critical Geography*, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 9:451-478.
- Dematteis, G. (2001), *Per una geografia della territorialità attiva e dei valori territoriali* in P. Bonora, (Ed.), *SLoT Quaderno 1*, 11-30, Bologna, Baskerville.
- Dematteis, G., Governa, F. (2005), *Territorialità, sviluppo locale, sostenibilità: il modello SLoT*, Milan, FrancoAngeli.
- Dredge, D. (2006), *Policy Networks and the Local Organization of Tourism*, *Tourism Management*, 27(2):269-280.
- Faccioli, M. (2009), (Ed.), *Processi territoriali e nuove filiere urbane*, Milan, FrancoAngeli.
- Fyall, A., Callod, C., Edwards, B. (2003), *Relationship marketing. The challenge for destinations*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30(3):644-659.
- Grasso A., Urbani L. (2001), (Ed.), *L'approccio integrato allo sviluppo locale: il sistema locale Val d'Anapo*, Milan, FrancoAngeli.
- Governa, F. (1997), *Il milieu urbano. L'identità territoriale nei processi di sviluppo*, Milan, FrancoAngeli.
- Gulotta, D., Naselli, F., Trapani, F. (2004), *Motris. Micro centralità relazionali nel Mediterraneo. Una ricerca per la mappatura dell'offerta di turismo relazionale integrato in Sicilia*, Palermo, Gullotta editore.
- Jamal, T.B., Getz, D. (1995), *Collaboration theory and community tourism planning*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 22(1):186-204.
- Jessop, B. (2001), *Institutional Re(turns) and the Strategic-Relational Approach*, *Environment and Planning A*, 33(7):1213-1235.
- Magnaghi, A. (2000), *Il progetto locale*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri.
- Murdoch, J. (1997), *Towards a Geography of Heterogeneous Associations*, *Progress in Human Geography*, 21:321-337.
- Pechlaner, H. (2000), *Cultural Heritage and Destination Management in the Mediterranean*, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 42(4):409-426.
- Pollice, F. (2002), *Territori del turismo*, Milano, Franco Angeli.
- Reed, M. G. (1997), *Power relations and community-based tourism planning*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(3):566-591.
- Saxena, G., Ilbery, B. (2008), *Integrated rural tourism, a border case study*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(1):233-254.
- Saxena, G., Ilbery, B. (2009), *Evaluating 'best practice' in integrated rural tourism: case examples from the England-Wales border region*, *Environment and Planning A*, 41:2248 - 2266
- Storper, M. (1997), *Le economie locali come beni relazionali*, *Sviluppo locale*, 4(5):5-42.
- Swyngedouw, E. (1997), *Neither Global nor Local: "Glocalization" and the Politics of Scale*, in K. Cox, (Ed.), *Spaces of Globalization: Reasserting the Power of the Local*, Guildford Press, New York, 137-166.
- Teo, P., Li, L. H. (2003), *Global and local interactions in tourism*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30(2): 287-306.

**MARKETING TOOLS AND TERRITORIAL PROCESS: THE COLLECTIVE QUALITY MARK  
"RURALITÀ MEDITERRANEA"<sup>1</sup>**

**Angela Tanania**

*Advisor for local development of "Agenzia per il Mediterraneo", Palermo, Italy  
e-mail: angelatanania@gmail.com*

**Michele Germanà**

*President of "Agenzia per il Mediterraneo", Palermo, Italy  
e-mail: presidenza@agenziaperilmediterraneo.eu*

**Abstract**

The local development policies and the governance question himself about strategies and dynamics that drive the processes of territory government. In the landscape of real territorial economies, tourism sector implicates strategic choices of exploitation and promotion.

In this domain, the Integrated Relational Tourism looks with interest at the product organized according to shared qualitative criterions, for the exploitation and the creation of synergy among territory's real resources, and establish a satisfactory relationship with inhabitants and places.

Is common belief that own territory must have a prominent role in the market and, while they try to rationalize the resources and to get the maximum output from the potentialities, the course which, from the recognition of the existence of unique resources and unquotable, strengthens and also confers to the territories market value.

In a contest of territorial appeal and competitiveness, the present contribution wants underline one of the themes connected to the territorial marketing, namely the importance of the marks area.

It will be possible to trace which are the primary elements of the territorial marketing and which are the communication's strategies for promoting an area in his complexity. Besides we can show the benefits of the use of a collective mark, especially through the experience of the collective quality mark *Ruralità Mediterranea*<sup>2</sup>.

*Reference theme:* the local development, exploitation's and promotion's systems for integrated management of territorial resources in circle of the rural Mediterranean areas.

**Approach:** methodological

**BEST PRACTICES IN THE TOOLS OF TERRITORIAL MARKETING**

In the rural world the information to the consumer - in terms of products and services pawn offered - is tied up to collective tools. Quality and peculiarity are elements appreciates and research by the final consumers.

<sup>1</sup> This contribution is the result of joint considerations made by the authors. The issues regarding territorial marketing and the different actions for local development will be dealt by A. Tanania, architect, local development expert, advisor in Agenzia per il Mediterraneo and the Local Action Groups of the Calatino area; collaborates with the University of the Studies in Palermo, Faculty of Architecture; the start of the area's mark *Ruralità Mediterranea* will be deepened by M. Germanà, architect, hocked from over 20 years in the processes of local development and President of Agenzia per il Mediterraneo.

<sup>2</sup> The mark *Ruralità Mediterranea*, ownership of Agenzia per il Mediterraneo was born within the transnational cooperation project "Re-discovery and exploitation of *Ruralità Mediterranea*", financed by the Community Initiative Programme Leader+ 2000-2006.

Exploitation and promotion of the quality through marks or certification tools is a practice spreads to every sector of economic activity, also in tourist area. Marks symbolizes a instrument to identify standard and/or qualitative criterions, in the agro products as in the tourist services, in a collective plan which valorizes territorial identity and warrants the consumer about the quality.

So the mark assumes triple nature of sign of identity, discernibility and origin from a stated and warranted territory. In this area, starts the collective mark *Ruralità Mediterranea*, been born for admitting operators of rural Mediterranean areas. The mark allows to the local entrepreneurs to organize an integrated offer, it warrants the quality of the services and it becomes tool of exploitation and promotion of the different sectors: hospitality, food farming and wine and food, handicraft productions.

**Key words:** identity: exploitation of local products, territorial marketing, know-how and new technologies

### INTRODUCTION<sup>3</sup>

The local development policies and the governance question himself about strategies and dynamics that drive the processes of territory government. In the landscape of real territorial economies, in these last years, more and more it is affirmed the conviction that tourism's sector implicates strategic choices of exploitation and promotion, producing economic and occupational labels in complementary sectors (craftsmanship, services, etc...).

The tourism represents however at the same time an extremely complex sector for inside and external dynamics, for articulation of the products (the tourist product, in fact, is composed of an elevated number of factors: receptiveness, receptive extra services, environment, climate, accessibility, etc.), for numerosness of the actors in game (Public administrations, regional, local, Corporate body of promotion, single and in partnership Private Organisms and, among these, subjects developing extremely different activities).

In this domain, the Integrated Relational Tourism looks with interest at the product organized according to shared qualitative criterions, for the exploitation and the creation of synergy among territory's real resources, and establish a satisfactory relationship with inhabitants and places.

In the outlook of the missions of the L.A.G., general objective can be considered that to organize the resources local realized to the promotion of the territories. In reason for the use that today we do of communication's and marketing's techniques, also politics of local development competes to sustain theirs »products«, that are appreciated more and more for theirs »quality«, that is tied up to the elements of »property« that postpone to the territory, to its traditions, to its culture and the social organization that animates it.

Is common belief that own territory must have a prominent role in the market and, while they try to rationalize the resources and to get the maximum output from the potentialities, the course which, from the recognition of the existence of unique resources and unquotable, strengthens and also confers to the territories market value.

