

## SPORTS TOURISM ROLE IN IRT THEORY. A CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK <sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The paper deals with sport role in Integrated Relational Tourism theory. There are various types of sport, but we consider sport in the open air, because of it is a category of sports tourism that can be interesting for IRT theory purposes.

We start to consider the evident tie existing between sport and tourism. To travel in order to take part to sport activity or in order to assist to events of the field, sinks own roots since the antiquity.

Also today, the travel is associated to the taste for the nature, the life in the open air and the sport.

The crescent interest for this new way to mean the relationship between tourism and sport is realized in a constant search from the specialists of the field (tour operator, innkeepers, agencies of promotion, society, sportive circles, etc.), for new products that are able to satisfying the needs of the tourists.

In this way, a form of sport, meant like a "search" is shaped: search of own possibilities and own limits, search of a contact with the others based on a healthy competition, search of a contact with environment, nature, history, culture, folklore, uses, customs, etc. Sports tourism is important to search a direct contact with the natural environment, to escape from the narrow spaces used for training, in order to practice echo-compatible sporting activities.

This conception allows us to consider the sport, using different point of view. For example, the formative dimension of this sector.

Therefore, the paper puts in evidence the characters of sports tourism, to estimate the dimensions caught up and its possible future developments, specially in Italy.

Later on, it is considered school role. In fact, being the school, the main educational agency that takes care of the development of the person, it can find in the practical of the sport in the open air, a valid way in order to catch up its institutional purposes.

Moreover, sport in the open air is shaped like a didactic proposal that, leaving from the study of the environment, resolves the scope to promote the ecological defense of the same one, to stimulate the recreational and sport use of green arenas that still the nature offers to us.

In this way, it concurs to develop the personality of the student through an activity that implies independent spirit and enterprising.

We wish the end effect to change the tradition inherent the curricular programs of the School. In Italy, it evinces in the within of the formative system. Great attention, in fact, has been classified in the Italian School Formative Offer Plans, to the impact of the tourism on the environment. So, interesting didactic laboratories dedicated to orienteering are born.

**Key words:** sport, tourism, open air, instruction

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## INTRODUCTION

What is sports tourism, and what may its role be in IRT theory? We will try to answer these questions, because of today, the attention and care for the bodies, the decrease of working time, combined with some temporary factors such as unemployment, massification of exercise physical activity and the call of nature created a strong link between sport and tourism, encouraging the growth of a culture of sport.

About this link Dewailly (1996) talks that the habit of traveling to take part in sporting activities or to attend industry events, has its roots since antiquity.

Over last few decades, then, both sport and tourism have been the subjects of research that led to better understand the close connection between them. This is evidenced by the fact that sport and tourism often share common resources, such as: natural environment, transport, services and receptivity. Starting from the various types of sports tourism, present in the literature, we gave priority to those activities, practiced in the open air.

Then, we identified some useful strategies for its development, based on several educational initiatives that have been covered in the curricula of the Offer Training Plans of some Italian schools.

This brings us into the role of education in relation to this reality; the latest survey of National Research Institut Tourism (Isnart)/Unioncamere 2008, shows that it is emerging increasingly, in the Mediterranean.

## VARIOUS TYPES OF SPORTS TOURISM

The relationship between sport and tourism emerges as a reality of recent identification and promotion.

However, the initial thinking on sports tourism had started in 1971 when, as part of activities of the International Council for Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE), we left for the first time that the old approach classify the two sectors as distinct, in order to understand the linkages and synergies.

The first scientific publication with the theme sports tourism: the *Journal of Sports Tourism*, appeared in 1983 and the first world conference on the topic was organized jointly by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Comité International Olympique (CIO) 2001.

The discussion gained in recent years took into account the relationships between tourism and sport and integrated elements of sports (for example the motor experience) and elements of tourism (travel culture). The behaviors that are observed are sport characterized by social activities of various kinds, both physical and cultural.

As the interest the topic is recent, it does not yet exist in the literature a common definition of sports tourism.

Bale (1989) identifies different point of view that interest it. In particular, the first point leads to a shift and stay away from home, with an adjoining a change in the normal rhythms of life; the second point, instead, relates to activities that are the target of travel and stay.

These different points of view generate behaviors, whose observation can investigate about motivations that drive sports tourism and its intensity.

Sports tourism, therefore, depends on the connection of two factors: the destination of the trip and the type of activity.

The destination is chosen to play in first person the practice of competitive sports, leisure, adventure, etc., or to live passively, through participation in sporting events, shows, conferences, etc.

Therefore, sports tourism is now the one hand, an extension of the sport activities of *loisir*; in other hand it plays the necessity felt in the tourism market, to develop complementary products and services or alternative to traditional holiday »beach, sun, sea«.

So, we can take advantage of attractive factors of the area, in key seasonal adjustment of tourist flows.

In this light, sports tourism is seen as a key part of the territory and therefore, useful for the development of a location.

The trip is conditional on the experience of sport and sport destination became home to several behavioral patterns.

So, in sports tourism we have to consider the:

- subjects involved (in the form of an identifiable audience, actor, visitor);
- behaviors that they put in place (also in the length of stay);
- choices of destination.

This classification produces the suitable tourist packages, usefull for active sports tourism (to travel to practice); for events sports tourism (to travel to attend); for culture sports tourism (travel to admire).

Sports tourism based on action, outlines when there is a tourist who participates physically, so he bases on its experience and its own technical capabilities to one or more sports. The big difference, with traditionally sport is that in sports tourism action hero confronts the subject of techniques and equipment than with other sports. The degree of participation, technical ability, to use of facilities and resources vary considerably depending on whether one is referring to beginners, amateurs or professionals.

This kind of tourism offers a wide range of sports, in which each person can find an activity suitable to their technical skills and physical energy level, for example: golf, fishing, hunting, climbing, orienteering, hiking, horseback riding, hiking, walking, cycling, marathon, air sports, tourism, water sports and snow sports.

The marathon is one of the most important part of sports tourism.

In confirmation of this, the only event of the Marathon of Rome (Italy) recorded a steady annual growth of 10-15% attendance. The most classic of sports competitions becomes the ideal means for combining the practice of physical activity outdoors, with the opportunity to learn new tourist resorts.

Another sport that today plays an important role is golf: an individual sport, praticable all year, in rapid expansion in Italy, but commonplace in the rest of Europe, because of it is able to attract many athletes coming mainly from northern Europe, where the climate is particularly hard and it prevents the practice of golf, for long periods of the year.

Golf can create a tourism, able to generate a good economic field in the host territory, in fact it guarantees a daily presence of a tourist average golfer of 7 days, significantly higher than that of the tourist standard (3 - 4 days in the case of foreign tourists).

Besides, an aspect not to overlook: the tourist golfer is, by its nature, constantly on the road, in search of new fields.

Events sports tourism generates, instead, a direct economic impact on the land providinf a good opportunity for tour operators from around the world. It relates to that class of tourists who, as spectators, they move from their habitual residence in order to attend to a live sporting spectacle (competitions, tournaments, international competitions, large events and exhibitions sector, etc.) without the participation actively. In this case, the visual approach appears to be crucial.

Studies in sports events were multiple and most of them have focused mainly on the calculation of economic impacts generated by so called mega-events (Olympics, World Cup, etc), or in technical terms, Hallmark Events are defined as »events of major importance, unique or periodic, time-limited, organized primarily to raise awareness, interest and viability of a locality in the short or long term. These events, founding their basis of success on international importance, create big interest and attract the attention of public opinion«(Porro, 1995: 71).

Major sporting events are now widely used tools in terms of communication, promotion and image creation of a destination. This explains why more cities engage in territorial marketing strategies to attract major events, to maximize the effects of high media exposure and benefit from sponsorship. In Italy, the third form of cultural sports tourism, highly developed in the Anglo-Saxon countries is certainly the least known of the three taken into account.

It relates to that particular category of tourists who, prompted by a great passion for sport or from simple curiosity, temporarily leave their habitual residence, in order to visit facilities that have been theater of great sporting events or athletic celebrated performance, or museums dedicated to very different sports. Over the last few years, in fact, some sports facilities have become a kind of mysticism among the lovers of the sector, much to be visited by a growing number of people.

All this leads us today to see plants like the Olympic Stadium in Barcelona, Yankee Stadium in New York, the tennis courts of Wimbledon, the real attractions.

»Even large sports stores also have become attractions of particular appeal. The most famous case in the literature is that of the Bass Pro Shop in the U.S. state of Missouri, which attracts 3.5 million visitors a year. Numbers that make this store the most visited attraction of the entire state« (Nocifera, 1997: 24).

On some occasions it is a special motivational factor that leads many athletes to move from their place of residence in order to reach locations of important events or sports events: it is the desire for emulation.

Ride along the stages of the Tour of Italy or the *Tour de France*, skiing down the slopes of World Cup skiing, sailing in the waters of the America's Cup match races or play on golf courses that have hosted the greatest sporting champions allows tourists to emulate big business.

Regarding the practice of sports tourism, it occurs throughout the year, with peaks in the middle months of the summer season (July and August), during the Christmas holidays and the month of February.

Holidays in the winter months concern sports of snow and ice, skiing in the first place, while in summer there are water sports and so-called Californian sports, as surfing, windsurfing, etc.; trekking, mountain biking and cycling have, however, a less pronounced seasonality.

Our research focused more on natural attractions of a territory, to grasp the emerging new relationship between man and nature, in the evolution of sport.

To fully understand this reality is however necessary to refer to some data on the number of practitioners of sports at continental and regional levels.

At continental level, it shows a significant quantitative difference between the countries of northern Europe and the Mediterranean area. The highest percentages are found in Finland, Denmark, Ireland, and countries such as Greece, Portugal and Italy stood in the concluding part of the list.

In particular, in Italy you can find a difference between north and south of the country. Indeed, the analysis of Isnart/Unioncamere 2008 about practice of sport, shows that the region of Trentino, Veneto and Lombardy you can practice more of sport.

There is also a significant number of European tourists who choose Italy for sports (18%). These are especially attracted by the possibility of skiing (34%), cycling (27%), golf (23%) and others (16%). This inflow is aided by the fact that about one quarter of Italian tour operators, today, begun to see Italy, as a sport target.

### **Strategies for the development of eco-compatible forms of sports tourism**

In recent years, in sports tourism began to emerge a new reality, motivated by a desire to understand this reality in a new way.

Dewailly and Flament (1996) supported the idea of sustainable sports tourism, to implement best practices able to combine nature and sports.

Corna Pellegrini (2000: 82) deals with »tourism that can last, maintaining its such-quantities values; that is likely to coincide in the short and long term, the expectations of residents and those of tourists without diminishing the quality of the tourist experience and without damaging the environmental values of the territory«.

In the past, it was thought to encourage sustainable tourism could be a constraint for the development of territorial systems, limiting the potential of speech and stifling economic and business; in this way, a sector that still pays a considerable lack of competitiveness.

Yet today, we begin to realize that sustainable tourism can also represent a major strategic opportunity to market, as factors such as the quality of the territory and to the system of local services, comply with the standards of eco-sustainability move and affect choices tourism.

In this way arises an act of awareness about environmental issues and the respect of the traditions and local culture, leads inevitably to one conclusion: tourism development and sustainability, always travel on parallel tracks.

Just think about the many documents written:

- *European Charter for Sport, Code for sustainable development of sport and European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in protected areas* (by European Union);
- *Manual Sport and Environment* (by International Olympic Committee).

These calls for environmental sustainability are bringing up the need of having to focus on developing a sustainable sports tourism development, as demonstrated by the European Project: *Sustainable tourism and outdoor sport activities*, which aims, in first, to provide a starting point for the creation of best practices and the establishment of a charter of quality, in sports tourism development.

They are so sharp a number of problems encountered in the Mediterranean, such as the:

- concentration of frequencies in a limited part of the tourist;
- focus on traditional resources (sun and sea);
- influx of population, local and otherwise, along the coast;
- greater concentration of waste;
- concentration of seasonal work;
- lack of consideration about alternative resources and the hinterland;
- limited development of the combination of sport and tourism, especially outdoors.

The sustainability of sports tourism should manifest itself both in the external environment, through a sport and tourism respectful of the area and in the internal environment through the development of an ecology of the body.

To propose sports tourism sustainable means to encourage a seasonal adjustment of tourism and the exploitation of so-called marginal areas. Therefore it is essential the participation and cooperation of integrated systems of all stakeholders, from government local operators, until the same locals.

In this way new tourist products can arise. In particular, they should be in attempt to create a common cultural basis and a sense of belonging to a new mode of land use, usefull for the local population.

In order to advance the development of eco-compatible forms of sports tourism, it should be pursued on a number of practical proposals, divided into three areas: 1) building and promotion regional offer; 2) infrastructural improvement in the medium to long term; 3) instruction.

As part on the first area of intervention you must focus on:

- census and mapping of sites for the environment sports and the accommodations which are placed in sporting facilities;
- instruments, both traditional and computerized information (guides, maps, leaflets, brochures, reports, websites, etc.).
- image of the region to promote, through support sporting activities and sporting events, also trying to link sports to cultural activities in parallel;
- accommodation to foreign journalists during international events in order to convey the image of the host region, even outside national boundaries;
- sport as a promotional vehicle of the region to promote, through sponsorship of teams, sports clubs and athletes of high level;
- programs and initiatives with the aim of seasonal adjustment.

In the second area of intervention is deemed necessary the:

- implementation of regional transport services even during low season;

- accommodation, even during the low season;
- accommodation for young audience (guesthouses, hostels, etc.);
- construction of road links with the use of appropriate signage in double tongue.

Finally, as part of the intervention on the instruction, which is what we are more at heart, you should must focus on to:

- ensure the curriculum planning in Schools;
- set up in the curricula of the educational institutions of the School courses that prepare students to grasp the importance of outdoor activities;
- ensure the establishment of a regional agency coordinating tourism-sport, in synergy with the Italian National Olympic Committee and the others sports organizations;
- make appropriate instruments to assess the cost-benefit analysis of events in the tourist-sports to plan;
- identify new professionals in tourism-sport (specialized maintainers, repairers of sails, the promoters of the sport tourism, etc.).

There is a significant number of eco-friendly disciplines, which, in recent years has emerged in the panorama of the combination between sport and environment.

Among them, we can mention *trek* (a discipline characterized by long walks in natural settings, usually in middle and high mountain, which requires a good knowledge of cartography and the ability to move along rugged paths); *skyrunning* (a discipline that requires a good technical ability to face uphill and downhill running trails in the mountains); *ecomaratona* (discipline which consists of the classic marathon distance of 42,195 km, within parks, reserves, protected areas and special regulations aimed at environmental protection and safety of participants); *trail running* (discipline practices along paths through forests and hills to lower elevations); *ecorunning* (a discipline that combines the race to the knowledge of the environment); *Nordic Walking* (discipline that combines brisk walk the use of ski poles on trails around the lakes or on the flat grasslands); *ski mountaineering* (discipline involving climbing and hiking in the mountains, featuring great uphill and downhill off-piste); *orienteering* (a discipline that combines the race to orientation skills in natural environments, woods, mountains and forests). In particular, the choice of location ability to juggle between the sites established is the true essence of orienteering.

All these are disciplines just yet capable of enhancing the area, low cost and environmentally compatible, since it needs of only few essential tools (for example: topographic paper and compass).

They are ductile sports, because of they can easily adapt to changing conditions and different situations. These abilities create a sport to measure for each: for students on educational tours that you can structure; for athletes who want to grapple with a task in which speed and endurance combine with the power of choice and the speed at having to make decisions; for older people who can be fitted with a motor task and intellectual who is, at the same time, even healthy competition.

Pedagogy conducive to contact with the natural environment is placed at the beginning of the twentieth century. »Then, cultured interdisciplinary aspects of this activity are satisfied«(Giorgio, 1986: 125).

So open-air sports has also been used as therapy for psychological and practical training at some schools in Italy. During last years, Instruction Offer Plans of Italian Schools provided the opportunity to develop some interesting didactic and experimental laboratories, for the students.

At the end of the experimental teaching that educated the children more aware of tourism, students were able to reflect on the importance of outdoor activities. By these activities there was no damage to the landscape, there i was no energy consumption, clothing and sports equipment were extremely simple. These activities allow to establish a different relationship with nature, a relationship devoid of risks that may be defined a framework compatible with the aims of IRT theory.

From this perspective, nature is experienced as a source of energy available to all and it helps to provide motivation in the exercise, totally different from that of the people of the gyms.

## Conclusions

The growing interest in this new way of understanding the relationship between tourism and sport results in a constant search by the specialists of the sector (tour operators, hoteliers, promotion agencies, societies and sports clubs, etc.) for new products that are able to meet the needs of users (Robinson And Gammon, 2004).

So, for the number of people involved in this situation, we can say that sports tourism represents a form of tourism likely to have a trend of high growth in the near future, not only in quantitative terms but also and especially in terms of quality (Pivato, 2005).

This way you configure a form sport, as research: research of their own possibilities and limits, seeking contact with others in healthy debate and competition clearer; search for a contact with all our surroundings.

This view of the sport allows us to consider the educational aspect of this discipline, because who is affected develops the skills of observation, perception and representation of space, the concentration, the ability of choice, to make decisions, autonomy, retention and recognition of their abilities and limits.

For this reason, orientation sports since 1987, are entered in the School through the games of youth, today named: student championships, with the full approval of the Ministry of Education, who praised the interdisciplinary characteristics.

The school, being the lead agency that deals with the educational development of people, is a valuable tool to implement its institutional purposes.

Finally, the discipline of outdoor sports is seen as a didactic proposal that aims to stimulate the recreational use of the sporting green gyms, that still the nature gives us, to develop the personality of the student through an activity that involves independent and enterprising spirit. For this reason it must be more contemplated in Formative Offer Plan School.

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## BACKSTAGE. A NEW FORM TO INTRODUCE TOURISM IN ALEXANDRIA

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### Abstract

Tourists travel nowadays millions of miles, chooses among thousands of destinations to reach satisfaction for their motivations. Today's tourist's motivations became more sophisticated as to what globalization has possessed. That means that tourism has changed to different patterns as a result of a Variety of physical and cultural attractions possessed by different places which appeal to people with different backgrounds, tastes, interests, needs and desires. New forms of tourism appear continuously as to reach satisfaction of tourists. Backstage tourism is a form that offers the tourist what is behind the scenes, that helps the tourist to interact with the culture he is coming to explore and experience. Alexandria is a city in Egypt that possesses many historical sights, where many stories hide behind its historic scenes. Its culture is unique; therefore the purpose of this research is to develop a distinctive character for the city of Alexandria. And offer the backstage tourism as a main option in our tour packages. This article will high light the opinion of tour guides and tour operators to appraise the desire of the tourists to fetch behind the scenes in any tourist destination.