For the Local Action Groups - organizations been mainly born with the mission to promote the territory and to valorize its resources -, marketing and communication are activity with strategic value. In fact, when projects integrated for the local development are programmed and are conceived they are also defined, of fact, some important premises of the strategy of communication. During the years there was many best practices with characteristics of transferability and sustainability, to promote the diffusion of the best experiences on the territories, to strengthen the planning ability and to create initiatives endowed with a suitable critical mass. In a contest of territorial appeal and competitiveness, the present contribution wants underline one of the themes connected to the territorial marketing, namely the importance of the marks area.

---

<sup>3</sup> The paper is the result of the common remarks of the authors. The introduction, the paragraph *Rural development and diversification of the activities* and the conclusions are written by Angela Tanania, while the paragraph "*Ruralità Mediterranea*" and the rural development policy are written by Michele Germanà.

It will be possible to trace which are the primary elements of the territorial marketing and which are the communication's strategies for promoting an area in his complexity. Besides we can show the benefits of the use of a collective mark, especially through the experience of the collective quality mark *Ruralità Mediterranea*.

### **RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION OF THE ACTIVITIES**

Beginning from the seventies, in the theories of the economic development, the local dimension is investigated more and more. It is born a field of studies that conjugates economic, social and morphological problem list: the territory becomes the spatial system in which interacts complexes factors social and cultural in which finds explanation the dynamics of development. This is the first footstep for the revision of the sectorial politics - industry, tourism, services, agriculture - expressions of the systemic complex that drive the runs of development.

The agricultural policy is so translated in rural development policy, in which the development is not entirely conceived just as result of the growth of the agricultural sector, but it keeps in mind of the whole the activities and the present potentialities in the territory.

For this motive the rural development policy curtains more and more to diversify the activities in the rural zones to improve the quality of the life and the attractiveness of the area. Contextually a radical looks out upon him cultural change of the economic and social operators and the territorial public corporate ad a social and institutional reorganization of the territory.

In this context the LEADER<sup>4</sup>, in comparison to the traditional development policy has offered and offers to the operators the maximum degree of share into the phase of definition of the strategies of intervention. The Leader programme introduces possibilities for locally based bottom-up approaches to rural development, imposes an intense activity of animation for the construction of a representative partnership of the local demands: they actively compete to the definition of a project development the economic, social and institutional strengths that operate in the area.

During the last decade, the community initiatives from a side and the application devices of the national and community politics from the other (for instance territorial pacts for employment and the Integrated Territorial Projects) one have sensitized further the local strengths in the debugging development plans.

A increasingly central role, in the different Leader initiatives, has been attributed to the cooperation among territories and to the constitution of networks. The constituted partenariats manifest him for the wish to promote the synergy and the collaboration among the different LAG, through the realization of common projects that puts to system the resources of the respective territories. The cooperation among rural territories represents an element of evolution in the development policy, it constitutes one of the fundamental elements to apply principles of transferability of the adopted strategies, to stimulate the comparison among areas with similar or complementary characteristics and to favor the use of innovative solutions to the common problems.

These premises allow to understand what importance can develop the transnational cooperation project »Re-discovery and exploitation of *Ruralità Mediterranea*«, which has activated direct initiatives of territorial marketing to promote, to strengthen and to commercialize the tourist offer of the involved territories. For the promotion of the »*Ruralità Mediterranea*« it has also been defined a Mark that identifies the territories, the products, the enterprises.

The inter-regional cooperation project »Rete dei distretti rurali« has operated in complementary way to the transnational initiative and it is inserted in an ampler process of international exploitation of the Mediterranean rural areas and the economic (agricultural enterprises, food farming and tourist) system.

<sup>4</sup> The LEADER+ is one of four initiatives financed by EU structural funds and is designed to help rural actors consider the long-term potential of their local region, encouraging the implementation of integrated, high-quality and original strategies for sustainable development.

In an inter territorial level, the LAG partner has developed the objective to improve the quality of the tourist offer and the local products and to contribute to their promotion through the predisposition of common and integrated promotional tools.

The quality and the typicalness are by now known elements and sought by the final consumers. The exploitation and the promotion of the quality through marks or tools of certification it is a practice that is by now spread to every sector of economic activity, also in tourist circle. The marks represent a tool to identify standard and/or qualitative criterions - in the products food farming as in the tourist services - in a collective sketch that valorizes the territorial identity and it guarantees the consumer on the quality.

The Mark »Ruralità Mediterranea«, in his conception, welcomes the principles of the Integrated Relational Tourism so that to allow the local entrepreneurs to organize an integrated offer guaranteeing the quality of the services through a tool of exploitation and promotion of the different sectors: hospitality and food farming, handicraft productions.

The element of the »relation« it tightly puts the accent on a tied up irreplaceable aspect to the social component, in the continuous supportive exchange for the integration among culture and economy maintaining priority the attention to the human relationships. A construction of an offer of tourism that is born from the territory through the sharing of values and objectives.

Every system of guarantee of territorial character necessarily has to depart from the analysis of the elements of territorial specificity (landscape, nature, history, traditions, agriculture, craftsmanship, etc.): their evaluation can be realized analyzing the interrelations that intervene to different levels among the different classes of specificity (for instance, agriculture and breeding / markets; craftsmanship / traditions; history / culture / economy).

In general considered the projects of cooperation within the Leader+ initiative, they prevail two orientations: the exploitation of the local products and the natural and cultural resources. The projects to such end will be direct, for instance, to realize plain of marketing, to create territorial marks and itineraries connected to produced specific; also, to direct the interventions to the recovery and the strengthening of the elements of the identity and the mass to system of the territorial resources. Tightly connected also the direct actions to the tourism in rural circle with the purpose to give new impulse to the territories sustaining the knowledge of the peculiarities, to increase the tourist presences to favor its charm.

The mark affirms so its triplex nature of sign of identity, noticeable and of originality: In this area, starts the collective mark *Ruralità Mediterranea*, been born for admitting operators of rural Mediterranean areas.

#### **“RURALITA’ MEDITERRANEA” AND THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

The rural development policy, have been already said, they offer the possibility to put the processes of share in the phase of definition of the local strategies into practice to the operators. The bottom-up approaches and the construction of the local partnership they activate formality participatory able to actually transform the realities to the tall levels.

From 1990, in application of the principle of subsidiarity, the principle of institutional hierarchy has been replaced by the principle of participation. In the sicilians<sup>5</sup> pilot experiences are developed particularly meaningful initiatives of local development, in which the objective is reached to individualize the formalities of activation of bottom-up decisions<sup>6</sup>.

*5 From the experience of the Nebrodi (1993) to that of the Calatino Sud-Simeto in which the undersigned has been promoting to constitute the first Agencies of Development, experimental for the integrated planning and the territorial and environmental management.*

*6 In 1998 the Agenzia di Sviluppo Integrato is born, constituted by the communes of the Calatino Sud Simeto, from economic public corporate body and from representations of category of the economic and social partnership, whose purpose is that to develop, for the area, the role of support to the planning of the local development, of promotion and of realization of programs of territorial investment, as well as of monitoring.*



They experiment the new practices, the consolidation of the technical ability of management of territorial programs of development is pursued, to make interesting and competitive the territory.

In this trial any hypotheses of development exclusively »local« it is restrictive and therefore the assistant value is given by the ability to activate network politics: the ability to apply and to effect strategies turned to put to system of contexts.

The cooperation among territories offers such opportunity and the Leader it applies at the most the principles of subsidiarity – integration – complementarity.

In the last years is improved, through the projects Leader, the offer of the territories and in the Sicilian context is promoted that is the regional agency for the coordination of the bottom up actions, so that could be put to system "head of net" of the nets<sup>7</sup>.

To create an integrated offer to promote the rural and cultural tourism in the basin of the Mediterranean is an ambitious project but the action of the Agenzia per il Mediterraneo, first organism structured for realizing a net of cooperation among the territories, it can coordinate the initiatives of development and exploitation of the territories of reference and it promotes online the put of the Sicilian, national and European LAG over that of the public-private partnership euro-mediterranean.

The *Agenzia per il Mediterraneo* is born within the project of cooperation interterritoriale "Net of the Mediterranean rural districts" and it also wants to answer to the increasing question of quality, distant from the classical circuits of the tourism of mass. Shortly time has admitted the operators of the rural territories to express an innovative and homogeneous tourist offer.

The mark *Ruralità Mediterranea* is born with the objective to valorize and to unite the territories of the rural areas of the Mediterranean through a collective system of recognizable quality; it sustains the enterprises of the hospitality, of the catering and of the products of wine and food and handicraft.

The integrated offer of the system Sicily on the markets is valorized today thanks to the tools put into effect, from the catalogs to the portal, from the showcases of tasting to the educational tour of sector, but the element of strength is the recognition of the property of the territories through a system of quality - "Ruralità Mediterranea" - enriched by the "value of bond", recognized by the tourist: the relationships are favorite interpersonal directed to authentic knowledge and friendship, the capillary relationships they are favorite among the belonging people to the net of the territories.

Such tools nevertheless must also have sustained from actions of sensitization that involve the public and private subjects in the definition and management of a new tourist offer. The Agency, in the first year of activity, has already undertaken this run, through the involvement most subject, and it has delineated the next operational tool for its "base" inside which the single lines of the regional tourist offer will integrate him to compose the system only Sicily. With the planning of the innovative managerial software, defined System Tour Operator, the tourist operators can be allowed to study an offer integrated by to promote to international level.

The complementarity of the interventions for the development, through an enough critical mass, it can develop effective politics of marketing and communication, necessary for the access to the markets, also through the promotion of the mark "Ruralità Mediterranea" to guarantee of the quality of the services, of the tourist offer and of the local products.

### CONCLUSIONS

With the actual planning (2007/2013) we aim to develop and to give continuity to the initiatives of cooperation Leader. The construction of the system of the integrated offer of Sicily and the Mediterranean and its promotion on the international markets, through the base of the »Ruralità Mediterranea« can reach result of maximum relief, as has happened for the constitution of the same Agency.

<sup>7</sup> The *Agenzia per il Mediterraneo* (2008) was instituted according to the Local Development Plans as provided by Leader+.

The interventions of cooperation - particularly for the themes that concern the tourism and the rural offer, the typical products - they propose him to connect the local potentialities with an ampler context to overcome the due structural ties to the local dimension and for the attainment of the necessary critical mass to guarantee the vitality of the projects.

The construction of a »territorial system of quality« must operationally connect and managerially the different interested areas and to allow a real trial of international exploitation of the Mediterranean rural territory all of their expressions.

Among the objectives they assume importance the ability to affirm to international level the culture of the Mediterranean rural patrimony, what potential appeal element for a sustainable tourism; to qualify the tourist and productive offer of the rural territories; to develop an integrated promotion of Mediterranean rural areas to make to know the characteristics and the productive potentialities of it; to qualify the system of the commercial relationships that can create some reliable points of reference for the local system; to build new relationships with the world of the tourist organization and the distribution of the sour-alimentary products and the craftsmanship with the purpose to open new lines of development for these sectors; to start stable interchanges with other territories.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Agenzia di sviluppo integrato S.p.A. (2001) (a cura di), PAL Calatino Sud Simeto, LEADER II Sicilia, Azione 3.1 Piano di valorizzazione turistica del Calatino.*
- AA.VV (2009), Repertorio progetti cooperazione transnazionale nel Leader+, Rete Nazionale Leader+, Ministero delle Politiche Agricole Alimentari e Forestali and ATI INEA and Agriconsulting SpA.*
- Dematteis G. (1995), Progetto implicito Il contributo della geografia umana alle scienze del territorio, FrancoAngeli, Milano.*
- GAL Kalat Est (2004), Piano di Sviluppo Locale Leader+ Calatino Est, LEADER+ Sicilia 2000-2006.*
- GAL Kalat Ovest (2004), Piano di Sviluppo Locale Leader+ Calatino Ovest, LEADER+ Sicilia 2000-2006.*
- GAL partner (2004), Progetto di Cooperazione transnazionale "Rete dei Distretti Rurali Mediterranei", LEADER+ Sicilia 2000-2006*
- GAL partner (a cura di) (2006), Progetto di Cooperazione Interterritoriale "Rete dei Distretti Rurali Mediterranei", LEADER+ Sicilia 2000-2006*
- Gulotta D., Naselli F., Trapani F. (2004) (a cura di), MOTRIS microcentralità relazionali nel Mediterraneo. Mappatura dell'offerta di turismo relazionale integrato in Sicilia, Gulotta Editore, Palermo.*
- Magnaghi A. (2000), Il progetto locale, Boringhieri, Torino.*
- Minerva M.L. (2009) (a cura di), Repertorio progetti cooperazione interterritoriale nel Leader+, Rete Nazionale Leader+. Ministero delle Politiche Agricole Alimentari e Forestali and ATI INEA and Agriconsulting SpA.*
- Tarangioli S. (2009) (a cura di), Rural and Quality Food Districts as Governance Instruments: The Italian Experience, Ministero delle Politiche Agricole Alimentari e Forestali and ATI (INEA and Agriconsulting SpA).*
- Tenna F. (2008) (a cura di), Working Paper, Il Marketing territoriale, Ministero delle Politiche Agricole Alimentari e Forestali and ATI (INEA and Agriconsulting SpA).*

#### **Website references**

- [www.agenziaperilmediterraneo.eu](http://www.agenziaperilmediterraneo.eu)
- [www.reterurale.it](http://www.reterurale.it)
- [www.ruralitamediterranea.com](http://www.ruralitamediterranea.com)

**THE FOOD EXPERIENCE OF TOURISTS IN SICILY; STEREOTYPES, EXPECTATIONS AND SATISFACTION/DISSATISFACTION FACTORS IN THE ONLINE TRAVEL BLOGS AND RESTAURANT REVIEWS**

**Alessandro Vaccina**

*University of Palermo – Dep. Economics, Viale delle Scienze, 90128 Palermo*

*PHD in Tourism Marketing*

*e-mail: ale\_vaccina@yahoo.it*

**Abstract**

The Internet is immensely popular with travellers and widely used by the tourism industry. Travel sites have become the most widely utilized online channels for booking and purchase travel, lodging, and complete vacation packages for millions of travellers around the world.

The role of an Internet website has changed from a simple indication of presence on the World Wide Web into a vital marketing and customer communication tool. Today, a website represents a new platform for customer interaction. The Web offers spaces for spontaneous communication that represent a strong enhancing of the traditional word-of-mouth, with valuable “customer generated” information and comments, regarding both the tourist services and the destination in the broadest sense with his specific characteristics.

The establishment of those factors which contribute to the overall life satisfaction of a travel experience, obtained through a spontaneous information source, could be used periodically by industry experts to gauge the “health” of the industry in its contribution to the overall life satisfaction of tourism consumers. Among the factors above mentioned, the so-called “food experience” is of course important for a lot of different destinations, but this is especially true for Italy. The importance of food in Italy (and in the Mediterranean area in general) is well-known around the world, very often through stereotypes, and this cannot avoid to have an influence both on the expectations before the vacation, and on the final level of satisfaction of tourists.

This paper is part of a wider research in progress about the word of mouth on the web, seen as a public image of a region, a town or a specific lodging service, becoming another crucial parameter in consumer decision-making. The research intend to understand the significance of the Internet as a communication medium and e-commerce market for the tourism industry and vacation consumption, and to describe the contents of travel blogs, tourism forum, travel reports and hotel reviews regarding a single region of Italy (Sicily). This article is dedicated to the contents of the restaurant reviews and travel blogs in Sicily, considering causes of satisfaction/dissatisfaction food – related.