**Key words** Backstage, Tourism, Culture, Integration, Tourist sites.

### INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry has been affected, as well as many other activities owing to the recent culture and informational currents. It corresponded by revolutionary shifts in means and ways of information, communication and transportation; causing an un-preceded phenomenon known as "Globalization". This phenomenon struck our modern civilization, provoking influential pressures and changes in the world's political, economic and social way of living. As (Wahab and Cooper, 2001) illustrated that we now live in a world of incredibly rapid and revolutionary change where many remarkable achievements have been reached. These remarkable achievements affected many ways in our lives and forced policy makers to change their attitudes and provisions to be able to keep their grip on basic socio-economic, cultural and political values and norms.

This phenomenon raised a more competitive compulsive burdens among tourist destinations by bringing more needs, requirements, and demands into the consumer's list of demands. One of the main prevailing tendencies which dominated tourist demand is the Human relations and integration between cultures. The distinction between mass and alternative tourism has promoted many researches to study the cultural interactions between people. New forms of tourism has been developed to apply this concept and to understand its potential effects on both tourists and hosting community. These new prevailing tendencies of appreciation for the sustainable environment and culture quality has reshaped and dominated to reveal new types of tourism.

### Cultural Tourism

Cultural Tourism is characterized by a series of motivations such as the desire to learn and interact with foreign people, learn about the history, heritage and lifestyles of others, to study the habits and customs

as well as tracing past civilizations. (Tools and Techniques, Aug.2009) It is also defined at the Wisconsin Heritage Tourism conference as follows "Visits by persons from outside the host community motivated wholly or in part by interest in the historical, artistic, and scientific or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution." (Grail Dexter, 1999) Therefore it is considered as a branch of tourism oriented towards cultural heritage of the location where tourism is occurring. (Melane 2003)

In the past around the 70s, cultural of tourism was associated with wealthy people for its high expenses. It was restrained for high educated cultured people. Then it became in the 80s an obvious mean of tourism for learning and traveling. In the 90s, it became a big business and turned to mass tourism. According to the heritage tourism program activated by the national trust organization for historic preservation, Cultural heritage tourism is "traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources." (The National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2009)

With the estimation done by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) that the growth rate of the tourism industry will reach an annual rate of 3% till the year 2010 for the world as a whole. And for the cultural Heritage tourism in particular a study by the National Tour Association in the US indicated that 20 %of tourism revenues are based on cultural tourism. What is clear is that tourism is growing and will always expand. It will have an increasing impact on cultural heritage of tourist destinations. In its forecast tourism: 2020 vision, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) predicts that cultural tourism will be one of the five key tourism market segments in the future.( Sustainable Tourism and Cultural heritage,2009)

In recent years, however, tourism demand started changing towards a new type of activity where the individuality and independence of travelers are placed at the heart of the leisure activities. (Middleton and Hawkins, 1998) The concern to link activities to everyday life, hears stories told by locals, taste the local cuisine, and taste the diversity in cultures and to relive the atmosphere of the historic site. In this sense people prefer to live their holidays rather than to spend them (WTO 1985, 9). Globalization effectively implies that increasingly tourists and the industry need to interact in a culturally diverse environment and to learn how to manage negotiate and compromise with people from different cultural backgrounds and experiences (Dimitrios Buhalis, 2001). Backstage tourism can offer this satisfaction of today's tourist's motives.

### **The Backstage Tourism**

It is a sort of cultural heritage tourism that can encourage the establishment of traditions and the restoration of historic sites and monuments. But its role is extended than just being a monument oriented tourism, it is an experience of what can be behind the scenes. Who lived in these monuments, their traditions, life style, actions and characters? All these are stories told by locals narrated by their ancestors. It is an enjoyable and educational way to get in contact with the local people and learn about their community's heritage. It is not only connected to the past but, it is also to explore the present culture and way of life. It is about taking walks and doing a lot of "foot walks" in the evening around the back streets of the tourist destination to see the true style of the resident's way of life, to explore some of the main holiday activities taken by them. ( Novelli, 2005)

Through the backstage tourism, travelers can travel through history by exhibiting and learning about famous characters. They feel the destination through stories told about the people who use to live in these historic places. Tourists view cultural heritage as one of the major reasons they travel to specific locations. The WTO stated that 37% of all international trips are connected to culture. Therefore the backstage tourism is a new trend that allows visitors to immerse themselves in the local socio-cultural environment of the city they are visiting.

It plays on the pejorative connotations that have accompanied the evolution of mass and package tourism and their negative impacts in relation to environmental degradation and socio-cultural disturbance.

For destination managers and planners seeking to utilize tourism as a mechanism for economic development. Backstage tourism approach appears to offer greater opportunities and a kind of tourism that is more sustainable, less damaging and more economic benefits. For tourists, it appears to offer a more meaningful set of experiences in their knowledge and expectations. (Marina Novelli, 2005) Perhaps for the first time in our history, we are consciously trying to preserve or bring back old cultures and values. At its worst this can impede the 'natural' evolution of new cultures. (Swarbrooke, J. 2000)

### **Characteristics of cultural Tourist**

At the Wisconsin Heritage Tourism Conference (Sep. 1999), they described the cultural tourist as most educated, intellectual and knowledgeable. This percentage of people is rising; it tends to increase through middle age, as well as between 45 and 65. This age is typically the peak learning years with the highest discretionary income and time to spend on cultural related activities and travel. Also cultural tourists are classifying into groups. One group, the smallest, consists of persons "greatly motivated" by culture- people who travel to a city or region specifically because of its cultural opportunities, representing perhaps 15% of the total non-residential pleasure travel market. The second group is the people motivated "in part" by culture, persons who travel both because of the cultural opportunities and other motives such as visiting friends, relaxing or recreation. This group represents about 30% of the market. The third group, representing about 20% of the market, they are people whom culture represent an "adjust" to another more important motivation. That is the main motivation is sport, shopping, safari...etc. linked with one visit or two to cultural places. The fourth group is also 20% of the market, which is what we refer to as "accidental cultural tourist" ... they are people traveling with no intention to visit or get in contact with cultural attractions or events but they might be exposed accidentally to a cultural opportunity or event. Also there are about 15% of tourists, who wouldn't attend cultural attractions or even under any circumstances has to do anything with culture or heritage of the place visited. (Grail Dexter, 1999)

Auspiciously; the Egyptian culture is a blend of many cultures specially the city of Alexandria, the beautiful city located by the Mediterranean Sea. Alexandria the model of a unique city created through cosmopolitanism. Different ethnic groups with different denominational backgrounds co-existed but did not actually assimilate. In this city the tourist can experience a bouquet of many citations of neighborly behavior between families and friends of different backgrounds, of participations in feasts, religious events, funerals and weddings. Therefore, backstage tourism can be used to attract the greatly motivated (15%), the partially motivated (30%), and the adjust type of cultural tourists representing (20%).

### **Alexandria, the City Of Multi Nationality**

Alexandria has a long tradition of tourism, attracting travelers fascinated by the art, philosophy and literature of ancient times. In term of historic sites, it is considered one of the richest cities of the world with many ancient monuments and artistic treasures.

Alexandria is located on the narrow strip of land that separates the Mediterranean from the lake of Mareotis to the south. It extends about 32 Km (20 miles) along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea in north-central Egypt. In ancient times, Alexandria was one of the most famous cities in the world. It was founded around a small pharaonic town c. 334 BC by Alexander the great. It remained Egypt's capital for nearly a thousand years until the Muslim conquest of Egypt in 641 AD when a new capital was founded at Fustat (the city of Cairo) (wikipedia)

Alexander the great was a conqueror whose vision was to Hellenize the world, and Alexandria, was founded as a link between the East and the West and as a manifestation of internationalism. During the three centuries of Ptolemaic rule, Alexandria was the world's center of learning and capital of culture. And it became the main Greek city of Egypt, with an extraordinary mix of Greeks from many cities and backgrounds. It was captured by Julius Caesar in 47 BC during a Roman intervention in the domestic civil

war between king Ptolemy XIII and his advisors, and usurper queen Cleopatra VII. After this era, Alexandria declined in general during the Ottoman occupation of Egypt in 1517.

Alexandria is a city of many nationalities, the Turks and Albanians who followed Mohamed Ali from Cairo and helped him establish Alexandria as his second capital. They were followed by the French who helped Mohamed Ali to establish the Egyptian army and the navy. Although the British occupied Egypt in 1882, they were generally the third in the numerical scale. They came after the Greeks and the Italians. Not forgetting the Armenians who came to live in Alexandria and became among its residents. They were encouraged by Mohamed Ali, and then they came during the Turkish massacres in 1894. Not forgetting the Syrians who played a very important role in creating and promoting the Egyptian press. They helped the Egyptians to reestablish different art forms. As Dr.Sahar mentioned in her paper (Alexandria an international city) "For almost a hundred and fifty years, Alexandria was the model of a particular brand of cosmopolitanism in which different ethnic groups with different denominational backgrounds co-existed." (Hamouda, S.2008) In some regions of Alexandria there may be no indigenous culture left as the original population disappears, to be replaced by a second home. Backstage tourism can help reestablish these cultures through famous characters that lived in these eras. There are many examples such as the district of Glym which refers to Mr. Glymonopulos, who was a highly viewed member of the civic council of Alexandria. Also, the district of Laurent refers to monsieur Laurent who was the owner of a famous cigarette factory in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The district of Lazarita was a derivative name from an Italian word called Lazar. Not forgetting, the district of Smouha which was named after Joseph Smouha a Jewish Iraqi trader who lived in Alexandria. (Sharobim, M, 2009) There are many other districts that carry names of people who lived in Alexandria and left their traces behind. This in its sense can introduce Alexandria on the touristic map, and create a wider level of appeal to more cultural tourists.

### **How to offer Alexandria as a backstage tourism destination**

To name a certain place as a tourist place, it should possess one or more of the aspects of tourism attractions. A tourist destination by definition might be a natural or cultural resource which has the ability to draw visitors to its site, and provide them some sort of satisfaction. Although satisfaction, in the tourism sense; might not be perceived unless such attractive resources were provided with other factors (transportation, hospitality, service facilities...etc), still the main attraction will stand as the drawing power of the tourist destination. The chief task for planners, developers and designers is to create a pleasant environment made up of the main resources and other integral comforts and facilities to provide appealing opportunities for tourists to enjoy their visit. (Robert Christie Mill, 1985)

Developing backstage tourism linked with the cultural heritage tourism is an incremental process; it will require an investment and a commitment- an investment of financial resources and a commitment of human resources. If the combination between the two is successfully achieved, it will help protect our nation's natural and cultural treasures and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Linking backstage tourism with heritage tourism can do more for local economies than promoting them separately. That's the core idea, to save our heritage and our culture, to share our traditions and culture with visitors, and to gain economic benefits. The goal should be to reach not just the 15% "greatly motivated" cultural tourists, but to reach the whole range of 85% of travelers to participate in cultural activities along with other ones. Successful promotion and packaging can expand the market substantially by attracting travelers interested in culture. Promotional activities increase consumer motivation to participate in cultural activities, while packaging increase exposure to cultural activities. Promoting cultural activities means promoting products of the same type for example the Roman Theatre, Pompey's Pillar and Alexandria's Catacombs. But through packaging we can offer the Roman ancient monuments along with Alexandria's Library, the Montaza Palace, Ras el Tin Palace, and Presidential Palace, the Museum of Jewelry, Cavafy museum, the museum of fine arts and the Aquarium. Also, combine both cultural along with

recreational tourism at the Shallalat Gardens, Green Plaza, and Marina Village...etc. Not forgetting the religious places. Also tourists will have the opportunity to extent their visit to share their vacation with families of different ethnic groups or traveling to the traditional that are partially motivated by cultural tourism.

According to the Egyptian statistics of airport arrivals, 795128 passengers (Egyptians and foreigners) arrived to Alexandria by air in 2007, they increased in 2008 to reach 1162987 visitors by air. Also the number of arrivals till the month of August, 2009 reached 844783 visitors. Still this number is very poor compared to what Alexandria has to offer. This is due to seasonality problem, poor marketing strategies, limited tour programmers, insufficient highlighted events on the international tourist map, limited accommodation services, and limitizing the types of tourism practiced in such destination.(El-Masry, R. 2008)

Therefore, Alexandria has to be offered to the international tourism market with a different concept, reestablishing its image as the city of multi nationalities, widening the attraction of different segments of tourists, and setting new strategies to attract these tourists.

### **Offering Alexandria through backstage tourism**

- Celebrating with different ethnic groups located in Alexandria their organized international events. As well as arranging different exhibitions to discuss and celebrate a day in the memory of famous poets, musicians, writers, and actors who lived in Alexandria and belonged to these ethnic groups.
- Constructing well equipped museums for the sunken antiquities found under the Mediterranean Sea as to exhibit and narrate stories about such material found.
- Alexandria's tourist image should be reestablished on the international tourist map, by encouraging tour operators through stability of prices policy.
- Inviting famous journalists and writers from different media organizations to attend different celebrations and festivals held to display cultural traditions.
- Marketing and highlighting Alexandria as it was chosen as the "Arab Tourism Capital" which was awarded on Wednesday February 18, 2009, by the Executive Office of the Arab Tourism Ministerial Council, emanating from the League of Arab States.
- Providing signs to show people traveling on their own their way around. As well as cleaning tourist areas and providing catering services and essential facilities in the streets.
- Raising an awareness campaign for citizens and training them to corporate with tourists as backstage tourism mainly depends on the direct contact between tourists and local residents.
- Reestablishing the tram (train) mean of transportation to travel by tourists throughout the city for sightseeing. As well as well developed means of public transportation.
- Form integrated tourism tours with other countries like Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Syria, Turkey and Lebanon as their ancestors use to live in Alexandria.
- Advertise the Egyptian Cuisine as an attractive mean to experience the Egyptian life.

### **Field Research**

A sample of 30 travel agents managers was chosen randomly to accomplish an interview with their managers to explore their opinion towards the backstage tourism. Through this interview 76% of these travel agents agreed that Alexandria does not stand alone in tourist programs as a touristic destination but it is always part of a program as an over day tour. While 8% verified that Alexandria is demanded as a tourist destination for a couple of days ranging from 3-4 days. While 16% notified that Alexandria is not planed in their programs. The reason why Alexandria does not compensate a big percentage is that it lacks the suitable marketing needed to be placed among the other competitor destinations in Egypt like Hurgada and Sharm el Sheik as well as other tourist destinations on the Mediterranean Sea.

Therefore 67% of them were not satisfied with the marketing plans established for this competition.

They demanded Alexandria to gain a bigger portion in the tourist authorities' strategy, as to increase its share of tourism. They demanded a more intensified and diverse marketing plan. As Alexandria is a unique tourist destination that possesses more than just beaches. It is the only destination that posse Greco Roman monuments and a treasure of sunken antiquities. Also its weather is highly demanded for its sunny days and clear breath. 33% were satisfied with the marketing efforts of both the national government organizations and private sector.

45% agreed that Alexandria can be marketed and introduced to the international tourism market as a tourist destination that offers backstage tourism, because of the different ethnic groups that lived in Alexandria and its monuments. Also because it is not a polluted tourist destination, the industrial area of Alexandria is located in the south and the wind's direction is moving from north to south that makes it an unpolluted area. 68% agreed that the backstage tourism will help extend the days spent by tourists and will extend the season of tourism in Alexandria. Also 52% agreed that through backstage tourism yachting tourism can be flourished and used as the east harbor can be well planned to welcome these tourists.

#### **Benefits of Backstage Tourism:**

The backstage tourism is particularly capable of attracting income and profit because it has a greater capacity to generate and expand, extend stay vacations and repeat visitation. As backstage tourism is based on experience rather than facility based (such as luxury resorts or famous hotels) most of the visitor expenditure stays in the community as fees paid by the tour agents for families who are willing to share their cuisine and time with tourist. Also tourists will be exposed to traveling with their tour guide to local markets to buy food and souvenirs. Not forgetting the economic benefits like new businesses, jobs and higher property values. Backstage tourism highlights the community's heritage therefore authorities responsible for tourism will ameliorate, conserve and sustain the quality of museums, monumental places and heritage traditions of local people as well as developing new markets for traditional crafts and art forms. Not forgetting the growth in respect of local people for their traditions, language, religion and customs if they are seen as an attraction for tourists. A well managed tourism programme can improve the quality of life for residents. It promotes community pride, which grows as people work together to develop a thriving tourist industry. Also backstage tourism can offer Alexandria the high value and low volume tourists which is targeted to achieve sustainable tourism.

#### **Challenges facing backstage tourism:**

When a community's heritage is the theme of attraction, protecting that heritage is essential. So the major challenge is ensuring that increased tourism does not destroy the very qualities that attract visitors. Tourism could threaten the community's heritage through the construction of buildings using non-traditional architectural styles, theft of artifacts by tourists, censorship of heritage stories by locals so as not to upset tourists. Also the pressure opposed on local language if tourists are unable or unwilling to conserve with staff in these languages or the introduction of foreign words into vocabulary. Pressure opposed to replace traditional crafts with other products which tourists demand as well as modifying the traditional art forms to meet tourists' desires. Not forgetting the danger of losing dignity as forced to behave in a servile manner towards tourists, reduce level of personal morality, growth in crime rates, increasing the influence of foreign media on the community. Another challenge can be imposed as changing the traditional eating habits, way of life, and the spirituality of religious believes. These challenges can result not only from tourist's impact on the community, but also from tourists expectations of quality products and services.



### Threats facing backstage tourism

Although cultural tourism is growing among certain segments, still it is threatened by pressures on cultural diversity due to the increasing homogenization of culture worldwide resulting from the effects of global popular cultures such as television, music and films. This reduction in cultural diversity may reduce the motivation of people to travel and experience other cultures.

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## REGARDING INTEGRATED RELATIONAL TOURISM (IRT) AND THE EXAMPLE OF A RURAL HOTEL

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**Key words:** Rural hotel. Family business. Female entrepreneur. Tourism. Relation. Integration.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC. MATTERS OF PERSPECTIVE

The expression IRT is formed by the initials of three concepts which make up an original aspect of the touristic activity: *Integrated Relational Tourism*.

The aim of this paper is to delve more deeply regarding this initiative, both from the standpoint of the concept and its contents, as well as regards to didactic aspects related to the formation of experts in this field. This objective is ambitious, and the field is varied and complex. For this reason, this contribution aims at providing a set of suggestions at the level of knowledge and at the level of action. Or at both levels, which are interrelated, although knowing that it is neither possible nor opportune to completely cover the topic, given the main objective of this paper, which is preferably didactic, and which targets experts in IRT in the process of formation. As a consequence, we will attempt to alternate some theoretical or conceptual questions with others of a practical nature.

As a guide, we can use the description and analysis of an example taken from a first-hand true experience: a brief stay in a mountain hotel in the north of Spain. We believe that a brief narration of that stay, with the provision of some facts that seem to us to be especially significant, is a good opportunity to foster the curiosity of researchers and to open their minds to the comprehension of some problems related to the contents and working methods in this field.

This brief introduction has the aim of justifying the order in which we present the topics chosen on this occasion:

1. A set of sequences and facts taken from the real-life experience, along with some comments which we believe to be opportune.
2. A more detailed treatment of the concepts which make up the IRT plan as a result of the suggestions that arise from the life experience.

### REGARDING THE REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCE IN A RURAL HOTEL

On the occasion of a commemorative event, a group of some thirty persons, including adults and children, got together to spend a weekend in a mountain hotel. This hotel is located in an interior valley of the Sierra de Guara, which in turn is located in the piedmont section of the Pyrenees (region of Aragón in the north of Spain). The hotel stands on its own and is relatively small (eleven rooms). Its decoration is reminiscent of the rustic style of the zone, although the hotel incorporates all the state of the art functional advances (saunas, swimming pool, meeting rooms, etc.). The valley where the hotel stands is quite large, limited to the north by the crests of the Central Pyrenees, whose relief become less abrupt as we near the flat areas. The exact location, in the frontier area between Spain and France, brings about a mountain climate, with Temperatures which are not too extreme and a very clear horizon, given the topographical elements of the area. The landscape is even further enhanced by the existence of two small historical centers, among which a salient feature is a couple of ancient churches in a fairly good state of preservation and whose spires stand out in the distance.

Access to the hotel is fairly complicated. In order to reach the venue, it is necessary to leave the main highway and then follow several narrow and sinuous roads for some eight or ten kilometres.

This description of the landscape is an element which brings rise to the first questions. Why, given the fact that this is a fairly recent business, was it located in this precise place, which is extraordinarily beautiful from the standpoint of the surroundings, but of difficult access and far removed from more important population centers? What type of client can feel attracted to this place and formula? What was the philosophy of the owners or administrators? Lastly, what impression did we, ourselves, gain from this experience?

The answer did not come only from the advertising information provided by the management of the chain to which this business belongs<sup>1</sup>, but also from what the managers told us and from what we ourselves could observe; above all, regarding our expectations: good service, friendly treatment, comfortable installations, etc. But there was more. This additional plus is a very significant fact: the managers of the hotel are all members of the same family.

They are a married couple with three young daughters which we assume are single. Speaking with the mothers, she told us that both she and her daughters tended to the clients, whereas her husband was in charge of administration and suppliers. There were also two or three hired employees. Mother and daughter were the cooks, or at least in charge of the kitchen. It has to be said that the menus were delicious and adequate to the type and needs of the clients. We were also impressed by the diligence with which menus were switched in accordance with particular needs.

We had thought that size was a determining factor when it came to keeping an eye on detailed attention. But we soon learned that, apart from size, there was an underlying deliberate policy. As the Spanish saying goes, the managers did not want to "outstretch the arm above and beyond the shirtsleeve". They were not interested in massive numbers. They were content with the workload they had chosen. This workload was exactly what they could handle, and furthermore, in this manner, the entire family was together. Any other option would have probably meant that the family would have had to disperse.

Thus, these people had organized their work in attention to their family conditions, and not vice-versa, as is usually the case. They had designed their own plan and had put it in practice, with freedom and responsibility. Perhaps this is why they seemed relaxed and comfortable.

It was also interesting to observe their particular division of labor. Although the mother was usually stationed in the interior rooms and the daughters catered to the public, from time to time she would appear and make small talk, regardless of whether or not we were eating, having coffee or sitting around the pool. Thanks to these moments, I became aware of two very interesting things. For example, that the family had been in charge of the interior decoration. Concretely, our attention was focused on a pretty removed area that had to be crossed in order to go from the hotel rooms to the common areas. This was a circular space occupying just a few square meters, which was decorated with armchairs and a small coffee table. Apparently, this was a mere place of passage, but it was soon converted by us into a place of encounter and of intimate conversations. The place had the "small" of a home. I subsequently learned that the decorator had been the mother.

Given the style of these surroundings, we thought that the clients also had to be special. If, that is, if we consider "special" to refer to normal people in search a place to rest, take in the natural beauty and celebrate festive events, as was our case. We could therefore have been those special clients. I thought it would be worthwhile to foster that market.

Yet the best information came from observing the mother and her daughters. This is where I grasped the

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<sup>1</sup> The hotel belongs to the hotel chain "Rustikae", hoteles con carácter en el campo ([www.rustikae.es](http://www.rustikae.es)) and "Rukalka", cada hotel una experiencia. This chain brings together two networks of small hotels that are distributed among Spanish zones having touristic worth, information concerning which can be obtained in different blogs which also appear in the mentioned web page.

best facts regarding their particular philosophy. What those people were doing was meaningful to them; they knew why they were doing it and the manner as well. This is where I discovered what some call *unity or coherence of living*.

How can we explain this philosophy? Arguments could be varied. From doing well what they had to do, to doing it in this manner precisely because this made their guests happy. From what I experienced, I think that this second argument was a priority. Many details confirm this belief. I noticed that in the dining room there were two tables, one for adults and the other for children. Close to each other, yet separate. In this manner, the children could enjoy a joyous autonomy, and yet be under the vigilance of the adults. The menus were also different and accommodated to the tastes of each group. As we ate, the waitresses would discretely walk around us. Sometimes the mother would show up. We could also perceive some special detail or other, such as prolonging the hour of closure of the swimming pool so that the guests could continue enjoying it.

Quality service, personalized attention, trusting treatment, comfort and closeness; these and other values were at the basis of our wellbeing. I believe that in other circumstances it would have been difficult to attain the degree of satisfaction that we reached on that occasion.

It cannot be overstated. The variety and richness of those details were very significant or –stated otherwise– definite in order to make our family reunion a festive event of high human quality. The philosophy that reigned supreme in the hotel could also be termed as humanistic philosophy. And given that the price was in accordance with the attention given to the guests, we could conclude that doing things well doesn't mean having to make things more costly. Stated in another manner: doing things well, at the end of the day, is doing business in the best manner.

This last discovery made me think of the people who had set up the hotel. Who were they? What did they expect from their business? Why had they set it up in this manner? We had access to advertising that confirmed what they were saying and doing. This material came by way of two volumes, "*Rustikae*", *hoteles con carácter en el campo* and "*Ruralka*", *cada hotel una experiencia*. The information contained in these volumes<sup>2</sup> was a good response to our queries.

## CONCEPTS AND CONTENTS OF IRT AS A RESULT OF OUR EXPERIENCE

It is now a matter of relating the description presented in the foregoing section with its possible usefulness regarding the IRT plan. We understand that this usefulness can come from the levels of contents and of method, concretely as a didactic aid in the formation of experts in IRT.

From the standpoint of contents, we will try to relate the information given in the preceding section with the concepts that make up the IRT project. Matters concerning the method will be developed in the following sections.

### **Integrated Relational Tourism is an expression formed by a noun (Tourism) and two adjectives (Integrated and Relational).**

This manner of presenting a title indicates that there are other manners of practising or planning tourism (for example mass tourism). This manner is original, precisely because it contains peculiar characteristics that are expressed by the two qualifying words which impregnate the noun with a certain nuance.

### **The concept of tourism is affected by the two attributes of IRT.**

Even at the risk of evoking very well-known commonplace ideas, we wish to refer here to the generic topic

<sup>2</sup> In these publications we could read: "Surrounded by cultivated fields and almond trees, with views on the mountain", and "The hotel is conceived to provide unique experiences to a sensitive guest seeking sensations linked to the cultural, historical and geographical wealth of the surroundings".

of tourism. Tourism is understood as a human activity which entails values such as recreation, enjoyment, rest, vacations, etc. Nowadays, there are many manners of making tourism or of conceiving tourism. Some of these run counter to the qualities we have cited. Mass tourism, for example, or tour operators who end up exasperating their clients no matter how many places they take them to visit or how many festive events they organize. On the contrary, the experience of the rural hotel did none of this, but did provide the warm encounter of persons bound by family bonds and who were celebrating a private fiesta. Certainly the physical background was propitious, but what was valuable was the soul of the reunion: the feeling of having a good time by being well together. This is precisely what is at stake: having a good time for the mere fact of being together is one of the root frameworks of a manner of tourism which is hardly contemplated by collective organizations. Furthermore, this delves in the concept of recreation or leisure, which in the words of a known author<sup>3</sup> is a "joyous activity of the mind" (more so, we would add, than of the body).

Perhaps it would be useful for students of IRT to reflect a bit on this idea, as on many others that make up the program of non-material ingredients of IRT; without forgetting that there must always be a close relationship between material structures and their functionality as per a set of objectives. But the important thing still remains in the objectives, which belong to the realm of values. Thus is how we can explain some of the details commented on in the foregoing sections: extending the time spent around the swimming pool; the decoration of the small hall enabling encounters, personalized attention, and so on. All this gave the impression that there was perfect harmony between what the guests were seeking and what the hotel managers were offering. This is probably so because both groups shared the same values. Or perhaps because both groups had a family experience.

#### **(a) From the concept of Relation (R)**

In the previous paragraphs we had plenty of opportunity to note the quality of "relation" when we were describing scenes of situations which allowed for diverse realities of a different nature. In fact, the human being is a being of relations. One is the son or the daughter of a father and a mother, and the colleague of so-and-so. To what an extent this is true that one's personal character proceeds from the relationships which that person maintains relations with other persons (one is, for example, a child of God), or with things, when the latter have been appropriated, in a certain manner, by the individual. This appropriation can be material ("I am rich because I have lots of money") or spiritual ("I am good because I carry out good deeds").

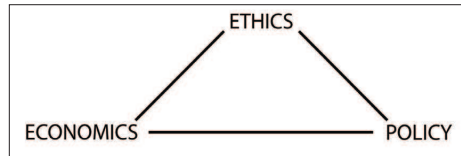
Relation, which as we have seen is an anthropological quality, is emphasized in IRT to such a degree that it appears in the definition as a root. And given that relationships affect human nature itself and its works, it is very important to tend to this aspect within the formation plan of IRT experts.

The spheres in which this particular attention given to the relational factor, within our framework, are multiple and unattainable, because each case is different from the rest. But they can be put together according to families or general concepts which are present in all cases.

Going back to the example of the rural hotel, we saw that a basic element was that of values, which had inspired an entire policy of action among owners and managers without the loss of the nature proper to a business endeavour. Thus we have the three roots of a simple structure which can be reflected in a simple triangular graph, in which the unifying lines represent the relations that are held among each other:

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<sup>3</sup> Josef Pieper, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2009. Originally published in 1952 by Pantheon Books Inc.; English translation, 1963, by Knopf Doubleday (a division of Random House).



The operation we have just carried out can be seen, at first sight, as a synthesis. In this case, we have ascended to the realm of general concepts, but we can also descend to matters of detail (differential aspects within each of the three chosen concepts, or others). Then important thing is that we have made a synthesis out of a narration; we have sought concepts which are universal and therefore are applicable to other cases; we have elaborated a structure as a model to analyze a more complex reality.

In the end, we have followed a process of inductive learning and we have achieved the conceptual definition of singular facts.

This simple example has helped us (at least me, who hails from the Human Sciences) to come closer to the analysis of complex situation by applying a method.

Apart from this, methodical analysis is of great help in order to delve more deeply in the very sphere of contents.

#### **(b) From the concept of Integration (I)**

The term "integration" can be understood in the sense of synthesis, as we have seen, slightly, in the above graph. The triangle represents the final synthesis of a previous process of analysis. It seems to me that there has to be more, but I do not exactly know what. I am going to propose a hypothesis. If I am off the mark, this is of no consequence because research does not consist of seeking what has been said, but rather of asking questions without knowing the answer.

I remember that on one occasion Professor Urbani drew, in front of me, a few lines and some circles which were united among each other. I had the intuition that he was amplifying the scenarios of the tasks of IRT. It seemed to me that he was referring to an extra-national market in which contacts were established which organisms which were not necessarily linked to tourism (telecommunications, for example).

This was an eye-opener for me, although I hardly understood anything. Perhaps for this reason the term "integrated" is inserted in the formulation of IRT. What I do know is that to integrate is to join, to articulate the diverse in order to build a unity which is richer than the original unity. If this is so, I would like to believe that the scenario of IRT has been extended to other areas which go above and beyond tourism, to embrace fields so diverse as technology, international relations, politics or economics. And, of course, all this without renouncing to the humanistic philosophy which has been, and always shall be, a brand name.





## INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM? THE MARATHON OF NICE AND ITS FUTURE "UMBRELLA" STRATEGY

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The Mediterranean basin, the hub of tourist attraction worldwide (42% of world tourism) and the birthplace of Olympic sport must become an area where new tourism offerings will be tested. The experiments aim to restructure tourism along the lines of «Sustainability» to cope with the negative excesses of mass tourism, started in the 60s and characterized by seasonal, spatial concentration of infrastructure, urban sprawl of housing coastal areas. This provoked the physical and environmental impacts of destructive land and maritime natural heritage. To those drifts were grafted systematic economic abuses illustrated by the business strategies of international tour operators who have created dominant commercially positions. They have led to the gradual disappearance of «small producers tourism» premises.

Since the late nineteenth century, NICE was able to host and organize many cultural and sport events who have participated in developing its image and its reputation around the world. In the field of tourism, NICE, since 1880, is one of the sites where it is good to be a tourist, with Hyeres, Cannes, Antibes, MONACO, etc..

The tourism industry has developed throughout the twentieth century from a seasonal tourism winter to summer tourism to achieve today in tourism increasingly seasonally adjusted and more permanent. This development is the result of changes in behavior of the tourist population of all the «blue planet». This population aspires to meet so good as possible, the needs of escape, discovery, encounters, experiences in places extra-ordinary in company of indigenous people. This trend has led to two contradictory effects, one positive and one negative on the economic and social world.

Positiv effects of tourism	Negativ effects of tourism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases and complete the P.I.B.</li> <li>• Improves equipment and infrastructure</li> <li>• Allows more effective investments for the conservation of cultural / natural</li> <li>• Slow or stabilizes the emigration of local populations</li> <li>• Educates local population and tourists to the environmental, cultural and social values</li> <li>• Improves the sociocultural level of locals</li> <li>• Facilitates the marketing of quality local crafts</li> <li>• Allows exchange of ideas, customs, lifestyles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases consumption of natural resources</li> <li>• exhausts the soil, destroying the landscape by new buildings and infrastructures</li> <li>• Increases the production of waste and rubbish</li> <li>• altered the natural ecosystems and local biodiversity</li> <li>• Concentrate flow of tourists in limited areas</li> <li>• Encourages the use of natural elements as a few memories</li> <li>• Causes the loss of traditional values and homogenizes cultures</li> <li>• Increase prices, encourages all speculations, pushing the locals outward.</li> </ul>

Source U.N.E.S.C.O.

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From a highly secure and standardized tourism, based on the relaxation as a sign of wealth, demand is changing, handling the rural or urban adventure, the exotic or social difference, a kind of rediscovery of the "true", authenticity of nature, local cultures and identities. At the edge of mass tourism, mainly bathing, develops an offer aimed at an audience of more educated consumers in search of excitement and knowledge of emergency, supported on an imaginary recreation sports, active, culturally and geographically exotic. These practices suggest market niche mixing sport and culture with the discovery, relaxation and sporting activity to a discourse based on authenticity and sustainability. The population is valued by the identification of local cultures. It participates actively to the success of the process, by volunteering as a key to the organization of mass sporting events.

This has given rise to an approaching tourism more concerned about respect for the blue planet, to counteract the tourism and its corollary the mass transport that distort the world by causing pollution: economic, social, cultural and environmental. Recognizing these negative tendencies and behavioral changes in travel demand policy makers and private tourism industry must innovate to win their catalogue offerings. These innovations affect all forms of tourism, be they recreational, religious, health, business, cultural, sports, ... They allow destinations to gain access to new markets by improving and supplementing their competitiveness. We can identify these innovations into two categories: innovations "heavy, meaningful," such as construction of tourist infrastructure (airport, subway lines, circuit racing ... cf. JO BEIJING 2008 F 1 Grand Prix in Abu Dhabi ) and incremental innovations more diffuse like tourism events (art exhibitions, opera tower, concerts, sports trails edutainment, ...) which correspond to demand more and more focused and offer more and more segmented.

This trend leads tourism professionals to develop strategies "one to one " to offer a more refined for this industry which is tourism opening. Tourism in both factor and topic of globalization has been multiply innovations for adaptation to compensate for a lack of supply response to demand more and more demanding (see value) This trend implies that " true Tourism professionals" adopt a tactic of constant innovations. They can be both technical, human, organizational or business. The policy permanent innovations is also a disability which disturb social order because it poses risks for the public and private "establishment" (see OJ BEIJING and closure of roads for tourist and sporting events of mass , or the debate on the new tram line on the Promenade of the English in NICE, ...)

Aware of developments, the city of Nice as well as many of its private and public partners in the tourism sector have gradually since the early 90s, noted the interest that could represent the choice of structured development strategy of the tourism offer based on the many tools that sports tourism has in his toolbox.

Faced with this situation, an innovative experiment was developed in Nice on the Cote d'Azur to develop a new emblematic image of tourism leisure. This experiment is based on leisure and sport offers which Nice Côte d'Azur hosts and regularly organize since the 90s. These deals have allowed the region to promote an image of youth, sport and eco-responsibility. The latest work has created the first Nice-Cannes marathon whose course runs on the beach, the the English Promenade in Nice to Cannes Croisette. A first study<sup>2</sup> was conducted among 10000 "Tourists participating athletes," study that tracks a glimpse of innovative tourism development. This research has allowed for a comprehensive monograph of the participants in this tourist-sport event. They are young, educated, in search of thrills and social and cultural otherness, all based on an imaginary recreation assets. On this knowledge, an umbrella strategy appeared credible. NICE and the Cote d'Azur in its entirety (from Menton to Cannes) have since the early development of the tourism industry, designed and implemented sports both popular and fashionable to animate the tourist season addressed to tourists and locals. Without being exhaustive we can cite the oldest in the latest

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2 Massiéra B., Parisot D., Ben Mahmoud I., Paget E., Macioci N., «Monographie des coureurs. Marathon des Alpes Maritimes, Nice-Cannes », Novembre 2008, Laboratoire de motricité humaine, Education et santé (LAHMES), Université de Nice Sophia Antipolis, Nice. L'étude a porté sur 810 questionnaires (méthode des quotas) parmi les 10000 inscrits au marathon Nice-Cannes.