After a website selection made through the page rank of Google, the comments contained in travel reports and restaurant reviews of tourists in Sicily after the travel experience in a given period (2004 – 2008) were analysed and selected considering the presence of mentions, positive or negative, of any kind of experience regarding food in Sicily, and their frequency. The satisfaction/dissatisfaction factors regarding various aspects (time and logistic, prices, variety and quality of food, the existence of a language barrier) have been divided into related to a service ( meals in a specific restaurant/hotel ) and general about the food in the destination considered (especially in comparison with the rest of Italy).

**Key words/themes:** Internet, food experience, blogs and reviews on line, customer-generated, destination image

## INTRODUCTION

The internet has become the most critical marketing channel for the tourism industry, in terms of providing information, selling services of any kind, and making any specific destination visible and accessible on the Web. Consumers increasingly use it as a source of travel information. They plan, search for, buy and modify their travel and tourism products and services on the Internet. According to a recent survey of 2,931 online U.S. adults ages 18 and over ([www.harrisinteractive.com](http://www.harrisinteractive.com)), nearly three in four (73%) who stay in hotels when they travel say they start their stay by researching hotel accommodations online, according to the survey commissioned by VFM Interactive and conducted by Harris Interactive.

This paper is part of a research in progress, that will be finished and published within the current year 2009. The research purpose is to analyse the contents of the sites that offer spaces for spontaneous comments, tips and reviews of services, or of the global experience, regarding a specific region of Italy (Sicily). A growing number of tourists look for information given by other tourists (Watzlavic 1972, Trevisani 2002), on websites where everybody interact with each other in a context of equality, creating a relationship among customers where all the "actors" of the communication itself start from the same level.

The vigorous growth of the internet has drawn a lot of attention from both academic researchers and business operators. Internet publications on tourism marketing have grown significantly in the last few years. Some have provided a necessary background to some in-depth discussions of the various issues of marketing tourism on the internet. Some of these articles have highlighted the internet's impact on tourism distribution. However, bigger efforts should be made to understanding the internet's role in tourism marketing and as to how tourism organizations and destinations can exploit its full potential.

The Internet has transformed the well-known marketing communication model from one-to-many to one-on-one. The traditional print, radio and television, follow the passive one-to-many communication model. This way a company reaches many current and potential customers through repeated broadcasts of the same message. This traditional approach presents three main problems (Liu 2000):

- The message to every consumer is generic
- Wasted exposures to uninterested audiences
- Competing and conflicting messages being sent to consumers.

The Internet gives the ability to address each consumer personally. Each time a user visits a web site its server has a record of the user's electronic address. This information will help, to send a personalised message to a smaller target audience or an individual consumer.

Global exposure is of prime importance for tourism destinations. Till the mid-1990s destination promotions were entirely reliant on travel agencies to market its products. The web has enabled tourism destinations to market themselves through well designed and well promoted websites. Doing business on the web has helped avoid regulations and restrictions that companies must follow when physically doing business in other countries. For example in some countries, foreign travel companies are forbidden to operate. Finally, compared with the traditional media, the web allows unlimited access for hundreds of millions users to an unlimited amount of information (Liu 2000).

In tourism the web-based distribution systems can help satisfy the consumer needs of easy access to a wide choice of information. Increasingly tourist satisfaction depends on the timely availability of accurate and relevant information. Improved access to information on all aspects of tourist activities has made it possible for marketers to offer personalized services at the same prices as standard packages.

But also the customer-generated information are growing in importance through the web, changing the traditional word-of-mouth of potential and effective customers into something with a power and an intensity never seen before, that probably will influence the tourism market with more intensity in the close future.

With the Internet, virtually unlimited amount of information can be stored at a web site and an unlimited number of users can retrieve it at any time from anywhere in the world. The Web can not only provide

more information but also provide it from a much wider range of sources; while in the past, tourists were almost exclusively dependent upon representations and descriptions obtained through the travel trade. The Web can also deliver the information in a greater variety of formats, from text to photos, graphs, audio and video clips, whereas in the past, tourists primarily relied on the printed brochures as the limited copies of videos of a limited number of tourism destinations or holidays were only available to the major travel agents.

What is written on the web is public, and visible for the surfers, sometimes for years, without password. Every information coming from spontaneous sources, not from marketing - oriented communication channels, can be classified as "word of mouth" (R. Wilson, 1998).

With the internet, WOM has empowered himself. Word of mouth has risen almost as swiftly as the Internet in becoming an equal force in marketing products. While the Internet affects the way to sell products to customers, word of mouth affects the way to promote products to them

In their spontaneous reviews, the tourists report various reasons of satisfaction/complaint (about the services or in general about the destination) personally experienced, and they often talk about some aspects considered important in the classical customer satisfaction studies. But in this case, the traveller feedback is not obtained through a validated questionnaire, no samples techniques are used, and the statistics standards of significance, content validity and reliability are not present. Maybe, this is the reason why the contents of these websites are still not frequently debated in the marketing literature.

Above all, proceedings and results of the customer satisfaction surveys are not public. The reviews on the web can be consulted virtually by every potential tourist, with an influence on his decision process (Trevisani 2002).

Here, the main interest is not to analyse the contents of complaints as if they were obtained from a statistic sample, to observe a whole universe behind; the main purpose is to start to describe the characteristics of the public image of a region, a specific area or a lodging service, that will be perceived by the potential tourist looking for information from other customers.

If we want to know how the destination is perceived by the tourist after the visit, and his final level of satisfaction, it is necessary to quantify the frequency and intensity of attractiveness factors, for every tourist destination. The customer - generated information permits to reduce the influence of the negative factors and to emphasize the positive factors, up to use them to build a new and better image of the destination.

### **FOOD EXPERIENCE AND TOURISM**

Until a recent past, in most cases, the "local food" was far from being first in the list of priority for the majority of tourists, and very often this important cultural aspect of a lot of countries was ignored by the visitors, when not labelled as "unsafe", unhealthy", "disgusting" and so forth. The mass-tourism industry used to guarantee a standardized culinary experience, where the food choices were a few and very predictable, the same all over the world, and every kind of organised tourism package was structured with the intention to eliminate any chance of "encounter with local foods".

In the last 2 decades, a lot of things are changed. For decades the process of globalization has been creating a standardization in the consumption and the behaviour of individuals, to the detriment of local identities. The imposition of external models has led to the subsequent abandonment of certain traditional foods.

But today's tourist is more cultured than visitors of 20 years ago, is well travelled, is searching for new experiences, is concerned about the environment, and wants to experience the local culture when he goes on holiday.

The last few years has seen an unprecedented interest in the marketing and development of culinary tourism, both overseas and in Europe (Hall, 2003). Indeed, local food and beverages have become integral

components of the tourism experience (Hall, et.al., forthcoming). According to Fiona Jeffery, Group Exhibition Director of World Travel Market, who undertook the independent research with 2000 people throughout the UK of all ages and socio economic groups, "Food tourism today is where eco-tourism was 20 years ago; people are starting to take an interest". The industry needs to take note and use the opportunity to its advantage. A growing number of tourists are starting to refuse a standardized experience and food is a manifestation of a destination's culture ([www.tomorrowstourist.com](http://www.tomorrowstourist.com)).

«The last five years has seen an incredible shift in the way holidays are marketed and it's all because people are demanding authentic experiences, said Erik Wolf, president of the International Culinary Tourism Association, a non-profit group representing more than 500 tourism businesses in 19 countries (<http://www.hospitalitynet.org>).

The marketing analyst Ian Yeoman writes that food is a significant aspect of the tourist's experience of a destination, driven by the growing trends of authenticity and the need to have a less standardized experience. Food tourism today shapes not only traditional destinations like France or Italy and California whereas a lot of emerging destinations such as China, India, Vietnam and Mexico food plays an important part of the overall experience. A minority of tourist today still engage in looking for well-know foods when travelling in foreign countries. Gone are the days of the British tourist wanting 'fish and chips' in Ibiza or Americans eating only in fast food chains when abroad. When on holiday, food becomes the social occasion when busy people create a space to connect with friends and family members who may in general be less time-impoverished. Food becomes a human-space within frequently too much harried lives. As the tourist ask for new experiences increases, the 'authentic' food experience becomes more important. Authenticity is intended as food that is simple, rooted in the region, natural, ethical, and so forth. (Yeoman, 2008).