### The Regatta CANNES 1860

- Croquet Tournament 1861
- Horse Racing de Cannes 1867
- First tennis court in Cannes France 1881
- First Grand Prix F. 1 MONACO 1912
- Tour de France rider and MONACO NICE
- World Championship Boxing MONACO (years 70/80)
- NICE Davis Cup Final 2003
- World Championship Figure Skating NICE
- Etc...

Referring to the well known umbrella brand of «marketers» of the entire «business world» we can identify this new tourism strategy by the surname «umbrella strategy» whose components are:

- Branding
- Product Catalog / offers
- Variation of Offer
- Know-how
- Workers Partnership
- Approval of local

### **Brand:**

NICE “capital of the Riviera” tourist destination reference since the beginning of the twentieth century, despite increasing international competition, is one of the most popular destinations for all international tourists with 10 million tourists by year or 1.1% market share of global tourism (see WTO sources and House of France).

### **Product Catalog / offers:**

The catalog NICE COTE D’AZUR is both very diverse and complementary. It also meets the needs of tourists than those of traditional highly targeted visitors who have very specific needs. The offer consists of all forms of tourism:

- Tourist resort
- Business
- Cultural
- Shopping
- Senior Citizens
- Juniors
- Health
- Event
- Sport
- Edutainment Sports
- Fair
- Etc ...

### **The advantage: A sport event of high symbolic potential in a tourist site**

Sport tourism is born, part of the expansion of sport activities and recreational sports, on the other hand of the need to develop complementary products to basic services in tourism. This approximation tends to nest more strongly tourism and sports<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Hall E., (1992)

Practice Marathon often brings a movement and a stay in a place dedicated to this practice. This can also be the first pretext to certain destinations to create an event or incentive to participate. The Olympics, the New York Marathon and many others, are illustrious examples. In addition to the sporting side, people are taking advantage of a new country discovery, a new culture simultaneously promoting tourism in the country hosting. Sport tourism often results in "economic impact, sociocultural, environmental and health"<sup>4</sup>. Tourism stakeholders therefore become necessary to develop and facilitate certain sporting activities. The sport became a means to support tourism and vice versa. Becoming a part of society, sport is becoming more commonly integrated into tourism products<sup>5</sup>.

Since the emergence of sport in tourism (fifty years), link them together and has continued to grow. Two blades of funds have gone through, not without foam that period: the emergence of a society of leisure and the rise of a consumer society<sup>6</sup>. The consumer movement has given rise to new solutions to local development. It is from this link between tourism and sport events such as sporting Nice-Cannes Marathon can develop their originality. This event takes place as potential regular event, held annually at the same time and in the same territory.

It aims to become "a major event recurring, limited duration, developed primarily to increase the awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourism destination in the short or long term"<sup>7</sup>. The sporting event in itself is considered an attraction that draws visitors<sup>8</sup>. The Nice-Cannes Marathon, implement close cooperation between a private association believes (Azur Sport Organization) which aims to create, promote and organize sporting and cultural leisure activities and services of the cities concerned Alpes Maritimes for that purpose is to promote the commons and tourism.

#### **A tourist consumption induced by the sporting event**

The purpose of an event is primarily to achieve good performance in sport and consequently the tourism aspect is not the priority of the organizer. The tourism impact of the event is considered as an induced effect of particular interest to tour operators and public authorities. In a time of year (November), far from being conducive to tourism, the sporting event has generated a tourist movement and therefore economic well above that of the previous year, during the same period. It has been estimated at 3 000, the number of vehicles (total number of trips by car), use of 20 000 rail travel (total travel by train). Regarding athletes Parisian and foreign runners, 2000 Air travel has been used for a budget estimated at 250 000. After transport, what are the different modes of accommodation and food have been analyzed. The non-local runners (half of them) spend an average of 2 nights and 3 days away from their primary residences, resulting in 40 000 nights spent in a hotel located in the department with a preference for Nice and Cannes and causing 1.5 million euros of revenue in accommodation (total number of hotel accommodation). However, riders and local leaders not consume 24,000 meals in the restaurant for a recipe of 1 million euros (total number of meals in restaurants). Out of their participation, riders and coaches and rest are shopping on the Riviera for a budget of EUR 700 000 (total addicted to shopping). The economic benefits for the entire department of Alpes-Maritimes, rising between 3.4 and 4 million euros excluding transportation costs and benefits related to spectators. The results show that indeed, a tourist consumption has been driven by the Marathon des Alpes Maritimes.

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4 Standeven J. (1999)

5 Sobry C., (2005)

6 Pigeassou C. (1997)

7 Richie

8 Middleton (1998)

### **Declination of tenders: The example of the Marathon des Alpes Maritimes Nice-Cannes**

Each of these offers may naturally be declined. Our communication is limited to presenting one of the versions developed by NICE CÔTE D'AZUR regard to sports tourism and leisure sport. This variation is the Marathon des Alpes Maritimes CANNES NICE whose first edition took place on 28/29/30 in November 2008.

This marathon has been recognized by all participants, business partners, local people as sport end leisure tourist event of the year with a satisfaction rate of over 91%<sup>9</sup>, recognized success both locally, nationally and internationally with a first edition with 10,000 registered from 37 countries. Regarding the forecast for the second edition, taking into account the state of late registration in August 2009, forecasts are realistic 11,000 bips from over 45 nations. The entire French Riviera, particularly the cities of Marathon partners will therefore develop an "umbrella strategy" to complement and enhance their offering of tourist entertainment event (Nice, Cagnes / Mer, Villeneuve Loubet, Antibes, Juan LES PINS, Golfe Juan, Cannes). This strategy relies on what the event umbel becoming Marathon NICE CANNES. (see Chart Strategy Parasol)

The riders monograph<sup>10</sup> conducted and provide a set of key figures in socio economic geographical origins of the participants: - Alpes Maritimes 44%, foreigners 13.3%

Female 25.4%, men 74.6%

74.7% are couples

More than 50% have 2 or more children

Foreigners most represented in order of importance: German, English, Swiss, Italians

The 5 continents are represented

For 30% of foreign Marathon was the source of their 1st visit to the Coast, which seems good for the Advancement of Côte d'Azur

The public is foremost advocate of individual sport unconstrained nature of logistics

The average age of riders is 44 years, 58.4% were between 36 and 52, the youngest is 19 years old, the oldest 78 years

- 53% are graduates of higher education
- 42% belong to higher social classes
- 46% of riders are accompanied by more than 4 people
- 66% of carers are spouses or friends
- The average number of nights is 3.04 for French, 4.67 for foreign
- The hotel is hosting the formula most used, 30.7% French, 70.4% foreign
- Budgets means riders are:
- Accommodation 83 € (243 € for foreigners)
- Food 50.4 € (114.5 ")
- Activities outside marathon € 70.7 (161.9 ")
- Total turnover for the accommodation 1 500 000 €
- "Restoration 1 000 000 €
- "Shopping 700 000 €
- A rider is accompanied by 2.2 persons
- 50,000 spectators accompany marathoners

<sup>9</sup> Massiera B., Parisot D., Ben Mahmoud I., Paget E., Macioci N., «Monographie des coureurs. Marathon des Alpes Maritimes, Nice-Cannes », Novembre 2008, Laboratoire de motricité humaine, Education et santé (LAHMES), Université de Nice Sophia Antipolis, Nice. L'étude a porté sur 810 questionnaires (méthode des quotas) parmi les 10000 inscrits au marathon Nice-Cannes

<sup>10</sup> Massiera B., Parisot D., Ben Mahmoud I., Paget E., Macioci N., «Monographie des coureurs. Marathon des Alpes Maritimes, Nice-Cannes », Novembre 2008, Laboratoire de motricité humaine, Education et santé (LAHMES), Université de Nice Sophia Antipolis, Nice. L'étude a porté sur 810 questionnaires (méthode des quotas) parmi les 10000 inscrits au marathon Nice-Cannes

**Know-how:**

Most marathoners (90.1%) recognize the quality of the organization.

This finding is not due to chance. It is the result of an experiment on mass races gained since 1991 with the 1st half marathon and completed by the Prom'Classic from 1995.

This experience helped to construct a logistics transportation, information, accommodation, catering, security, health level of a quite remarkable given the low rate of dissatisfaction, for a 1st edition, identified by the survey (9.9%).

It should be noted that the quality of this knowledge is due to the professionalism of the crew of Azur Sport Organization associated with the "amateurism" of over 500 volunteers involved fully in the success of this event.

Public / private Partnership:

The close partnership and effective Azur Sport Organization with public authorities (prefecture, municipalities, police, fireman, ...), the public economic sector (Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer), the private economic sector (hotels, restaurants, shops, ...) has helped to further access to the proposal and implementation of a product / quality event. The term quality is taken in a broad sense (economic, social, cultural, images, ...).

The quality of this partnership is the result of consistent policies and strategies of each group involved.

**Acceptance and approval of the local population:**

Historically, it is accepted that the quality of tourism going on, first, by the quality of care offered to tourists by local people.

Naturally this quality can be achieved and only if local people are intimately persuaded and convinced that tourism is in harmony with their lives everyday, it will not disturb their daily lives.

If this happens the "welcome" will naturally appointment.

To facilitate this, the organizers should make an effort towards educational premises. This, through an information campaign that will start well before the event, which will rise in power until the day of the event through use of the media (local press campaign, display, website) PR and word of mouth.

Local people will therefore be the additional crew who will make the difference and allow access to the highest step of the podium, that of success. Obviously we should not forget to thank the local press by voice and other media support to ensure their communion for future editions that may be associated with the warm welcome of the native population of exaltation five senses of human beings throughout the course on the Cote d'Azur:

- The view: beautiful scenery, the sea out of sight and the massive alpine snow in the back.
- Smell: spray and marine scents that awake the marathoners senses of smell. Traffic is blocked thereby rediscover the pleasures of a life with less "assault vehicle"
- Hearing: The only rocking flow and ebb of the great blue along the path trodden the pace of marathoners
- The taste of both iodine floating around and participants arriving through tastings of regional culinary identity
- Touch: the "unattainable dream" (cf. J. BREL), which becomes reality through the coin as the "finisher" is proud to bear, to bring, keep and show to their relationships saying "you can do (see NIKE and B. OBAMA). Speech, the more credible it is (see quality BAO), which serve to promote the event more effectively than traditional media materials.

**The motivations of participants in the Nice-Cannes Marathon**

Two hypotheses are advanced. The attractiveness of the participants and attendants turns first to the sporting event but also leads to aspects of another nature. The motivations to engage in the marathon are influenced by the mythical aspect of the event and its development in a tourist site.

Higher is the level of the athlete, more important is the choice of destination. However, the choice may be determined as the venue and various motivations will then be combined<sup>11</sup>. The discovery of the place is a source of pleasure and reinforces the pleasure of driving experience through aesthetic emotion developed by the original experience of the natural environment. The tourism environment is an amplifier of sport motivation. The control and / or technical expertise of a motive and ability to run leads to. This focus on self-mastery and progress, self-knowledge and thereby affirming identity. The impact of environment on this type of experience is second. Athletic competition comes as the main motivation sports tourists. It gives rise to multiple trips of short stays when they reached a certain level of excellence in practice. It is also a motivation that strengthens the competitive sport of amateur sports. In this case, competition is an additional attractive tourist environment of the sporting event.

In other words, the discovery of a new environment, the practice of his sport in an unusual place, surpassing oneself and ultimately the spirit of competition are determining factors in the decision, preparing the motivation to participate in such particular sport event. The motivations animating men and women to participate in this type of sport event is almost homogeneous.

We can therefore say that the location of the event (discovery of an environment) is the major factor in the decision of participating athletes. Running on one of the most beautiful coastlines in the world, bordered by the Mediterranean is highly attractive and unusual for a large portion of athletes involved.

The Nice-Cannes Marathon brought together in a single stroke of great substance, two different types of runners in terms of motivation, but equal in the passion of sport, leaving an opportunity for practicing "common" to tread a path "idyllic" and participate in an exceptional race.

### **Summary of the marketing approach:**

With this success, thanks to the local tourism potential and to master new trends of market demand edutainment sports tourism, the public and private partners will refine the establishment of an umbrella strategy, based on logical transverse offering tourism involving:

- Freedom
- Pleasure
- Sport
- Health
- Environment

This "new offer" sticks perfectly to the new behavior in recreation that prospective surveys conducted by WTO and consulting firms in tourism were highlighted and confirmed. Tourism demand is more concerned with sustainable development and seek to travel otherwise.

This alternative tourism, mindful of the scenery, historical interest, local culture, natural environment, should grow faster than any other segment of the tourism market and represent over 20% of travel within 10 to 20 years. This finding may therefore allow us to consider the representation of the virtuous circle of sports tourism edutainment.

### **Develop a new umbrella strategy?**

#### **Recommendations to maximize the tourism potential of the event "Marathon"**

Regardless of the nature of the event, its success depends on identifying the classic four Ps of marketing by the organizer of the event and "the place of your event can dictate not only the presence but also the public character and personality of the event"<sup>12</sup>. The relationship of public communication is "a major element of the marketing mix with everything that is connected to the distribution of event such as the media, radio, television ... The communication generated at the Nice-Cannes marathon was concerned essentially the event itself (the programming quality of the race, place ...) and very few assets of the region's shelters in the hotel and catering, its nature and culture. Yet the quality of tourism (hotels,

<sup>11</sup> Pigeassou C., (1997)

<sup>12</sup> Hoyle L.H., (2002)

catering, transport, leisure) part of the satisfaction of participants and leaders and therefore the overall success of the event. It is therefore essential to explore how to better integrate the tourism objectives among the overall objectives of the event, and not regarded as marginal or secondary effects.

While the practice of sports over the years have become major elements in tourism activities and are increasingly integrated with the holidays offered by tour operators or the many specialized structures. To get a better value both socially and economically, it is necessary to bring together tourism and sports players. A sporting event can be a total success as tourism through active cooperation between event organizers and promoters of tourism. A true partnership would be to formalize between different actors in the context of a Local Organizing Committee consists of:

- The event organizers, who remain the guarantors of quality sporting event.
- Representatives of tourism, which brings expertise in marketing terms of supply and demand, "packaging" of the event (integration and enhancement of tourism assets of the territory), and marketing of the event.
- Representatives from business planning, providing a practical vision of how to involve businesses in the event.
- And finally, the local communities who play a leadership role partnership and balances between the cultural, sporting, economic, social and tourism. Some websites are already dedicated to the creation of packages for different marathons in France shortly<sup>13</sup>. France suffers from a lack of "packaging" in its events and especially marathons compared to other European countries.

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<sup>13</sup> Sportstoursinternational.co.uk is a website, we can find a partial package to Nice.  
Thomas Cook has also a website dedicated to the marathons.



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**TRAVELLING WITH DISABILITY, WELCOMING DISABILITY.  
DESTINATION MANAGEMENT FOR ACCESSIBLE TOURISM**

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**Abstract**

Disability is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others, due to physical and social barriers (Hughes 1999).

Such barriers show to have a strong impact also on the decision of travelling by people with disabilities, having more challenges to face before and during a trip than travellers without a disability and yet experimenting the same desire to travel.

Since the number of people with disabilities is expected to increase all over the world as a result of increasing life-span, decreases in communicable diseases, improved medical technology and improved child mortality (Yau et al. 2004), a significant but often ignored tourist market niche is growing (McKercher et al. 2003; Murray and Sproats 1990; Ray and Ryder 2003).

This is true for Italy, too, where an increasing number of destination managers, tour operators and single tourist businessmen have recently begun to pay attention to the needs of such travellers and, consequently, to the planning of services and strategies for the development of what can be defined "accessible tourism" (SL&A 2008).

Starting from such considerations, this paper proposes an overview on the demand and the supply for such kind of tourism, then looking at the case of Italy and focusing on Sicily as a potential "accessible tourism destination". Since human relations with local tourist operators and residents are one of the crucial holiday components for travellers with disabilities (Crawford and Godbey 1987; Smith 1987; Daniels et al. 2005; Grösch 2007), an Integrated Relational Tourism (IRT) approach aiming at considering accessible tourism from both the demand and the supply side is adopted in the paper and explained in its first section. The framework derived from such theoretical stream and its application to the analysis of accessible tourism are here interpreted within a *destination management* perspective (Buhalis 2000; Franch, Ed. 2002; Pechlaner et al., Eds. 2003), as explained in the first section.

The second section presents an international literature review on the characteristics of the disabled travellers in terms of a) their different pleasure travel constraints, especially the "interpersonal" and "structural or environmental" ones (Crawford and Godbey 1987); b) their travel needs and motivations; and c) their holiday decision making process.

The third section looks at the supply side of accessible tourism, enlightening the role of different tourist and not tourist stakeholders on its development.

The fourth section presents early results from a desk research on the demand of accessible tourism within the Italian market, finally focusing on Sicily, where a research has recently been conducted on the issue of the physical and social access to tourism (from the sole supply side, yet).

Finally considering the case of Sicily as a prospect "accessible tourism destination", the last section summarizes some issues about the development and the marketing of this kind of tourism.

**Key words:** Disability, accessible tourism, Integrated Relational Tourism, destination management, Italy

## INTRODUCTION

Disability is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others, due to physical and social barriers (Hughes 1999).

According to Yau et al. (2004), «Living with a disability poses unique challenges and can influence participation in many activities. Tourism is one activity that many people with disabilities feel must be sacrificed as it requires an orchestrated cooperation of physical, mental, and social capabilities, which are often adversely affected or compromised by a disability. Nevertheless, it is widely accepted that desire to travel is the same for persons with or without a disability» (Yau et al. 2004, 946-947).

Since the number of people with disabilities is expected to increase all over the world as a result of increasing life-span, decreases in communicable diseases, improved medical technology and improved child mortality (Yau et al. 2004), a significant but often ignored tourist market niche is growing (McKercher et al. 2003; Murray and Sproats 1990; Ray and Ryder 2003). For this reason, an increasing number of destination managers, tour operators and single tourist businessmen have recently begun to pay attention to the needs of disabled tourists and, consequently, to the planning of services and strategies for the development of what can be defined "accessible tourism". According to a recent research (SL&A 2008) such interest has been growing also in Italy.

Starting from such considerations, this paper proposes an overview on the demand and the supply for such kind of tourism, then looking at the case of Italy and focusing on Sicily as a potential "accessible tourism destination". Since human relations with local tourist operators and residents are one of the crucial holiday components for travellers with disabilities (Crawford and Godbey 1987; Smith 1987; Daniels et al. 2005; Grösch 2007), the theoretical approach adopted within the paper refers to what has been defined as "Integrated Relational Tourism". The framework derived from such theoretical stream and its application to the analysis of accessible tourism are here interpreted within a *destination management* perspective, as explained in the first section.

The second section presents an international literature review on the characteristics of the disabled travellers in terms of a) their different pleasure travel constraints, especially the "interpersonal" and "structural or environmental" ones (Crawford and Godbey 1987); b) their travel needs and motivations; and c) their holiday decision making process.

The third section looks at the supply side of accessible tourism, enlightening the role of different tourist and not tourist stakeholders on its development.

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Finally considering the case of Sicily as a prospect "accessible tourism destination", the last section summarizes some issues about the development and the marketing of this kind of tourism.

## AN INTEGRATED RELATIONAL APPROACH TO THE MANAGEMENT OF ACCESSIBLE TOURISM DESTINATIONS

Human relationships between residing population and travellers play an important role in tourism development and promotion (Ap 1992; Garrod and Fyall 1998; Gursoy et al. 2002; Ko e Stewart 2002; Jurowski and Gursoy 2004; Sheldon and Abenoja 2001).

According to several scholars, human relations with local tourist operators and residents are one of the crucial holiday components for travellers with disabilities (Crawford and Godbey 1987; Smith 1987; Daniels et al. 2005; Grösch 2007).

Over the last decade disability has started to be considered as resulting from a *social construction*, deriving from a weak ability of society to take account of people with impairments' needs (Hughes 1999; Hughes and Paterson 1997; Imrie 1996), as also highlighted by Freund (2001).

However, according to Shaw and Coles (2004, 399), «Few, if any, of the social constructs of disability have permeated the tourism literature. There has been a reluctance to explore the experiences of the disabled traveller, in addition to neglecting the wider relationships between disabled people and the tourism industry [...] However, [...] these are missed opportunities which, if corrected, can lead to a far better comprehension of the problems faced by disabled tourists».

One of such opportunity is to consider and study disabled tourists and accessible tourism according an *Integrated Relational Tourism* approach, within a more general *destination management* perspective (Buhalis 2000; Franch, Ed. 2002; Pechlaner et al., Eds. 2003).

According to the definition provided by ARCES University College (ARCES) and the Institute of Tourism Studies from Malta (ITS), «Integrated relational tourism concerns that particular sector of the market in which supply and demand converge via balanced and combined management of interpersonal relations [...] In this context human relations [...] reacquire importance in commercial exchange itself, by providing visitors with the possibility of building up relationships of an economic nature with the "local people", thus consolidating the social-economic growth generated» (ARCES and ITS 2007, 3).

IRT is based on managing at least two kinds of relationships: those among operators and those among clients and operators (besides the usual ones among clients) (Ruisi 2004).

Under this viewpoint IRT approach is consistent with the *destination management* perspective: since destinations are amalgams of individually produced tourism amenities and services, and a wide range of public goods (Buhalis 2000), one of the main purposes of destination management is to reconcile the interests of all the local stakeholders involved in the development and supply of tourism products, and to facilitate both their mutual relationships and those with travellers.

The following section will be focused on disabled travellers as one of the final target group that IRT and destination management aim at reaching.

## TRAVELLING WITH A DISABILITY: A REVIEW ON THE DEMAND SIDE

Existing literature has always tended to study the relationships between being persons with disabilities and holiday making in terms of *constraints to leisure* (Crawford and Godbey 1987; Hawkins et al. 1999; Jackson et al. 1993; Jackson and Scott 1999; Samdahl and Jekubovich 1997; Turco et al. 1998). Such constraints can be considered as *barriers to participation* (Henderson et al. 1988; McGuire 1984; Murray and Sproats 1990; Smith 1987).

According to an interesting review by Daniels et al. (2005), scholars agree that leisure constraints can be distinguished into three main categories:

- Intrapersonal constraints, which «are associated with a person's psychological state, physical functioning or cognitive abilities [...] and include areas such as stress, anxiety, lack of knowledge, health related problems and social ineffectiveness [...]».
- Interpersonal constraints "arise out of social interaction or relationships among people within social contexts" (Scott, 1991). Interpersonal constraints can occur during interactions with an individual's social network, service providers or strangers, or because one lacks a partner with whom to engage in some leisure activity [...].
- Structural or environmental constraints are said to intervene between preferences and participation [...]. Examples of structural constraints include financial challenges, lack of time, ecological influences, transportation difficulties and barriers due to regulations» (Daniels et al. 2005, 920).

As Yau et al. (2004) reported, scholars as McGuire (1984), Murray and Sproats (1990) and Smith (1987) found that *intrapersonal constraints* «are felt to be the greatest obstacle [...]» (Yau et al. 2004, 948). According to other researchers, physical barriers that affect movement and travel are perceived as the most disabling (Freund 2001; Imrie 2000).

Shaw and Coles (2004, 399) remarked that «Detailed research on disabled travellers is fairly limited within tourism studies and what work that does exist tends to focus on the problems of physical access», whereas a limited amount of investigative research on the pleasure travel needs, behaviours and intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints has been conducted so far.

Research by Shaw and Coles (2004) highlighted that «access and costs are two significant controlling factors for many disabled people» (Shaw and Coles 2004, 401). They have to face a range of physical barriers – both in public and private spaces, especially regarding transport – which limit the range of holidays to be chosen. For this reason, they tend to make domestic trips. Since they often depend on their family, constraints of the family budget further affect their travel choices. As also Berthoud et al. (1993) remarked, disabilities restrict the access to the world of work and such a limitation has relevant economic implications on holiday making.

Shaw and Coles also showed that disabled travellers tend to give «strong emphasis to rest and relaxation and, more importantly, a time for carers within the family to be partly relieved of their duties. In this context, holidays represented a time of respite for everyone» (Shaw and Coles 2004, 402), as also pointed out by Smith and Hughes (1999) in their research on the meaning of holiday to disadvantaged families.

Daniels et al. (2005) found out that «Within the context of pleasure travel, individuals with physical disabilities are, in most respects, similar to other travelers [...] However, every stage of the travel process requires significant planning time and careful attention to detail [...] Attention to accessibility is particularly important in less structured settings [...] Failure to provide information, inflexibility, intolerance to change, inappropriate facilities or technology, unwillingness to enforce safety rules and lack of individualized services are examples of barriers of omission [...]. Travelers with physical disabilities were also keenly aware of the presence or absence of other persons with disabilities» (Daniels et al. 2005, 928-923).

Besides considering needs and constraints experienced by persons with disabilities, it is important to take account of the decision making process they go through when planning to travel. With regards to individuals with mobility or visual impairments, Yau et al. (2004) stated that they experienced five different stages in the process of becoming *travel active*:

- *Personal stage*, which involves the *acceptance* of their disability, particularly if this is acquired, and their *reintegration*, in terms of *rehabilitation*.
- *Reconnection stage* is a period «where the individual begins to establish him or herself fully in community life [...] generally, little tourism occurs as the individual focuses on learning to live independently» (ibidem, 952). Since persons with an acquired disability wish to be reintegrated into their usual environment – now perceived as new and unfamiliar – reconnection stage represents for them a period of *exploration for future travelling*.
- *Travel Analysis stage* is characterized by taking account of the idea of going on a journey and resolving a range of practical concerns about the desired holiday. In order to face such problems, travel analysis stage represents a period of *search for information*, involving a detailed preplanning.
- *Physical Journey stage* is based on attitudes and behaviours of *compensation* and *compromise*, which are necessary for people with disabilities to manage their travel experience. To allow disabled travellers to live a satisfying holiday experience, tourist operators should reduce the range of the ordinary compromises for them and their need of *negotiations strategies* (Daniels et al. 2005).
- *Experimentation and Reflection stage* represents the final stage of travel, which determines «whether the individual will try again, with experience playing a crucial feedback role in determining future interests» (Yau et al. 2004: 958). In particular, according to Ray and Ryder (2003: 57) people with disability «are impressed by “personal inspection” of hospitality facilities and accommodation».

The core lesson that can be derived from the studies on the process of becoming travel active is that the tourism industry and the way its operators manage the relationships with disabled travellers has a strong impact especially on the last three stages of the process. Consequently, tourist operators wishing to develop accessible tourism plans have to identify the key-variables affecting such stages and the constraints and needs as experienced by different segments of disabled people, so to enhance the whole process and increase their propensity and frequency of travel.

### WELCOMING DISABILITIES: AN OVERVIEW ON THE SUPPLY SIDE

From an integrated relational tourism perspective, besides analysing the tourist demand, it is also necessary to consider the attitudes and behaviours towards disabled travellers by the different stakeholders<sup>1</sup> working within the destination already visited or to be visited.

Travel agents, for example, are influent stakeholders, as they can work as facilitators or inhibitors of travel. McKercher et al. (2003, 472) found out that «people with disabilities are largely dissatisfied with the performance of the retail travel agency sector. Their failure to service this market, in turn, affects the ability of tourists with disabilities to participate fully in travel. The failure can be attributed to two main factors: attitudinal and structural. Education may help address attitudinal problems, but greater changes are required to resolve structural problems inherent in the industry».

The results from McKercher et al.'s research are consistent with those highlighted by Ray and Ryder (2003), who investigated the preferred sources of travel information used by individuals with mobility impairments. They found that travel guides are just the third source of information they rely on, after word-of-mouth and the Internet. As reported by Ray and Ryder (2003), scholars such as Kahn (2000) stated that «few groups have benefited more from the Internet than the disabled» (Ray and Ryder 2003, 58).

Tourist public operators and destination managers should identify and consider the importance of each information channel for different segments of disabled tourists, when planning and implement marketing strategies to reach each segment: although people with disabilities have often been considered as «a unique group», «disabled people represent not one market, but a series of different sub-markets», as suggested by Shaw and Coles (2004, 402). Consistently with such idea, Ray and Ryder (2003) stated that «careful segmentation strategies will need to be employed with the various disabled groups. For example, independence is crucial to many wheelchair-bound consumers. While they belong to support groups, sports clubs and teams, and other social organizations, [...] finding a sense of community among the mobility-disabled is difficult. Other disabled groups may have different levels of a sense of community. For example, most deaf individuals see themselves as definitely part of a social community, bound together by shared activities, social values, and most importantly, language (Baker & Cokely, 1980)» (Ray and Ryder 2003, 64-65).

This fact has important implications for destination management, since tourist public decision makers and private operators have to correctly identify the different needs and travel constraints of people with different kinds of impairments and to take account of them through focused tourism development and marketing plans.

Since residents' attitudes toward tourism have crucial effects on their support for it (Ap 1992; Garrod and Fyall 1998; Gursoy et al. 2002; Ko and Stewart 2002; Jurowski and Gursoy 2004; Sheldon and Abenaja 2001), such plans should be addressed to local communities, too, and «should include measures that would protect the use of the resource base for the local citizens or enhance their ability to access it» (Jurowski and Gursoy 2004, 308), so increasing their acceptance towards disabled visitors<sup>2</sup>.

Marketers should pay attention to another type of stakeholder: interest groups and no-profit organizations

1 See the article by Polonsky et al. (2002) about a stakeholder perspective for analyzing marketing relationships.

2 See Daruwalla and Darcy (2005) about personal and societal attitudes to disability.

which connect and offer services to people with specific disabilities. In Italy such organizations often work as influential "travel agencies", which are considered trustworthy because of their deep knowledge of their users and members. Interesting kinds of no-profit organizations that disabled persons rely on are especially those tied to the Catholic Church.

The next section is going to look at the case of accessible tourism to Italy, focusing on some recent market trends.

### **ACCESSIBLE TOURISM TO ITALY AND SICILY: SOME MARKET TRENDS**

In Italy "accessible tourism" has been defined as «the set of services and structures that allow people with special needs to experience a holiday and leisure time without hurdles and difficulties» (Italian Department for Works, Health and Public Welfare and ISTAT 2009).

According to ISTAT – the Italian Statistical Institute – "people with special needs" can include people with disabilities, people with other health problem (such as heart disease, asthma etc.), people with food allergies or similar problems and people who need special comforts and facilitation for travelling (for example, old people and pregnant woman).

The definition of tourist by ISTAT includes all the people who have made at least a travel during the last year.

An early analysis of the potential domestic demand for accessible tourism to Italy shows that Italian citizens with disabilities living with their family amounted to 2.609.000 in 2005. 66.2% of them are women (ISTAT 2005a). The top four Italian regions where most people with a disability live are Lombardia (12.9%), Sicily (10.9%), Lazio (8.3%) and Puglia (8.1%).

41.4% of disabled people is affected by the highest level of disability; the most spread type of impairment among people living with their family is that affecting mobility (38.3%) (ISTAT 2005b). Disabled people and not self-sufficient old people who live in welfare residences amount to 196.218 (ISTAT 2005c). 71.8% out of them consists of women.

41.3% of disabled people have made at least a travel within the last year; health problems, hurdles to mobility and economic limitation were the most frequent barriers to travel reported by people who have not made any journey (ISTAT 2005b). Such results are consistent with the ones discussed in the second section, where it was pointed out that access and costs are two significant controlling factors for many disabled people.

77.9% of the disabled have travelled with family (ISTAT 2005b), so confirming what was showed by previous research stressing the importance of family circumstances on their travel decisions (Altman et al. 1999). Younger people, people with a higher level of education, people with higher economic resources and people coming from the North of Italy tend to travel with friends more frequently than the others (ISTAT 2005b).

According to SL&A (2008) Italian disabled travellers prefer to go on a journey to bathing resorts, hills and mountains destinations, and art cities. The most important holiday components to them are the *warmth* and *helpfulness expressed by the host community* (tourist and not tourist operators, and residents), followed by the *absence of structural barriers* and the *efficiency/accessibility of public transport*.

The most important sources of information used by Italians are word-of-mouth, the Internet and brochures, consistently with the results observed on disabled travellers at an international level.

The lack of systematic data collections on the supply components in the field of accessible tourism to Italy does not allow to make an exhaustive analysis of them.

However, some Italian destination has recently started to make surveys on the structural and relational constraints to travel among private tourist operators.

This is the case of Sicily, where a recent research was conducted in the field of accommodation services



available in the Province of Trapani (Puglia and Xilone, Eds., 2009). 295 operators were contacted, only 154 answered to the sent questionnaire (52.2%). 62 operators out of 154 (40.3%) declared to be “equipped” for receiving tourists with disabilities. However, most of such operators seem to be affected by barriers to accessibility. The most important constraints involve the relational components of the tourist experience, since such operators do not offer specialized staff for facing different types of disability. Consequently, important segments of tourist demand are neglected, such as the guests with *visual impairments* – as the recurrent absence of a menu in Braille at their restaurants seems to show – and the *deaf travellers*. With regard to the deaf-and-dumb guests, as Ray and Ryder (2003, 66) recommended, «interpreters would have to be hired, with maybe more than one sign language (in the case of multiple nationalities) needing interpretation».

In addition, most of the operators working in the Province of Trapani do not offer accessible transport services; local wildlife and archaeological reserves seem to be not able to guarantee a satisfying level of accessibility to their disabled visitors.

Although Italian disabled travellers represent an interesting tourist market niche, the above mentioned trends both on the demand and the supply side highlight the existence of some relevant issues about destination management for accessible tourism, as I am going to discuss in the next section.

## CONCLUSIONS: DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ISSUES FOR ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

Starting from all the results derived both from the international review presented in the first three sections and from the preliminary desk research on accessible tourism to Italy and Sicily, this section considers Sicily as a prospect “accessible tourism destination” and summaries some destination management issues for developing and marketing this kind of tourism.

A systematic set of studies on the demand side is needed, aiming at survey:

1. the needs, travel requirements, constraints and the decision making process among the actual disabled tourists coming to Sicily; holiday experiences during the last years, in terms of travel patterns, organisation, travel arrangements and length of stay; meanings of holidays, both to the individual as well as to other members of the family;
2. the prospect demand for accessible tourism to Italy and Sicily through focused research, aiming at distinguish the *main reasons for not taking a holiday* and the *positioning of the competitors* of Sicily at the eyes of the disabled tourists who did not perceive the Island as an “accessible destination”.

The above mentioned steps will be useful for a) *identifying different segments of tourists with disabilities* with respect to some relevant variables such as type of disability, age, level of education, geographical distance form the destination, kind of journey they wish to make, etc.); b) *choosing which segments can be better served*.

Such choice should result from a systematic set of studies on the supply side, too, aiming at:

1. surveying the characteristics of the tourist and not tourist services provided by the stakeholders that can influence accessible tourism development at the destination. Such characteristics should be analysed on the basis of both the structural and the relational dimensions of accessibility discussed in section 2 and 4;
2. comparing the *expected level of accessibility* of tourist services – as defined by the actual and prospect travellers – to the *experienced level of accessibility* – as defined by the actual travellers coming to Sicily – in order to identify the strong and the weak points affecting the tourist supply within Sicily (as a whole destination or as a set of single destinations);
1. planning and implementing new single tourist services and new packages pointing at the satisfaction of specific targets of disabled tourists.

With regards to new single tourist services, the desk research on the accommodation sector in the Province of Trapani enlightened that most of the relevant travel components reported by Puglia and Xilone (Eds., 2009) – as the *warmth and helpfulness expressed by the host community*, the *absence of structural barriers* and the *efficiency/accessibility of public transport* – have been neglected by private operators, so making it urgent to enhance them on the basis of the correspondent segments of tourist demand previously chosen.

With regards to new packages, existing networks of operators could be further strengthened and oriented to accessible tourism, such the Wine and Food Routes already present within different Sicilian Provinces (including Trapani). Wine and Food Routes as new destinations of accessible tourism could benefit from the fact that «people with a disability develop other senses and select different foci to experience, which can produce a sweet, memorable taste [...] by exploring the places through descriptive words, smells, touch, and sound, they could achieve the same satisfaction as anyone else» (Yau et al. 2004, 956).