Sicily of course, as part of Italy, but with the added value of being more specific, original and less known by foreign tourists (so, as a consequence, less stereotyped when it comes to food), is part of this process. Long Travel, a specialist in rural Italy and Sicily, claimed around 85% of its clients now asked specifically for food advice when booking. Contracts manager Laura Bell said: "Customers have very high expectations of the food in Italy because it receives so much good press and is always featured in cookery programmes." "Getting back to nature and trying out dishes in a traditional setting is a must for our clients" ([www.airhighways.com](http://www.airhighways.com)).

Despite the increasing recognition of the role that food can have in attracting visitors there has been little specific focus on food and tourism linkages. As such there are considerable opportunities in more explicitly linking and marketing the food products in a tourism context, as part of the local heritage, or an "historical landmark" in itself in some cases. This paper reports on an exploratory examination and analysis of the nature and extent of linkages and relationships between the food experience and traveller satisfaction/dissatisfaction in Sicily. Based on the contents of restaurant reviews and travel blogs written by tourists after a trip to Sicily, it examines the strength of the potential of food tourism, highlights motivation, expectations, practices and perceptions that restrict the development of productive linkages between tourism and regional/traditional (or new and original) food sectors in a specific destination, and explores opportunities for strategic marketing activities that will benefit both industries at both a micro (i.e. individual enterprise) and a macro (destination product development and marketing level). Food in general and local restaurants are now vital components of the tourism experience, and are increasingly being seen as prime travel motivators in their own right. Looking at the interrelationship between food, the destination image and the tourist experience.

#### **NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE FACTORS IN RESTAURANT REVIEWS: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEEDINGS**

Online restaurant reviews are the norm and companies like [www.5pm.co.uk](http://www.5pm.co.uk) use the easyJet principles of yield management allowing consumer's discounts, reviews, auctions for exclusive restaurants, reservations

and for restaurants a distribution system for selling unused capacity. But the research is in progress, and at moment limited to the main travel site, [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com). purchased for is relevance on the search engine Google, searching for "Sicily restaurant reviews". About the relevance of a website homepage, the PageRank rating used by Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) relies on the nature of the web by using its vast link structure as an indicator of an individual page's value. In essence, Google interprets a link from page A to page B as a vote, by page A, for page B. But, Google looks at more than the sheer volume of votes, or links a page receives; it also analyzes the page that casts the vote. Votes cast by pages that are themselves "important" weigh more heavily and help to make other pages "important."

Important, high-quality sites should receive a higher PageRank. Of course, important pages mean nothing to you if they don't match your query. So, Google combines PageRank with text-matching techniques to find pages that are both important and relevant to your search. Google goes far beyond the number of times a term appears on a page and examines all aspects of the page's content (and the content of the pages linking to it) to determine if it's a good match for the query.

Every reviewer on this site can rate the restaurant from 0 to 5, and write a comment, sharing his experience with others. In this article, are considered the mentions of dissatisfaction factors (the satisfaction factors were, as stated above, too sparse and generic to be useful at this stage) encountered in the restaurant reviewed. The mentions were found reading directly all the reviews considered, the total number. In the study, we still haven't used any electronic program for the text analysis, and a direct human reading was preferred, given also the limited number of reviews, at least at the start of the research. This would not be possible choosing a destination like Rome, or Florence. In that case, the number of reviews only on this site is more than 5000! Also for Sicily, considering the constant increase, soon will become impossible to read all the reviews and the use of a statistic sample proceeding and electronic tools for text analysis will be necessary.

Table 1. Number of restaurant reviews 2003 - 2008 in Sicily

| 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 28   | 87   | 190  | 257  | 330  | 471  |

The influence of this kind of WOM among the tourists in Sicily is increasing every year. The total number of reviews considered here is 1364. The total number of restaurants reviewed in the whole region present on the site is 597. 709 reviews are entirely positive, more than the 50%

Table 2. Main dissatisfaction factor (written firstly in the text in case of more factors present in a single review) mentioned in restaurant reviews in Sicily

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| Price                              | 261 |
| Service(slow/indifferent/unpolite) | 134 |
| Language barrier                   | 96  |
| Opening hours                      | 68  |
| Food variety                       | 43  |
| Food quality                       | 30  |
| Standardized/globalized food       | 23  |
| Total                              | 655 |

Apparently, the main emerging issues are all about the quality of service and the approach with the foreign tourist. What we obtain through the spontaneous customer reviews is a general vision of food related services offering good and mainly local food, (but extremely overpriced in comparison with the

expectations), and perceived as unfit for good service standards. A good point is the low percentage of complaints regarding food quality (words like “freshness”, “authenticity”) , and the low presence of “standardized food”, expressed often by the expression “something you could find everywhere in the world”. Nevertheless, the number of complaints regarding the service and the low level of customer care is still extremely high, and is doubtless that the final effect is high probability of “characterizing” Sicily as a destination with high prices and an underdeveloped food industry despite the general good level of food quality, that adds to a general lack of tourism infrastructure.

In this context, is evident the existence of a problem regarding English not widely spoken.

### FOOD MENTIONS IN TRAVEL BLOGS AND REPORTS ABOUT SICILY

In this part of the study, we’ve been searching for mentions of encounters with local food in the travel reports, and blogs written by the tourist during or after the experience.

Here we find another kind of problem, more difficult to cope with for the tourism marketing. A territory characterized by words like “feeling”, “sensation”, “impression”, where is really hard to narrow down to a specific factor to explain the final effect of satisfaction/dissatisfaction of a food tourism experience. The awareness of the existence of a problem is of course the first step for any problem solving strategy, but isn’t easy to go further when the specific causes are not communicated, or expressed only in part. In the reviews we judge a single specific service, but in travel reports/blogs we judge a whole location, whit its attractions, its people and its “way of life”.

The blog search engines considered in this study, among the first five to appear after a query on Google ( searching “blog search engine” as query) are:

[www.blogdigger.com](http://www.blogdigger.com)

[www.Blogsearchengine.com](http://www.Blogsearchengine.com)

<http://Blogsearch.google.com>

The blogs found with comments and tell-tale stories regarding a tourism experience in Sicily at December 31, 2007 (searching as keywords “Sicily travel”) are 905, and their number was constantly increasing until 2008.

*Table 3 Number of blogs found with comments regarding a tourism experience in Sicily at December 31, 2007*

| 2005  | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|-------|------|------|------|
| 45    | 233  | 281  | 346  |
| Total |      |      | 905  |

Also in this case, the limited number of blogs and reports about Sicily allows a direct reading of all the texts. Only in the year 2007, Rome have more than 4000 blogs found.

The presence of any mention local food experience-related in the blogs was taken into consideration at first. About the language barrier, the blogs and reports considered contain a peculiar result for Sicily, not entirely unexpected, but that should be alarming for the local tourism trade.

*Table 4. Presence of language problems mentioned in travel blogs regarding Sicily*

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Presence food experience | 824 |
| Absence food experience  | 81  |



The slightest majority of the blogs and reports contains at least a mention of local food experience, of any kind, but mostly we encountered general comments and criticism, not referred to a single good/bad experience, but to the whole location. Even in this case, the majority of mentions are totally positive. (501)

Table 5. Main dissatisfaction factor (written firstly in the text in case of more factors present in a single review) mentioned in restaurant reviews in Sicily

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Food variety (only local/predictable) | 101 |
| Opening hours                         | 87  |
| Language barrier                      | 40  |
| Price                                 | 38  |
| Low level service                     | 25  |
| Food quality                          | 19  |
| Standardized/globalized food          | 18  |
| Total                                 | 323 |

Is interesting to notice that the language barrier as dissatisfaction factor in the food experience rank third in both the blogs and the reviews, two different contexts of communication.