Planning and implementing new single tourist services and new packages for specific targets of tourists will require the tourist public sector to develop specific training plans for local tourist operators in order to improve their relational accessibility to the destination.

Finally, looking at retail and promotion of accessible tourism, a focused use of information channels as the Internet can allow public decision makers and destination managers both to coordinate and support the relations *among the local operators* (public institutions, local tourist offices, businesses, no-profit organizations etc.) and to reach and better serve *their final target groups* for which the Internet has recently proved to be one of the most important source of information when planning to travel.

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## *Sustainable Tourism*



# **TARGETTING A TOURISM GOVERNANCE STRATEGY BASED ON SUSTAINABILITY FOR ENHANCING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT OUTLETS IN MEDITERRANEAN DESTINATIONS (APPLIED STUDY ON EGYPT)**

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## **Abstract**

Strategies and policies based on sustainability are often used to achieve certain aims and objectives, as integration and unionization to achieve completion, guarantee benefiting future generations, enhancing a destination's competitive situation, ecological conservation, Social justice and poverty alleviation, improving the wellbeing of the local community, community participation in decision making process, environmental protection, deepening the feeling of place and identity and ensuring efficient and qualitative governance.

Since tourism has been most ideally suited to adopt sustainability, as tourism doesn't consume additional non-renewal resources, community resources (community's culture, traditions, shops, and leisure facilities ....etc) represent the core base resources for tourism, it represents one of the few available economic tools to remote communities, reduce poverty and stimulate regional development, also tourism can revitalize cultures and traditions, conserve cultural and natural assets and foster greater understanding between peoples and greater global consciousness. Therefore Mediterranean basin destinations which are very rich by their tourist resources can depend on tourism industry to enhance their local development plans outlets. And implement sustainability and achieve its' goals.

This study will display tourist abilities of the Mediterranean destinations. As well as points of strength and weakness of tourism industry in the region, aiming to suggest an ideal strategy for tourism industry management in these destinations to achieve tourism sustainability depending on four axes:

### 1. Tourist economic policies

This part of the study will create a value chain for the tourism industry, as well as designing an ideal tourism industry cluster depending on the features of the tourism sector in the Mediterranean countries (this cluster could be modified due to the differences between countries), As a fundamental step for tourist co-operation and integration between these destinations.

### 2. Efficient and qualitative governance of the industry

This part will identify the role of every stakeholder (the government, private sector, social society, and local community) in the destination concerning tourist development process (planning and implementation).

### 3. Revitalizing Mediterranean destinations identity

This part will settle the procedures by which the Mediterranean destinations can revitalize their identity and cultures (traditions, local arts, handicrafts, and folklore ....etc).

### 4. Ensuring positive social effects of tourism

This part will display the policies and procedures which a destination can implement to increase the benefits of tourism to the local community through poverty reduction and ensuring social equity, as well as developing channels of communication between the tourist and local community.

Finally, the study will apply this strategy on Egypt as one of the Mediterranean destinations as a case study.

**Key words:** Sustainability, Tourism, strategies, Mediterranean destinations

## INTRODUCTION

Mediterranean countries present the southern natural extension of the European Union, that affects its' political, social and economic stability, on the other hand Mediterranean countries are affected by the EU policies and programs, that's why both parties are interested in settling different channels and frameworks of political, economic, social and environmental co-operation to guarantee their benefits.

Co-operation between Mediterranean countries and each other on one hand, and those last ones and the EU on the other hand is mainly based on identifying actual and positive solutions for the problems and obstacles of development and stability in the Mediterranean basin, aiming to facilitate ideal economic, socio-cultural, political and environmental interaction and co-operation in the region..

In spite of what is mentioned above, the region is suffering some political, social, environmental, and economic problems that hinder the progress of co-operation and integration between partner countries, these problems such as "freedom deficit", the political situation in many of the countries of the region is characterized by the need to further democratic reforms, including free and fair elections and respect for the rule of law and for fundamental freedoms and human rights. While constitutions in the region often provide for freedom of thought, opinion and association, legal provisions may also stipulate numerous restrictions, in some cases under the pretext of safeguarding national security or national unity. In recent years several countries have made considerable progress in these areas. At the same time, the rapid rise of moderate and reformist political Islam movements as well as political extremism has put severe pressure on political regimes in the region and sometimes slowed down progress towards more political openness and pluralism. Unresolved conflicts are also perceived as obstacles to reforms. (ENPI 2007) <sup>1</sup>

Also economic problems are a big obstacle facing the region, which is represented in wide variations in levels of GDP per capita, ranging from around 1 000 US dollars in Egypt and the Palestinian territories to 5 200 US dollars in Lebanon and over 17 000 US dollars in Israel. Moreover since the signature of the Barcelona Declaration in 1995, economic growth in the region has averaged 3.9% per year. However, strong population growth of about 2% per year, and especially strong growth in the working age population, leaves little room for increases in employment, income per capita and real wage rates. Unemployment has remained broadly unchanged over the period. The incidence of poverty varies widely across the region, from 7% in Jordan and Tunisia to 44% in Egypt. Macro-economic stabilization policies have improved, as demonstrated by the fall in inflation in the region, from 12% in 1995 to 3% in 2004, and reductions in the government deficit. However, the situation has deteriorated again in recent years and further consolidation efforts will be required.

Political uncertainty, security risks and weak economic competitiveness continue to weigh on investors' sentiment about the region and foreign direct investment flows remain quite low, after a peak in 2001 and following the September 11 events. The total volume of FDI varies between 5 and 8 billion US dollars per year<sup>2</sup>, with Israel and the Maghreb being the main destinations. <sup>2</sup>(UN 2005) This is due not only to external factors but also to domestic economic policies. Assessments of the business climate in the Mediterranean show that it remains significantly below that in the new EU Member States, except for Israel, Jordan and Tunisia. Available economic governance indicators show rather weak institutions and serious concerns about corruption in most countries. This has a negative impact on the business environment, competitiveness, and attractiveness for both domestic and foreign investors.

The degree of economic integration among Mediterranean partners remains low. This can be ascribed

<sup>1</sup> (1) *European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), "The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership", regional strategy paper 2007-2013*, p.7.

<sup>2</sup> (2) *UN World Investment Report 2005*



to both political and economic factors. Among the latter are often mentioned the similar production structures and exporting patterns of Mediterranean partners and the relatively high tariff protection vis-à-vis each other. South-South trade experienced only a marginal increase from 4.4% of foreign trade in 1995 to 5% in 2003. However, recent efforts (including the conclusion of the Agadir Agreement and the agreement reached on a single protocol of origin including provisions for the accumulation of origin among all pan-Euro-Mediterranean partners) should facilitate South-South economic integration among Mediterranean partners.<sup>3</sup>

Socially, the combination of fast (though decelerating) expansion of the working population and a relatively slow economic growth rate leaves little room for reduction in unemployment and poverty. This situation is attributable not only to the insufficient pace and depth of reforms in the economy but also to other factors in society. Apart from the above-mentioned freedom deficit, the UNDP Arab Human Development Reports pointed to two other factors that hinder social progress:

**Women's empowerment deficit.** Arab women's participation in economic and Political life remains among the lowest in the world. In many countries in the region women suffer from inequalities in entitlements. Society as a whole suffers when half of its productive potential is stifled. In some countries, gender equality is recognized and protected by law.

**Access to knowledge and education.** Most countries in the region have made tangible progress in improving literacy. Adult illiteracy dropped from 60% in 1980 to less than 40% in 2002. Female literacy tripled over that time span. Yet many remain illiterate and, as a result, have limited access to knowledge. The region spends a higher percentage of GDP on education than many other developing countries. The region is characterized by a wide variety of educational systems and levels of access to basic education. Enrolment rates in higher education remain limited to about 13%. Over and above gaps in the formal education system, knowledge accumulation is limited by low expenditure on research and development and very limited access to information technology and the internet.

Despite nearly thirty years of international efforts to protect the Mediterranean environment, it remains fragile and continues to deteriorate as pressures increase. On current projections 50% of the Mediterranean coastline could be built on by 2025<sup>4</sup>, just one illustration of the speed of this decline. Studies have begun to quantify the cost of degradation of the environment in several countries<sup>5</sup>([www.metap.org](http://www.metap.org) 26\ 8\ 2006). As an example, the cost of environmental degradation was estimated in 1999 at between €2.7 and €5.1 billion per year (or 3.2-6.4% of GDP) in Egypt, €1.5 billion per year (or 3.6% of GDP) in Algeria and €1.2 billion per year (or 3.7% of GDP) in Morocco. Clearly, if economic development and the health of the region's people are to be protected then inaction is not an option. Mediterranean countries must act now to safeguard their natural resources. However the key environmental problems of the region are:

**Quality and quantity of water.** This is one of the most serious environmental problems currently facing all the countries in the region. Water scarcity is set to worsen with the projected increase of the population in the region, while poor water quality or water pollution tends to result from high salinity due to over-abstraction and poor irrigation techniques, pollution from agricultural run-off and uncontrolled discharges of wastewater and effluent.

**Inadequate municipal and industrial solid waste management,** largely caused by factors such as rapid urbanization; absence of policies or strategies to rationalize waste management approaches; weak control of illegal dumping; lack of adequate landfills and other disposal facilities; and land shortages.

**Poor air quality due to transport and industrialization.**

3 (1) *Ibid*, p 8.

4 (2) *A Sustainable Future for the Mediterranean – The Blue Plan's Environment and Development outlook.*

(3) *Mediterranean Environmental Technical Assistance Programme (METAP) Cost of Environmental Degradation Studies -* [http://www.metap.org/main.php?id\\_menu=12,26\ 8\ 2006](http://www.metap.org/main.php?id_menu=12,26\ 8\ 2006).

**Marine pollution and coastal degradation** due to uncontrolled economic activities (including tourism) and urban development, most of which tends to take place in coastal areas.

**Land degradation and desertification** due to the region's naturally fragile terrestrial environment, which is very vulnerable to soil erosion, contamination and nutrient depletion.

The region's rich **biodiversity – both marine and terrestrial** - continues to be threatened, with alien invasive species and habitat destruction being the two most significant contributions to its loss.

Environment ministries in the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean generally have insufficient capacity to address these serious problems and there is also at present insufficient political willingness in the countries of the region to develop and enforce environmental regulation<sup>6</sup>(ENPI 2007)

Sustainable tourism is one of the best qualified tools that could be activated and used -if properly- to solve these problems ideally, preparing the region to achieve ideal interaction and integration between partners due to its' numerous positive effects on the tourist destinations, which most Mediterranean countries are considered from them. As well as the fast and high rate of development progress that tourism industry can present to these destinations.

## METHODOLOGY

Questionnaires have been spread on 70 tourism projects in Luxor and Hurgada to identify the problems facing them, they claimed that the investment environment concerning tourism marked some progress, but incentives still not adequate, besides long investment procedures, limited role in development decision making process, weak community links, high production costs and less qualified human resources.

Another questionnaire has been spread on 300 persons from Luxor and Hurgada, indicated that most jobs created in tourism sector are given to employees from lower Egypt ( CAIRO in particular ), low wages rate in tourist projects, low level public services compared to those offered in tourist sites, high priced essential products ( food, housing, cloth.....) and marginalization of local community concerning development decisions.

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL TOOL OF DEVELOPMENT

The concept of sustainable tourism was developed in the alpine regions of Europe by German, Swiss, Austrian, French and Italian academics, conservationists and tourism professionals. It is known by a number of other names green tourism, responsible tourism, post-industrial tourism; meta-tourism and alternative tourism are but a few. It was developed as an answer to the pressing problems of mass tourism in the Alps and the Mediterranean. It can best be described as a system of long term tourism planning which is friendly towards the long term well-being of communities and habitats, the visitor, and the tourist industry. It envisages these three players in the tourism equation being in a triangular relationship. In unplanned mass tourism, the industry dominates decision making, to the detriment of all parties because of the operation of the "resort cycle" theory, which envisages that a resort will have a finite life because of eventual overcrowding and deterioration. The Sustainability Concept gives power and knowledge in equal amounts to each party, resulting in careful, slow optimization of each other's aims.<sup>7</sup> (OCDE 1994)

Sustainable tourism is based on a positive relationship between the economy and the environment, with careful concern given to the social and cultural effects of economic growth. This does not, however, mean that economic growth and increased prosperity should be discouraged. The cultural and environmental

6 (4) *European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), "The Euro- Mediterranean Partnership", regional strategy paper 2007-2013, Op. Cit, P 9.*

7 (1) OCDE, (1994), *"Tourism strategies and rural development", organization for economic co-operation and development, Report No 013927, Paris, p 33.*

resources of a destination are the assets upon which tourism depends. This can be a starting point in the search for new growth models, to give greater consideration to the vulnerable features of a particular tourist region and to the general well-being of its inhabitants. Bearing these remarks in mind, and referring to the Cape Town Declaration, sustainable tourism could be defined as "A form of tourism which is economically viable, with direct economic benefits for local people; socially and culturally responsible; ecologically sound; and offers a high-quality end product and visitor experience, that is through tight commitment to principals of integration; intergenerational equity; sense of place and identity; tackling poverty and promoting equity; good governance."<sup>8</sup>(nrg4SD 2004) – Definition.

Due to the previous definition, sustainable tourism can maintain appropriate solutions for the problems of the region in general, as well as the problems facing tourism industry, through settling clear policies and strategies that identify the role of every stakeholder on the country level, as well as the regional level in the cadre of sustainable tourism principals.

### **EGYPT: A MEDITERRANEAN DESTINATION THAT NEEDS AN URGENT IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM**

Besides, the problems that the Mediterranean region is suffering from in general, Egypt in particular is suffering some other problems concerning the decreasing role of tourism sector in local development, resulting in limiting Egypt's opportunities to interact and integrate with other Mediterranean destinations, these problems could be illustrated through the following indicators:

1. Low share of tourism industry in GDP (3.4%) if compared to agricultural sector (13.4%) and industrial sector (17.1 %) in the fiscal year 2007\2008, which is a very low rate due to Egypt's tourist abilities.
2. In spite of the increasing rates of the Egyptian tourist revenues, tourism sector's share in services exports is getting low (39.2% in 2006 \ 2007), (41.3% 2005 \ 2006), ( 42.6% 2004 \ 2005), that is because of the slowing down progress of the sector.
3. Official statistics reported that tourism sector provided 1.71% of the total job opportunities created in Egypt in 2006 \ 2007, which is a very low rate due to the nature of tourism as a high density labor industry. Some studies stated that this is because of the reducing rate of the implemented tourist investment (2.7% in 2006 \ 2007) compared to (3.2% 2002 \ 2003).<sup>9</sup>
1. Tourism education programs in Egypt still dose not meet the demands of the tourism labor market, including all educational levels, though graduates suffer high rate of unemployment because of the lack of personal and technical qualifications.
2. Most Egyptian tourist governorates ( Red sea, upper Egypt, north Sinai) suffer from the lack of pure and safe drinking water, safe road networks and other public services, especially concerning local community.<sup>10</sup>
3. Tourism global competitiveness indicator for the year 2007 indicated that Egypt occupied the rank 58. Also Egypt came number 85 internationally concerning business atmosphere and tourism infrastructure indicator, and finally the rank 68 concerning human, cultural and natural resources, which means that Egypt occupied poor ranks due to the tourism competitiveness indicator and its' sub-indicators.<sup>11</sup>

8 (2) nrg4SD, (2004), "Sustainable Tourism", Network of regional governments for sustainable development, ,policy paper No SDSP (03-04) 24 - Annex C, Cardiff, pp 1-2.

9 (1) Arab republic of Egypt, ministry of economic development, (2008) "official statistics", Egypt.

10 (2) Arafat, H. (2009), "Evaluating the role of tourism industry in alleviating poverty in local communities in the Egyptian destination", D Phil thesis, Helwan university, Cairo.

11 (3) Egyptian ministerial council, IDSC, (December, 2007), "Tourism in Egypt, an ideal tool of economic development", information reports series, vol, 12, Cairo.

4. Weak tourism investment incentives, - economic incentives in particular -, especially after the cancellation of the law number 8 for the year 1997 concerning investment guarantees and incentives.<sup>12</sup>

Sustainable tourism approach can provide ideal solutions for these problems to activate tourism's role in enhancing development policies outlets, through identifying the role of each stockholder in the destination and applying collaborative economic policies.

### CLUSTERS AN IDEAL TOOL TO ACHIEVE TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY

Cluster-based economic development is a targeted strategy, usually drafted by economic development officials, to recruit and retain innovative companies. Innovative companies not only pay higher wages but also are capable of constantly creating new products and services. Thus industry clusters could be defined as:

"A cluster is a geographically bounded concentration of similar, related or complementary businesses with active channels for business transactions, communications and dialogue that share specialized infrastructure, labor markets and services, and are faced with common opportunities and threats".<sup>13</sup>(Martinez, 1998) Definition

Tourism as a complex industry consists of numerous fragmented industries and businesses, which share markets, labor markets, infrastructure, opportunities and threats, and links and effects on the local community, can accomplish great progress in developing its products, as well as its' share in developing the destination, through building a well linked tourism cluster including all the businesses and industries related to tourism.

Clustering tourism industry businesses can accomplish great advantages for the industry itself and the whole community as well. That is because the development of industry clusters in a county or region results five principal benefits:<sup>14</sup> (Barkley and Henry, 1997).

1. **Clustering Strengthens Localization Economies.** The concentration of an industry at a particular location may result in significant cost savings to firms in the cluster. These cost savings are referred to as *localization economies*. Sources of potential savings include a greater availability of specialized input suppliers and business services; a larger pool of trained, specialized workers; public infrastructure, investments geared to the needs of a particular industry; financial markets familiar with the industry; and an enhanced likelihood of interfirm technology and information transfers.
2. **Clustering Facilitates Industrial Reorganization.** The transition in industrial organization from large firms engaged in mass production to small firms focused on specialty production is well documented. This change in industrial structure is attributed to increased global competition and the emergence of new production technologies (e.g., computer-aided manufacturing). Clusters are attractive locations for the small, specialized, computer-aided manufacturers for several reasons.
  1. The adoption of new production technologies is more prominent and easily attained among firms in industry clusters.
  2. Proximity between the more specialized firms and their input suppliers and product markets enhances the flow of goods through the production system.
  3. Ready access to product and input markets enables firms to quickly adapt to market changes.

12 (4) Arafat, H., (2005), "Evaluating investment incentives in Egypt, applying to tourism sector", Master Phil thesis, Helwan university, Cairo.