When tourists talk about food in a destination in general, to resume a whole experience in different places and occasions, the main issue, surely unexpected to most stakeholders in Sicily, seems to be variety of food, intended as a general lack of choices. Even the problem of the very limited opening times (impossible to find a restaurant open before 8.30 pm, is the most frequent remark) appears much more relevant in the blogs than in the reviews. The reverse happens for the price/service related factors.

## CONCLUSIONS

Summarizing, the present work is part of a wider research in progress about the impact of word of mouth among tourists on the web; this paper aimed to determine the number of language issues reported by travellers on the internet about a given region (Sicily), regarding services or the destination in itself.

The fact that has been highlighted in the article is the general lack of a good service standards along with overpriced food and an apparently unexpected language barrier for English speakers, expressed by a big number of tourists in the two communication context considered, both in the restaurant reviews and blogs.

The tourists posting reviews and writing blogs are often the same, but they seem to consider some factors giving a different priority level if they are using one communication context or the other. While the positive appreciation, both in the blogs and in restaurant reviews, are in most cases generic, “very good” can indicate a good level of satisfaction for the single tourist’s perception, but nothing more, in the negative comments more specific words adjectives are present.

The price and service issues result as being very important in the value perception of the tourism experience of the independent visitors. If the feeling of being ignored, cheated, misunderstood in a restaurant can be generalized as always negative, on the other hand it could stimulate, in a segment of customers, the enforcing of a negative opinion extended to the whole destination and the motivation to communicate it to the other potential tourists through the web.

In the case of a single restaurant the problem could be seen as the problem of a single structure/ stakeholder, but when the destination on the whole is involved in the negative comment, the public image of the territory will have to cope with problems, both in the short and in the long term, especially the image of an Italian region, where the "good food " represents one of the few positive stereotypes. One of the strength points of the region could be compromised.

Also the food shops owners, and restaurant managers who operate in the destination, when interested in tourism-related business, should consider the necessity of a stronger effort in adapting their work/ business standards with the expectations of foreign tourists, through different criteria of selection for the human resources.

Interesting peculiarities regarding the destination image before and after the experience are starting to be visible in the research. Probably the most unexpected finding regards the "variety issue" or lack of food choices, the most relevant aspect emerged from the travel blogs, unexpected at least for the self-centered vision that part of Sicilian (stakeholders and chefs included) have about the "richness" of their gastronomy. On the other hand, the good quality of local food seems to be not discussed, and perceived positively by a big majority of tourists.

This study has spent considerable time on what may seem very mundane details of tourist practices. In closing, it is worth underlining that the mundane is not something inherently of little importance. To those unfamiliar with reports, or studies that focus on practice, the mundane can appear as a departure into the insignificant. However, as Barry Brown work (2007) states, "the massive pervasiveness of mundane action makes the impact of these practices both powerful and subtle. Seemingly trivial details, such as moment of troubles in communication, can have a large impact on tourist practice worldwide."

These first results are interesting and, in part, unexpected. Further results of the research in progress will be probably useful in a new way to keep under constant monitoring the word of mouth among tourists and its consequences, building an always renewing public image of a destination and its tourism related services.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Brown, B. (2006), *"Working the problems of Tourism"*. University of Glasgow, UK, Copyright © 2006 Elsevier Ltd  
All rights reserved.

Hull, *Food Tourism Around The World: Development, Management and Markets*, McGraw-Hill, 2003

Ian Yeoman "Why food tourism is becoming more important?"; 11 August 2008 Article URL:

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/10.1108/eb008683>

Kotler, P. (1996), *Marketing Management*, Hoepli, Milano

Ricolfi L. (1999), *"la ricerca qualitativa"* Carocci, Milano

Trevisani D. (2001), *"Psicologia di Marketing e Comunicazione"*, Franco Angeli, Milano

Vaccina A. (2004), *The »electronic world of mouth«*. *Travel comments, tips and stories on the web. Eurochrie 2004 - Global Issues and trends in the Hospitality and tourism industries*, Ankara 3 - 5 novembre 2004,

Vaccina A. (2006), *"Public image on the internet of lodging services in Sicily in the spontaneous hotel reviews of the tourists"*, 2nd workshop on tourism and ICT – dynamic and intelligent configuration of tourism services", University of Twente (NL) 30 – 31 may 2006

Vaccina A. (2007) *»Satisfaction/dissatisfaction of cruise tourists in Sicily in the online reviews«* Atlas conference Viana do Castelo (Portugal) 4 - 6 september 2007

Watzlavick P., Beavin J. H., Jackson D. D. (1971), *Pragmatica della comunicazione umana*, Astrolabio, Milano

Wilson R. (1998), *"Marketing passaparola"*, Franco Angeli, Milano.

Zhenhua Liu, (2000), *"Internet Tourism Marketing Potential and Constraints"*, Fourth International Conference "Tourism in Southeast Asia & Indo-China: Development, M

## *Policies*



**CINQUE TERRE NATIONAL PARK:  
A MODEL OF INTEGRATED RELATIONAL TOURISM BETWEEN TRADITION AND INNOVATION**

**Carmela Cacia**

*Professore a contratto in «Geografia Politica ed Economica», Facoltà di Scienze Politiche – University of Messina, Italy  
e-mail: carmenccacia@tiscali.it*

**Abstract**

In the eastern part of Ligurian Riviera, in the province of La Spezia (Italy), five small villages cling on a rocky territory overlooking the sea, enclosed between two promontories: they are the marine villages of Monterosso, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore, best known like Cinque Terre.

Their seacoast, belonging to a marine protected area, is characterized from amazing and picturesque terraces, with the secular dry-stones extending for thousands of kilometers.

These terraces had been built since thousand years and mainly cultivated as grapevines, creating a unique landscape, so to be inscripted in the UNESCO *World Heritage List*. They were risking to disappear, during 20's, because of the difficult job conditions, the inhabitants of this area began to abandon their lands. The depopulation caused its degradation, the landslides undermined the terraces and the traditional techniques of cultivation ran the risk to be lost.

From 90's the landscape of Cinque Terre changed again, thanks also to the institution of the National Park, that promoted the safeguard of the landscape through an imposing deed of requalification of the territory, revitalizing an area that risked to go destroyed. The innovative plan of conservation contemplated the reconstruction of the terraces, giving new impulse to a good quality agricultural production, mainly the grape growing, based on the rediscovery of the native grapevines. The positive effects of the reconstruction of the dry-stones interested also other cultivations like olive groves, medicinal plants, tomatoes, lemons and basil.

The recovery of the terraces and the differentiation of the agricultural production have gone hand in hand. Moreover, the Park has chosen to invest in renewable energies and new technologies, bringing telecom innovations and becoming one of the advanced tips in the IT field.

Through the environment protection, the use of territorial marketing that values the quality of the products and the investment in the hi-tech, the Park managed to requalify the tourist offer through the rediscovery of the traditional values and the local identities deep seated in the territory, becoming a destination for important flows of international tourists.

The Park, even if keeps an extraordinary ability of protection, has also become a company that closes its balance with a profit and assures the full occupation in the territory. Such an experience has assumed also a strong symbolic value, becoming the symbol of local development model.

The aim of the present job, therefore, is to demonstrate how a correct management of the territory, carried ahead both with a business spirit and with a particular attention to the environment sustainable, is able to throw again an entire productive system: economic increase and social development have gone hand in hand, having allowed the conservation of an ancient inhabited area and the recovery of traditional knowledges, but with a modern spirit capable to receive the opportunities deriving from the technological innovations.

**Key words:** Cinque Terre, Terraces, Development, Sustainability, Innovation

## INTRODUCTION

“Paesaggio roccioso e austero, simile ai più forti di Calabria, asilo di pescatori e di contadini, nuda, solenne cornice delle più primitive d’Italia.

Monterosso, Vernazza, Corniglia, nidi di falchi e di gabbiani, Manarola e Riomaggiore sono, procedendo da ponente a levante, i nomi di pochi paesi o frazioni di paesi così asserragliati fra le rupi e il mare”.

Eugenio Montale, Fuori di casa.