13 (5) Martinez, C., (1998), "Industry clusters: Competitive Advantage Through Innovation", industry clusters number 1, Hunter regional development organization (HURDO).

14 )) Barkley, D. L. and M. S. Henry. (1997). "Rural Industrial Development: To Cluster or Not to Cluster?" *Review of Agricultural Economics* 19(2), pp. 308-325.

4. A concentration of firms provides the pool of skilled labor required by the computer-aided technologies.
3. **Clustering Encourages Networking Among Firms.** Networking is cooperation among firms to take advantage of complementarities, exploit new markets, integrate activities, or pool resources or knowledge. This cooperation occurs more naturally and frequently within industry clusters. Surveys of firms in manufacturing networks show that networks generate significant advantages for firms through cooperation with their counterparts. Networking firms are more likely than non-networking firms to engage in collaboration and information sharing in marketing, new product development, and technological upgrading. The networking firms also report that their competitiveness and profitability are enhanced by interfirm cooperation and collaboration.
4. **Clustering Results in Larger Local Economic Impacts.** The total employment and income effects associated with attracting a new firm include the direct effects (firm employment and income) and indirect effects (employment and income changes at input suppliers for the new firm). The indirect employment and income changes generally are referred to as the multiplier effects. Programs supporting cluster development will have relatively large multiplier effects for the local economy because of strong linkages among cluster firms. That is, the total employment and income gains from recruiting (or retaining) cluster members will likely exceed those associated with non-cluster firms of similar size.
5. **Clusters Facilitate Entrepreneurial Activity.** Industry clusters encourage new firm start-ups and growth by fostering innovation and facilitating the commercialization of new products and technologies. Entrepreneurial activity, in turn, leads to further cluster growth. Thus, industry clusters and entrepreneurial activity reinforce one another, leading to more rapid local economic development through cumulative causation. The role of entrepreneurial activity in cluster development is especially important in areas where clusters are small or existing clusters are in declining industries.

#### THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN ACHIEVING TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY

To obtain a successful well linked tourism cluster in a country or a region, roles must be identified clearly and accurately to every stakeholder to guarantee the required results; these roles could be mentioned as follows

1. **Tourism regional and international organizations:** These international bodies play a huge role in achieving sustainability, through establishing various technical and financial aid programs to support small and medium tourist projects which implement sustainability principals while practicing their business.
2. **Destinations' governments:** Governments have a leading role in achieving tourism sustainability, through adopting ideal investment climate, facilitating micro loaning for medium and small tourism projects, innovating tourism infrastructure as well as for the local community, supporting local tourism projects that depends on local resources, participating private sector and local community in tourism planning process, guaranteeing equal share of marketing and tourist flow for different local destinations, issuing legislations that guarantee a minimum level of wages for tourist labor and minimum quality level for tourism services and activate linkages between local stakeholders.
3. **Destination management authorities:** These authorities are responsible of finding a mechanism of managing, promoting and developing tourism, through creating business linkages between tourist projects and the local community, by supplying these projects by full information about the local labor resources and local suppliers, as well as providing technical aid to enhance local products quality, and supply tourists by full information about these products to encourage them to buy it, and providing a financial support for different local tourism development efforts and projects.

4. **NGO'S:** They are responsible for co-coordinating between private sector and local community, through investing in building the technical capacity of the local community to enhance the community's awareness of tourism industry and its'importance, as well as providing well qualified tourist labor.
5. **Private sector:** Create linkages and relations with local community elements related to tourism industry, provide direct and indirect job opportunities through hiring local people and using local raw materials in production, play a major role in building local technical capacity, through investing in educating and training the staff and local community people, using local inputs, and creating new and creative local tourism product.<sup>15</sup> ( WTO 2004)

## CONCLUSION

Tourism industry is a complex one which affects and is affected by a wide variety of industries and economic activities in a destination, that is clarified by the tourism value chain displayed above, thus tourism can provide a successful economic cluster in Mediterranean destinations in general and in Egypt in particular, especially that these countries owe all the factors needed for such clusters, preparing the region to maintain a Mediterranean tourism cluster benefiting all partner countries economically, socially, politically and culturally.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Mediterranean destinations must stick to the demands of tourism sustainability, besides providing all possible tools and methods needed to accomplish ideal sustainable tourism industry.
2. Every destination must process an inclusive creative and actual tourism management policy, according to sustainability principals, as an initial step on the way to a Mediterranean tourism policy including all Mediterranean countries and reflecting the regions distinguished feature.
3. A tourism management policy must depend on a tourism cluster organizing relations between tourism industry stakeholders on one hand, and tourism sector and other economic and social sectors on the other hand.
4. Analyzing tourism value chain in a region is essential to create a successful cluster, depending on tourism added values.
5. Roles must be specified accurately and spread among different stakeholders in the destination, according to the national tourism policy emphasizing the necessity of mutual co-operation between public sector, private sector and the local community.
6. Linkages must be built between the tourism private sector and the local community to guarantee benefiting local community from tourism. And it's loyalty to the industry as well.
7. Tourist co-operation between Mediterranean countries must be activated to guarantee accomplishing a wide rang of tourism sustainability in the region

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## SOME REMARKS ON THE ACTUALITY OF "TOURISM AREA LIFE CYCLE" (TALC) THEORY. THE CASE OF ITALY<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

The tourism area life cycle (TALC) theory, originally proposed by Butler in 1980, has been in the long run subjected to validations, revisions and confutations, anyhow conveying a certain fascination in many scholars. New concepts, closely linked together, are more and more applied to understand the present periods of development and, above all, of crisis: particularly, the regulation theory is useful for a combined approach with the power distribution theories, in an age in which, even in tourism, the state power lowers, while globalist pushes and, at the same time, localist ones rise. Actually, the TALC has still great correspondence above all in the small mono-product places, where the force of changing the actual schemes of tourism output is very low. On the contrary, where the local community is hale and hearty and can express a certain political power in planning the path of tourism development, there could be also a complete repositioning of these areas in the international tourism market. So, there have been many attempts to enlarge the point of view of Butler's theory, mostly in the last years, introducing more sociological readings or hypothesizing a global restructuring. Italy is certainly an excellent case of study, where the debate on the future of tourism and the end of its spontaneous growth era raise crucial issues to scholars' attention. Italy is now a country in great difficulty to keep leadership positions on tourism markets, notwithstanding the good performances in the last years. The crisis or, anyhow, the stagnation of some products is not uniform in all the country, but has some remarkable territorial differentiations. Trying to reconstruct a diachronic reading is a first step to observe the consistency of the Italian case with the TALC and to hypothesize new reading keys of this theory in the light of a contemporary world, being more and more complex. In the final part of this work, two meaningful case studies are focused: Chianciano Terme, is a small spa town, trying to rejuvenate its main tourist product and, at the same time, creating new attractions; Ravenna, the last Roman capital and the most important Byzantine town in Italy, is a bipolar resort mainly based on its seaside resorts, that only in the last years had a new impulse in developing the historical inheritance, also due to a decrease in the number of tourist arrivals on the coast.

**Key words:** tourism area life cycle (TALC), collaboration theory, empowerment, governance, Italy.

### INTRODUCTION

The question probably most interesting, on which the tourism scholars are focusing, regards the evolution of visitors flows in the different areas. During the course of time many scholars, on that matter, have tried to follow the evolutionary trajectories of tourism areas, among which Gilbert, Wolfe, Christaller, Miossec, Stansfield and Gormsen. But the theory mostly under discussion on its effective applicability to real life is surely that proposed by Butler (1980), regarding the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC, the acronym commonly

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<sup>1</sup> Even if this article has been conceived together by the two authors, the first and the fourth paragraphs have been written by Fabrizio Ferrari, while the second and the third by Ramona Elena Badea; the concluding remarks and the bibliography have been redacted in common by the two authors.

used). Without illustrating this theory and dwelling upon the dense debate about it (Lagiewski, 2006), it is important, however, to stress two important elements: it follows the Vernon's Product Life Cycle model steps (1966 and 1979) and has been conceived in an age of strong tourism growth, mass destinations promotion and great development of package tours.

There have been made some important remarks to that theory: above all, the Vernon's model is based on a strong technologic determinism that disregards all the other components of the productive system, chiefly the social and spatial environment in which it is immersed. Tourism is, however, a sector with low technology and modest economic barriers to entry; it is not so important for that sector the innovative features bound to physical components, as the immaterial ones. So, the creativity of the actors in moulding products (or images in a certain sense) is crucial, able to capture the tourist gaze (Urry, 2002), that is the Schumpeterian creating energy. But not only the actors mould the tourism, rather all that forces (visitors, public operators, etc.) that focus themselves on this sector, sometimes collaborating, other times opposing one another; so tourism appears like the outcome of many powers, continuously influencing and shaping it (Church and Coles, 2007). Thus, a scheme of development of tourism areas should consider also the sociological implications (Bianchi, 1994).

Moreover, Butler's model supposes that tourism areas should react in every respect like single products, but this presupposition is observable only in the mononuclear and unipolar localities, using Lozato-Giotart's terms (1987). In other places, where the local community is hale and hearty and can express a certain political power in planning the path of tourism development, there could be also a complete repositioning of these areas in the international tourism market, often changing the global image and suggesting a new and energetic one, besides the traditional one. So, the Butler's sequence of stages could be twisted in these areas by new policies and strategies of development.

On that matter, Baum's hypothesis (2006) is interesting: it is based on the utilization of Handy's sigmoid curves (1994), supposing that the tourism area would have a peculiar product, following the life cycle stages; soon or later, however, to avoid a probable decline stage and a consequent exit from markets, it is necessary to launch on markets new attractions. According to Handy, it is better to plan that strategy when the traditional product reaches the peak of its development, when the local community has a sufficient power to invest in new activities and avoid the possible decline. So, unless there is a tourism area unable to create new products, it is necessary, at the same time, to research market rejuvenation strategies, on the one hand, and, on the other one, to propose new appeals in the more and more dynamic tourism markets, where the repetition of holidays in the same place is increasingly rare (fig. 1).

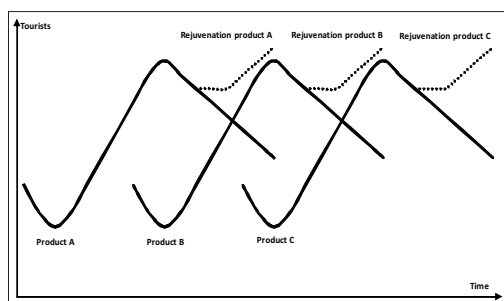


Figure 1. An ideal scheme of a multi-product tourist area life cycle, applying Handy's sigmoid curves.

A TALC scheme, in which it is hypothesized different curves for each tourist product that the locality intends to launch on markets, implies a crucial matter, regarding the careful planning, by local actors, of all activities to undertake for the success of the area.

The regulation theory, originally proposed by Aglietta (1976), hypothesizes a continuous mechanism of feedback in the resource planning, which should follow opportunely the instances of markets. Boyer and Freyssenet (2008), on that matter, analyzing the automotive sector, point out, as the better way of production in the future, the one defined as diversity and flexibility, in which different products are planned according to the customers, renouncing to the large scale production, but remaining sensible and attentive to the qualitative and quantitative variations of demand, quickly adjusting products to fit for the markets. That strategy, called by the authors *Hondism*, seems to be quite suitable also for tourism, together with another typology hypothesized, named *reflexive production*, in which it is preferred the development of practical and symbolical quality of products, renouncing to huge output volumes. Moreover, in a complex and polymorphic sector as tourism, is suggested by Du Tertre (2002): an approach of governance progressively cooperative, with the creation of a space of initiatives, in which all the actors could confront one another; a professionalization process; a constant evaluation of initiatives.

So, tourism needs a collaboration culture (Jamal and Getz, 1995) among the actors, going further the concept of industry to create a real system, viewed as a dynamic process-oriented strategy. That approach should be able to plan the destination in a sustainable way, gaining the consensus of inhabitants; however, it is important to continuously identify the facilitators and inhibitors to collaboration inside and outside the community.

### TOURISM IN ITALY: A MATURE SECTOR FACING THE CHANGEMENT

The role of Italy on tourism international markets in the last years has given rise to much controversy, both with worried visions and optimistic ones. In reality, Italian tourism is a complex system, which includes inward many smaller systems: so, there are areas passing through a stage of maturity or even decline, but there are also other places, especially in South Italy, in the development stage, or still in a pre-tourism period.

There are many motivations that led to the structural difficulties of tourism in Italy (Landini, 2007; Ferrari, 2009), to which are added in the last years the well-known relevant turmoils of global markets. Really, if we observe the trend of arrivals and overnights in Italy from 1981 on (fig. 2), we will note as there has been a growth almost constant; effectively, the remarkable decrease of nights was mainly due to the phenomenon of continuous shortening of vacation periods, mostly since 2000, a well-known global tendency, not diffuse at all only in Italy.

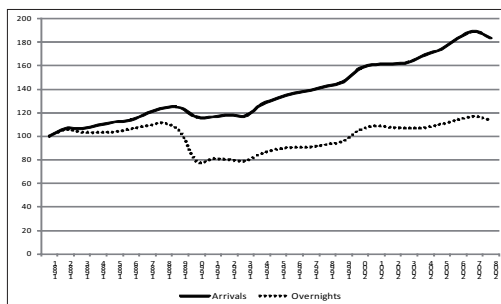


Figure 2. Arrivals and overnights of tourists in Italy in the period 1981-2008 (1981=100).

So, it is necessary to argue about a hypothesis of slackening and standstill for the tourist sector in Italy in its whole, rather than on a regression period; in fact, at a more careful observation of some areas and products dynamics, we can note, on the contrary, that many localities, especially some small mono-product historical places, are passing through a crisis, because they are not able to react to the actual tendencies.

For instance, the TALC analysis developed by Formica and Uysal (1996) suffers exactly from the limit of having formulated generalized considerations for the whole Italian territory, without any distinction of different trajectories of places inside the country macro-system. However, the authors single out some of the difficulties of Italian tourism, among which the seasonality, the low development of Southern areas, the overcrowding of some localities, pointing out on the necessity of a strategy more focalized on quality for the future.

In the present work, we are going to set some case studies, to help the theoretic composition of a very fragmented scheme; laying no claim of exhaustiveness, however, we want to invite to reflect on the necessary utilization of diachronic methodologies of research in tourism areas, together with the synchronic ones actually the more diffuse.

#### **THE CRISIS AND THE POSSIBLE RE-MARKETING OF SPAS: THE CASE OF CHIANCIANO TERME.**

The Italian thermal sector has a long and excellent tradition in the tourism development scheme, being one of the first modern forms of aristocratic relax appeared between the end of XIX century and the beginning of XX century. After the II World War, lost the characteristics of upper class tourism, the thermal sector enters in a "social and curative" stage, framing it into the National Sanitary System as a medical treatment. Even if in that way the spas initially had their number of visitors increased, in the long run that fact caused a disqualification of their image, seen as tourism areas for old and sick people. In the last years, however, it began a new phase of "thermal wellness"; many spas are transforming in centres for beauty treatments and body regeneration, with techniques aiming to let the customers live a unique and impressive experience.

The history of Chianciano Terme, a municipality with a little more of 7,000 residents, is quite similar to what described for Italy; the thermal springs near the town had been probably exploited since the Roman age; since the XIX century, there have been utilized in an intensive way the establishment of Acquasanta and, later, the other springs. In the first years of XX century, some entrepreneurs took the spring concessions from the municipality and started to improve the establishments; so, there were built some luxury hotels (the first of them was raised in 1905). From 1940s on, the spas became a State property; in the first years after the Second World War, the municipal administration tried to renew the town tourism image, with a new architectural planning for the town and for the spas, even building a plant for bottling the thermal waters. But tourism in Chianciano suffered in the last years a contraction as the whole Italian thermal sector for the crisis of the traditional sanitary segment (Ferrari, 2009), exclusively focused on national market and hotel accommodation (fig. 3).

In fact, the national customers in Chianciano, that in 1978 were the 99% of total arrivals, in 1991 dropped to 80%, while in 2008 there have been recorded a further decrease at 63%. So, the trend was only partly negative in the period 1991-2008, thanks to the increase of foreigners (even if again there is a lowering in the last years). However, in 2008 there were 244,072 arrivals (153,381 Italians) and 913,294 overnights (676,813 registered by national tourists). We have still to note a huge contraction in the tourist average stay: in 1978 the Italians stayed for about 11 nights, the few foreigners for nearly 8; in 1991 the national tourists registered about 7 nights, while the foreigners only 2; in 2008 the Italians lowered to 4 nights, whereas the foreigners rose to 3 nights. These data reveal a change of the vacation scheme, with the progressive renouncing to long stays to follow medical treatments, in favour of short holidays of amusement.

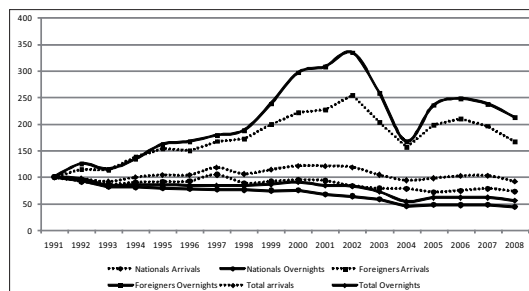


Figure 3. Evolution of arrivals and overnights in Chianciano Terme from 1991 to 2008 (1991=100).

The stakeholders reaction to this evident tourism crisis in the last years has been, however, considerable, even if it is still not able to spread its effects, also because many projects have been recently planned.

Recently, the spa has been partly privatized, creating a New Company, participated by the municipality, by some banks, by a private cosmetics company and by the local hotel-keepers consortium (Mercurio, 2007); the new industrial plan hypothesizes a complete rejuvenation of the product and its image, with the creation of the “sensorial spas” (which could be packaged in “sensorial holidays”, for instance, exploiting the local oenogastronomic traditions), the “thermal swimming-pool” (for balneotherapy, etc.) and the “thermal village” (with a playground and entertainment activities).

Together with the reorganization of the main product, new tourism segments should be developed, to make Chianciano the “multi-town of hospitality” as defined by the new Municipal Structural Plan. First of all, the congress tourism, in which the town already is among the first ten localities in Toscana, able to grow thanks to the considerable number of hotels available and to the Congress Centre inside the thermal establishment; moreover, the planning of a new Congress Palace has been carried out utilizing a municipal project financing announcement to collect the necessary funds. The other sector to develop is the cultural tourism improving the town museums (Art Museum, Civic Archaeological Museum of Waters), but also the historical inheritance, mainly the Etruscan and Roman monuments (among which are the thermal establishment ruins of Mezzomiglio). Finally, there is also the objective to develop the active tourism to revitalize the image of Chianciano, particularly the sport segment; on this purpose, there is a project of carrying out a golf course.