The sea villages of Monterosso, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore located in the eastern Liguria, in the province of La Spezia, better known as *Cinque Terre*, present a peculiar terraced landscape which made them famous all over the world.

Placed on a rocky territory which drops vertically in the sea, the five small towns, delimited by two promontories at their ends, belong to an area of ancient human settlement. On these places, the marks the human being has imprinted have created along the time scenographic landscapes with a strong visual impact, as well as a historical-cultural stratification of great importance for the identity of the area.

Given the morphology of the land, the necessity of terracing the slopes facing the settled areas has been felt by its inhabitants since remote period. Testimonies of hard working and of an aged material culture, such terraces continue up to date, to mark the skyline of the hilly and mountainous landscape of a great majority of the territory of the Cinque Terre.

Presently, such geographic area is object of different administrative programs. In 1997 it has been declared as a UNESCO Heritage Site. In the same year, it has been created a marine protected area and in 1991 it has been established the Cinque Terre National Park which also includes the rocky outcrops of the coast belonging to the area of the park itself.

Such needs for protection started being felt from the 90’s, mainly to preserve the uniqueness of the landscape of the place, threatened by the environmental deterioration which had affected it following a depopulation process that took place during the 20’s of the last century. Today instead, because of the repopulation and the strong touristic flow, the protection program is mainly oriented to safeguard the authenticity of the place against the possible obliterating effects which the uncontrolled mass tourism inevitably brings along. It is our intention through this work, to reflect particularly on the territorial dimension of the Cinque Terre National Park, as a meeting sphere of different factual and perceptive cultures of the area. An identification of the operative trends, intended to pursue the objectives of the environmental protection and the development of the economy of the settled communities, is aimed to be accomplished.

In fact the participation of the local communities to the establishment and management of the park, as well as the expectation for their propositional role and social control is deemed fundamental for the success of the initiative. An organized perspective, based on entrepreneurial approach resulting from communicative and decisional process, together with managerial forms widely shared.

Purpose of the present contribution, therefore, is to show how precise protection programs, that keep into account and respect the “genius loci”, and might strengthen rather than perverting the nature of the identity of the places. With the revitalization of the area in a modern way, yet respecting the original culture repository of a natural knowledge which has shaped such scenery, it is possible to conjugate the use of the cultural heritage with the conservation of its original meanings, a formula which can be a real catalyst of interest from both national and international communities.

## THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The theoretical and methodological approach that we have followed in this work has privileged a deep bibliographic study which aimed, as main purpose, to point out the changes which are taking place in the field of tourism. Secondly, to focus particularly on the rural tourism, as a form of visiting attractions compatible with both, the respect and safeguard of the environment and the culture of the places.

It could be defined as integrated relational tourism.

Subsequently, in the framework of the rural areas that can be partially converted in places of touristic destination, we stressed out the very particular case of the mountainous and hilly areas, which display the lay-out of their slopes in the shape of terraces for agricultural purposes. Even in this case, with the support of deep bibliographic research, the peculiarities of the areas and the distinctive features of the land have been established, and it has been understood why today they exercise a strong touristic attraction, which partially contributes to modify the original functions of these territories.

Finally, talking about the terraced slopes, we have taken into account the case-study which is the main subject of this work: Cinque Terre National Park. Such institution is meant to take care of conservation and valorization of the portion of the Liguria territory where the terracing of the rural areas, together with the distinctive urbanization of the five sea villages, have originated a natural and human landscape which is at the same time unique and irreplaceable, to the point of being included in the UNESCO Heritage list.

Cinque Terre National Park, making use, at the same time, of entrepreneurial modalities and new technologies is succeeding to conjugate needs which appeared to be opposite: innovation and tradition; needs for protection and marketing strategies; respect for the environmental balance and tourism; becoming in such a way a model to be followed and to be applied in similar context. The necessity for protection of the area remains the primary goal. Nevertheless, it can be wisely combined with the management of a business, creating a formula which could guarantee good results either for the safeguard of the heritage under protection or to a more strictly economic level.

#### **RURAL TOURISM AS EXAMPLE OF “INTEGRATED RELATIONAL TOURISM”**

As is known, thanks to the general increase in per capita income and free time available to workers, the increasing level of schooling, the average lifespan and technological advancement of communication system, the temporary movement of people from places of habitual residence to others, over time, have increased so that today tourism<sup>1</sup> is considered one the most important factors of territorial organization, for its ability to generate incisive changes in natural landscapes and anthropic and to establish close relation with the various productive sectors and to integrate different cultures.

The new structure of post-industrial society has changed the habits of tourists, making it possible and necessary to stagger the holidays throughout the year, in addition the modern tourist is not content to travel single issue, but wants to meet different needs (recreation, relaxation, culture, trivia , care, etc..) and acquire many experience.

Despite these trends, even in the era of globalization, tourism still remains an activity closely linked to the territory, since the use of the good tourist is necessarily the place of supply, which means the necessity, desirability, of provide places of arrival of adequate accommodation ready to seize and to meet the needs of the tourist-consumers.

The factors mentioned above, together with a new “environmental consciousness”, have helped to produce for several years, profound changes in the tourism sector, so much so that the next generation of the traditional tourist, or someone who wants to find the chosen destination services and comfort similar to that of “home” gradually has grown a new generation of tourists eager to immerse themselves in the culture of the places, to establish ties with people and things, seeking new experiences and authentic<sup>2</sup>.

*1 (Citarella, 1997) - Since tourism has affected entire populations, particularly in industrialized countries, scientific research has highlighted the cross-sectoral and multidimensional nature of the sector and stressed the need for a systematic treatment, through cooperation of experts pertaining to different sectors: it affirmed the contribution of both the methodological centrality of economic matters, to analyze the cost-benefits of tourism and the influence on the trade balance, and the humanities to interpret the evolution of relations between man and land.*

*2 Tourists “in search of experience” is characterized by the strong sense of rejection felt toward the tourist industry, aspiring instead to enter into contact “direct” with the place visited. You must be interpreted in this sense that the interest of “new tourists” in that mode of use “alternative” tour of the property, which allows it to establish direct contact with a reality of*

Tourism, in fact, belongs to the category of “relational goods”, in that it generates the matching of different people and produces only be useful if shared with others, and the exaltation of that particular aspect that the new generation of tourists looking at the moment which chooses a destination.

Should therefore interpret these new requests and implement those actions necessary to adapt supply to demand. To this end, they encourage forms of “alternative” tourism (such as rural) that make available services and local products, in order to achieve multiple purposes, such as to satisfy the needs of the tourists of greater peace, but also to ensure the survival of marginal agriculture, reuse of buildings, to support the work at home and, especially, to strengthen the relationship between city and countryside.

A confirmation of the above, there is a record even in Italy, the strong growth in demand towards certain types of holiday, such as green tourism, wine and food tourism, rural tourism, cultural tourism and religion, etc..

In this context is placed the revival of rural areas<sup>3</sup> as places of tourist interest, which is one of the most significant and economically more interesting than the profound transformation of the tourism phenomenon, which can indicate with “varying demand”.

Certainly, they are spaces that are still marginal if compared to the dominant streams of domestic and international tourism, as peripheral to the main routes, but are subject to further enhancement and increase in balance with the needs of sustainability.

Developing forms of hospitality in respect of the territory, in addition to responding to real needs of the market, perfectly embodies the aspiration of a model of tourism development compatible, based on resources and the territorial specificities, attentive to the quality of product and process, aware of importance of conservation and enhancement of local identities.

This awareness seems to emerge in the new projects of territorial planning of public bodies responsible, who, though so far have been directing their investments for the creation of hotels, resorts, residence, consumption of land and causing damage to the enjoyment of the landscape itself, lately seem to pay more attention to new forms of hospitality. This awareness seems to emerge in the new projects of territorial planning of public bodies responsible, who, though so far have been directing their investments for the creation of hotels, resorts, residence, consumption of land and causing damage to the enjoyment of the landscape itself, lately seem to pay more attention to new forms of hospitality. In recent years, in fact, some administration “farsighted”, he strongly favoured the new kinds of accommodation (Bed & Breakfast, farmhouses, historical houses, hotels disseminated) which also support economically, thus becoming a “model” to observe, analyze and possibly imitate.

### **THE TERRACES AS PECULIAR ELEMENTS OF THE LIGURIAN TERRITORY**

Recently, is emerging more and more the idea that the agricultural landscape should be protected, managed and enjoyed, as it represents a store of renewable resources related to the identity of places and communities. This interest in the rural areas is motivated at the legislative level: in Europe thanks to the “*European Landscape Convention*”, which art. 2 highlights the important role of “landscapes of everyday life” in creating the European rural landscape and considers the contexts in which to implement the strategies of participation, and enhancement of sustainable development in Italy thanks to the “*Code on Cultural Heritage and Landscape*” as art. 143 provides that the lines of urban development and housing should be consistent with the different levels of recognized value, with special attention to agricultural areas and UNESCO sites (Mautone and Ronza, 2006).

*their own, having an experience, then, more spend a simple residence, and thereby enrich their own identity.*

*3 Tourism in rural areas appears to be a model of endogenous development and local entrepreneurship bound tightly interlinked with socio-economic activities of the community, contributing thus to keeping alive the his “storical memory” of places. For these reasons and the impact on environmental systems definitely limited compared to other forms of tourism, it represents a model of sustainable development capable of preserving and enhancing biodiversity of rural areas, meant not only in strictly environmental, but also in cultural terms.*



An obvious example of how cultural and economic values may lead to an important heritage and cultural landscape is reflected in the detailed arrangement of hills and mountain slopes for agricultural purposes, where the ridge slopes with terracing, particularly if supported by low dry stone, is among the most fascinating human interventions on the territory for its visual impact<sup>4</sup>.

The interest of agricultural terraces and cultural capital is very high for their spread on the historical value constructive value for the landscape and environment and the important function of stabilizing slopes and retention of rainwater.

In such contexts, rural locations, structures for water resources, dry-stone walls, types of cultivation, they present themselves as the most complete synthesis of that relationship between local communities and the physical substrate, unique and unrepeatable, ensures originality to the locations and can support competitiveness.

The landscape of terraced slopes becomes, therefore, a rich heritage of geographical, anthropological, architectural, agricultural and environmental impacts, which has a power, perhaps a tourist attraction, as they can be exploited to the historic features of rural culture, great artists such works.

The terraced slopes contain components attributable to anthropogenic tangible and intangible aspects of the culture of a human group, which account for a different organization planning. Terracing is to be understood, therefore, in the double sense of identity structure and component production of a territorial reality.

To understand the centrality of the terracing, therefore, can't be ignored by the multiplicity of meanings that these structures assume under the aspect of perception, values, formal and functional.

Only if approved as "cultural goods"<sup>5</sup> by local communities, the terraced slopes can express the complexity of securities deposited in the forms and take on the character of production structures strongly linked to specific places.

Understood in the perspective of cultural factors in the terraces become tourist attraction, also has the competitive advantage of being in territorial often marked by economic marginality and productive. The taking of that property, therefore, depend on activities linked to cultural tourism, local productivity and business innovation.

The slopes terraced for agriculture are undoubtedly a feature of many territorial realities distributed along the Alps. In a few regions such as Liguria, however, they have left an imprint on the landscape so crucial to impart a unique brand and image, especially along the coastal strip.

In Liguria the terraces have played over the centuries many functions: they allow the exploitation of the slopes for agricultural purposes in a territory where the steep was not conducive to the crop, has enabled the sustenance of a population whose economic development was subject to very stringent environmental constraints, but that gave life to a rural tradition that only the recent social and economic changes have meant that setting; have held, and still cover the important function of system advocated by hydro-geological disturbances. Indeed, it was impossible to clearing a stretch of slope without conducting its placement in the terraces, in a short time when the runoff would have made him unusable and, moreover, landslides have threatened or harmed inhabited.

#### **TOURISM IN TERRACED AREAS: THE CASE OF "CINQUE TERRE"**

Among the factors that give to the physical environment of Liguria its essential unity, the most important appear to be a generally mild climate, steep slopes and the small thickness of the soil.

*4 The terraced landscape is widespread in many parts of the world, the factor that unites all of these areas is orographic in the sense that a greater or lesser energy relief requires the need to artificially create the flat land for the planting of crops.*

*5 (Mautone and Ronza 2006) - The cultural heritage should be regarded as the most complete synthesis and complex relationships between environmental framework and historical stage, the only way you can give the character of capital to this peculiar mode of arrangement of the slopes, giving strong characterization to the area and determine originality.*

While the first factor was favorable for the purpose of human settlement and for the growth of tourism<sup>6</sup>, the other two have been a limitation for the development of agriculture, partially overcome with the technique of terracing<sup>7</sup>.

This phenomenon affects the entire regional territory (albeit unevenly), but in the case of the Cinque Terre is a *unicum* for its spectacular.

The Cinque Terre, which is Monterosso, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore are located in the stretch of coastline about 15 km between Punta Mesco and Punta di Montenero, in the province of La Spezia in the east of the Ligurian Riviera; their territory hilly, rugged and bumpy haul to the sea with steep slopes creating a unique landscape: the five villages perched on rocky crags overlooking the sea, and behind, the steep terraced slopes almost entirely.

The peculiarity of this area is to be found mainly in its agricultural nature, given the need by the population to compensate for the lack of adequate space for the exercise of such activities in order to produce what you need for sustenance.

The work of man over the centuries has shaped the land, without altering, however, the delicate ecological balance: the deforestation of the slopes in order to recover agricultural land is immediately followed by the construction of terraces and walls dry containment of them, avoiding the hydro geological area, thus protecting also the towns.

The hydrographic network is characterized by rivers with torrential regime and of limited scope (given the proximity of the hills to the coast) and human interventions has assumed a significant role in relation to the schemes and the artificial water channel itself.

The water balance of the Cinque Terre is based, then, thanks to the dry stone wall. These, most visible symbol of the detailed work of the peasants, were built entirely from materials obtained locally. During the excavation of land for the creation of humus arable land, the rocks that surfaced were put aside and crushed. These sandstone blocks were then stacked and filled with rubble and earth to make a "dry wall"<sup>8</sup>, so called because it was used no material cohesion.

The construction technique involves placing large stones, placed in front of the terrace and then filling the remaining space between the field and the wall with stones and little land, to facilitate the flow of water. Moreover, among the terraces were built long and steep stone staircases, for passage of men and means, obtained cantilevered between the walls themselves.

The terraces of the Cinque Terre have ancient origins: their development can be traced back around 1000 AD, when the island of Palmaria settled a Benedictine monastery that reintroduced the cultivation of the vine (discontinued after the fall of the Roman Empire).

This massive work is reflected in the figures: approximately 8.400.000 cubic meters of dry stone walls for a length of 6.729 km. It is estimated that if the stones were aligned to height man they covered a length of 11.000 km.

During the 20's of last century, emigration and the consequent abandonment of farming have caused the rupture of the biosystem. Paradoxically, the presence of man failed, there was an immediate deterioration: the landslides have increased strongly and the Mediterranean took precedence over agricultural land.

During the 90's started a recovery process that brought the whole area in 1997, obtaining the recognition

6 *Tourism is one of the major elements of the economy of Liguria, this has had its most significant development after the war until the mid seventies.*

7 *(Pappalardo 2002) - Traditional agriculture was taking place mainly on the Ligurian terraces, where they were located mainly for arable use and forage for the small family farm, in association with the olive crops, vines and fruit trees. Cultivation techniques were archaic and needed a consistent use of manpower. Nowadays, this type of economy is no longer profitable, and with the development of tourism and many economically marginal land with poor access have never been cultivated, also many traditional crops have been partially converted into more profitable.*

8 *The foundations of the wall are about 60 cm, while the thickness is about 80 cm.*