So, Chianciano evidences a wearing down of the tourist product, quite similar to what has been forecasted by the TALC; but, in this case study, the local policies are trying to oppose to the decline both with rejuvenation of the spas and, at the same time, with the attempt of creating new products, according to the Handy’s model.

#### TOURISM AND CULTURE: THE CASE OF RAVENNA.

The Italian cultural patrimony has always been one of the fundamental elements of tourism, but often has been placed on the background. However, in the last years, there is a revaluation not only of the main localities, but also of the minor places, able to express, in some cases, an important historical and cultural fascination. Even if the official statistical classification does not allow to consider many areas, especially in South Italy, as cultural attractions, we can, however, observe that this segment has the 35% of total arrivals in Italy and the 25% of overnights; if we consider only the foreigners, there is an increase to 46% for the arrivals and 34% for the overnights, largely concentrated in the main tourist cities.

Ravenna is classified by ISTAT as a “cultural locality”, among the first places in Italy for this kind of tourism, with 557,496 arrivals and 2,853,523 overnights in 2008. In reality, its tourist evolution (fig. 4) has some characteristic features: a relevant Italian presence (80% of total arrivals against the 42% of the national datum for cultural localities), a high average stay (5.1 overnights against the 2.8 ones in the whole Italy), an intense development stage since 1990s, mainly due to the national market impulse, while the foreign demand is almost still from the same period.

Those anomalies in comparison with the other cultural localities are due to the fact that Ravenna has developed for long time as a seaside resort, especially for long family vacations made by Italians coming from neighbouring places, with a supply side mainly constituted by campings. This reason justifies the high average stay that arrived at 10 nights per tourist in the early 1970s, with modest differences between nationals and foreigners customers.

The beaches of Ravenna (among which there are Lido di Savio, Marina di Ravenna and Punta Marina Terme) became a very cheap mass tourism area, growing above all in the 1960s. However, from the end of 1970s the number of hotels and then of beds diminishes on the shoreline, due to overcrowding problems and progressive lack of spaces; but, in the last years there has been a new moderate expansion stage, justified also by the transformation of many traditional landlord activities in hotels and tourist residences (fig. 5).

On the contrary, the town centre, located 15 kms away from the coastline, with a rich historical and artistic inheritance, particularly the most important testimonies of Byzantine Age in Italy, has been neglected by many visitors, so the tourist supply was never able to develop; since the 1990s there has been a strong increase in the number of beds. In 2008, there were 2,134 hotel beds in the historical centre and 8,639 on the coastline; so, now the town has about the 20% of hotel supply, while in 1989, year in which the coastline registered its highest number of beds, the same percentage was only the 11%.

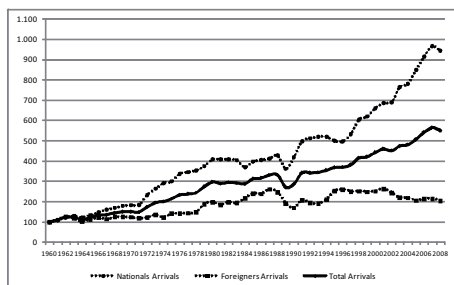


Figure 4. Nationals and foreigners arrivals in Ravenna from 1960 to 2008 (1960=100)

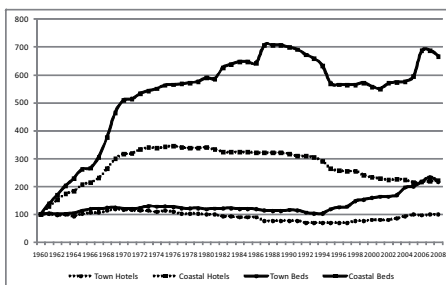


Figure 5. Evolution of hotels and beds in Ravenna from 1960 to 2008 (1960=100)

So, the development of urban tourism became remarkable above all since 1990s, while, from the same period, the coastal area denoted symptoms of overnights slackening; particularly, on the coastline from 1999 to 2008, the foreigners lowered by 37% of arrivals, only partially compensated by the increase of national ones (fig. 6). Thus, there is in the last years an important growth of national market both in town (75% of total arrivals in 2008, while in 1999 the percentage was 70%) and on the coastline (increasing from 68% to 83% in the same period).

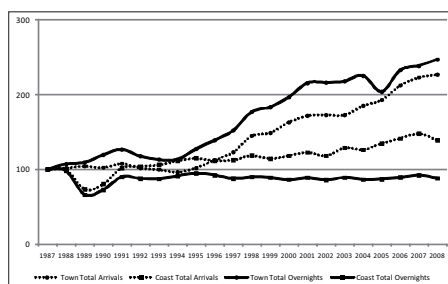


Figure 6. Arrivals and overnights in the town and on the Ravenna coastline from 1987 to 2008 (1987=100)

The shifting of tourist polarization towards the historical core is due to a resolute will of emphasizing the historical and artistic image of the town, a process culminated with the UNESCO decision of inscribe eight monuments of Ravenna in the World Heritage List since 1996. Both the province and the municipality inserted in their most recent planning the objective of strengthening the cultural supply, promoting a lecture more unitary and complete of the historical and architectural inheritance, not disregarding, however, further enlargements and requalifications along the coastline.

The reduction in the attractive force of the coast and the more attractive of the city centre, however, have highlighted some critical outcomes: surely, the most evident is the remarked reduction of the overnights; in facts, in the seaside accommodations, in the period 1987-2008, there was a decrease from an average of 10.4 nights per tourist to a datum of 6.6 for the same index, while, in the same period, the urban centre still remained on a very low value (1.9 nights per tourist in 1987, with only a slight increase, 2.1 overnights per visitor, in 2008).

So, tourism in the town centre has still the features of a transition destination and not of an area suitable for long holidays; its valuable inheritance is probably not much appreciated yet from the customers. Obviously, there could be also the choice of a stay on the coast, where the tourist infrastructure is wider, with a daily moving towards the historical centre. But another important matter is essential for a reflexion on the effective appeal of cultural attractions in Ravenna: observing the trend of visitors in the State archaeological areas, monuments and museums from 1996 to 2008, we note a decreasing tendency (fig. 7). The necessity of improving the fruition of the historical resources is felt also by their managers, as testified by the decision to close for more than two years the so-called Palace of Theodoric (reopened since April 2009).

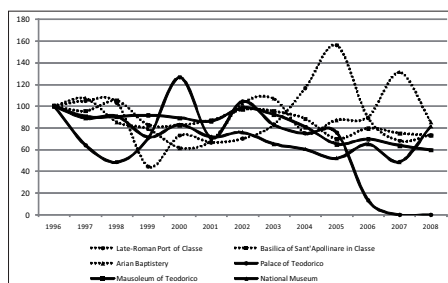


Figure 7. Visitors in the Ravenna national museums and monuments from 1996 to 2008 (1996=100)

Moreover, since 1991 it is offered also an integrated ticket of the three principal monuments (the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, the Mausoleum of Theodoric and the National Museum), but this initiative has so far not been particularly appraised. Lastly, it is necessary to reflect about the efficacy of management policies in Ravenna, considering the following fact: the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe gathered 325,650 visitors in 1996, without charges to pay; nowadays, there is an entrance fee for the access in the Basilica, following a decision taken in 1999, with the consequence of a relevant contraction of the flows (in 2008 the visitors were 237,499, but 155,619 of these were non-paying ones).

Thus, the original analysis proposed by the TALC will not allow appreciating the effective trend in the case of Ravenna, if we do not separate the development of the two osmotic but substantially independent subsystems, the coast and the historical centre.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Butler's model is an evident simplification of the real world; nevertheless, the most relevant paradigm coming out from this theory is the need of a diachronic and exhaustive study of tourism tendencies. The uncertainties of markets in the last years, their fluctuations due to exogenous phenomena, the financial and economic crisis, impose the necessity to focus the tourism studies, not only as photographs of the present time, but also as retrospective analyses, reconstructing the tendencies in the course of time of localities, so to have a more complete picture of the inquired system, in particular investigating its future perspectives and resilience degree to external shocks.

Obviously, a better picture of tourism trend could give a noticeable impulse to the draft of well fit governance policies. The need of a careful planning of resources and resorts is the second matter to point out: the spontaneous system, almost mechanical, proposed by Butler, nowadays has to be replaced by a perspective of frequent arrangements, continuous researches of transitory balance points of different powers unfolding on territories, with the constant aim of a quick response, if not anticipated, to market variations.

In Italy, the tourism planning only in the last years is acquiring relevance, however often comprehended in the local general plans (PRGs, PSCs, PTCs, etc.). The cases of Chianciano Terme and Ravenna are paradigmatic: in the first of them, we observed as a small mono-product resort, developed spontaneously thanks to a natural feature, the thermal waters, nowadays needs to draft a heedful scheme for the future tourism development, setting up new products beside the spas; in the second, we noted a dualism between two tourist subsystems, that needs more careful analysis tools to appreciate the different trends, and then a systemic recomposing vision of the whole picture, so to be planned in an integrated way.

Finally, the diachronic vision tool to gaze at tourism is appreciable to point out the strengths and the weaknesses of different places, especially in countries that reached the maturity stage like Italy; there is the necessity, however, to carefully analyze every area as complex systems, in which the industry and the tourist product are only some of the essential components, but plunged in a dense network of human material and immaterial interactions.

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## APPENDIX

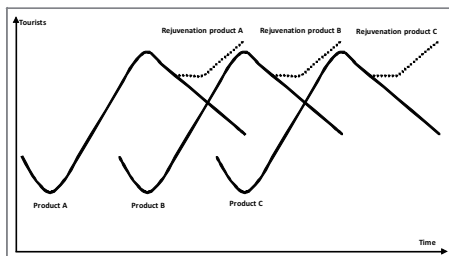


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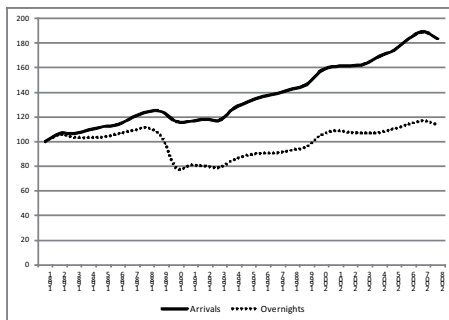


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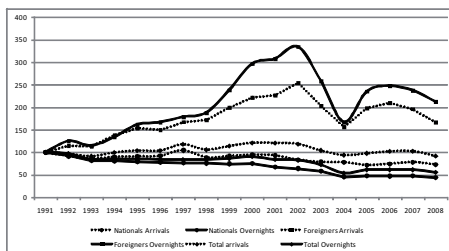


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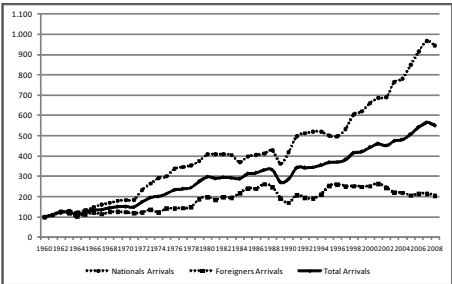


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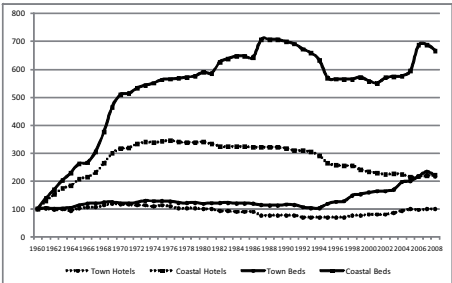


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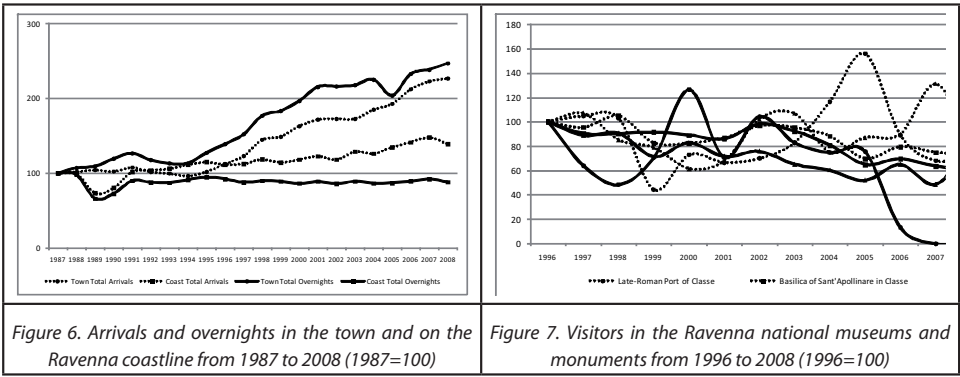


Figure 6. Arrivals and overnights in the town and on the Ravenna coastline from 1987 to 2008 (1987=100)

Figure 7. Visitors in the Ravenna national museums and monuments from 1996 to 2008 (1996=100)



## HOW TO PROMOTE TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AREA (YOUTH TOURISM)

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### Abstract

All the previously mentioned points involves the Tourism as a mean to improve the economy of the countries in the area. On the othe hand my research is about a different kind of Tourism, it is the most and unique one, because it gives the human being an outstanding richness that cannot be obtained by money. In addition it concerns the youth who has no mean to travel and to discover the world. The normal tourist enjoys the beauty of the visited country but his journey usually add nothing to his knowledge. Eventhough he visits the monuments which have been explained by the tourist guide, nothing remains in his mind because most of the tourists are old in age and are not interested to know about the other, their interest is to have fun, to relax from workburden or from the boredom of their retired life.

The normal standard tourist luxury, quirness, good food, beautiful weather, nice atmosphere and that's all. On the other hand, we have to work hard in order to offer more to the tourist in terms of culture and knowledge and not focus on the material side only. Thus my research seeks to redefine tourism in a more cultural way. The following points are the main ideas of my research.

Tourism does not only enable you to discover the past of the visited countries but their their present and their future too. In that way young students could help people of the visited countries who need help. They can share their social and economical problems, by giving them ideas and opportunity of exchanging their experiences. This Institution is a kind of charity Association which has to be sponsored by private companies, universities, businessmen etc. People working in this institution has to be volunteers, and to receive only the expenses of their work. It is time to stop using tourism as a way of gaining money only, but to sirect it for the benefit of the humanity.

\commercial tourism does not fulfill tourist's need in knowledge, it is only a way to make profit like any other business. In fact, tourism has to be considered from a different perspective which is an enrichment of minds. This kind of tourism will not compete with thw tourism we have nowadays, but it is different, and it aims to realize love and peace allover the world. It has no material benefits but cultural, spiritual and human ones. I am not talking of the Tourism which increases the economy of the countries, but I am approaching and advocating a new kind of tourism which doesn't include any material profits but it realize what money cannot do.

My personal experience in the summer courses organized by the Catholic University of Milan in Italy, gave me the opportunity to know everything about Italy, as people, culture, history, art, customs etc.. Things that I ignored before, I became so attached to this beautiful country and I feel that I am belonging to it as I am belonging to Egypt.

I wish to realize this precious experience among the youth of the mediterranean area.

With peace and love we can realize happiness allover the world.

**Key words:** Mediterreanean

## INTRODUCTION

In this research the negative impacts of tourism are highlighted in order to introduce and give an incentive for another kind of tourism called cultural tourism for youth to take place. This new aspect of tourism is the main focus of this research.

- The Mediterranean has been identified by WWF as one of the most important regions in the world for its outstanding biodiversity features. It is one of the cradles of civilization with a rich natural and cultural heritage. The Mediterranean sea is the region with the highest percentage of endemic species- species living only in this part of the world- just after
- Given the fact that tourism occurs in environmentally fragile areas, rich in biodiversity, its impacts on the environment is significant. On the other hand, large scale mass tourism is on the main forces behind the ecological loss and destruction in the region.
- Particularly Coastal and marine areas that still maintain high natural values and are important to safeguard biodiversity. Through inappropriate practice and development once pristine locations have been damaged, sometimes beyond repair.
- Similarity in the climates make the tourist feel at home, he is not shocked by the changes of the weather, so he feels more comfortable and willing to enjoy his journey.
- Nobody can deny the bonds between the different Mediterranean people, the Ethiopians, the Libians areas thousands of years ago, since the time of the pharaos till now, and than the Persians, the Asiatic, and finally the Roman Empire which monuments remain till now in these areas especially in Egypt.
- Thus people in these areas feels that they are not completely different, their roots are similar in behavior, character, beliefs, way of living, and even if they are a little bit different they can at least understand the habits, the religion and the costumes of the other habitants.
- We cannot deny also the social and cultural impacts in theses areas.
- Exchanging goods through these countries, many years ago make the prosperity of the people because of the commerce.

## Background on Tourism in the Mediterrenean <sup>1</sup>

- The Mediterranean region is the most frequented tourist destination. Tourism is mainly concentrated in the Coastal areas which receive 30% of international tourist arrivals. The most widely used tourism development model in the region is based on seaside summer holidays and the attainment of quantities goals, of the total 46,000 km of coastline, 25,000 km is urbanized and have already exceeded a critical limit.(\*)<sup>2</sup>
- International Tourist arrivals (excluding domestic arrivals) in 1999 totaled 219.6 million (4.7% increase over 1998). Projections show that this figure could reach 350 million by 2020. 84% of the tourists in the Mediterranean come from Europe, mostly from northern and western countries.
- Germany is the largest market followed by the United Kingdom, France and Italy. Spain, France, Italy and Greece receive almost 80% of Mediterranean tourism.(\*)
- The Mediterranean receives 1/3 of the income of International Tourism. Tourism receipts in 1999 totaled US \$ 131.8 billion. Over the last three years, 2/3 of the income returned to the hands of less than 10 tour operators from northern Europe.(\*)

## THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Mass tourism threats in the Mediterranean:

<sup>1</sup> Data sources: WTO World Tourism Organization (\*)

The Mediterranean is under threat due to the inappropriate practice and development associated with mass tourism. With current development models based on quantity, the projected growth of tourism development in the region can cause soil erosion, put pressure on endangered species, further strain on water resources, increase waste and pollution discharges into the sea and lead to cultural disruption.<sup>(\*)</sup><sup>3</sup> The Mediterranean Sea receives 10 billion tones of industrial and urban waste per year with little or no purification. The production of wastewater and solid waste in tourist area often exceeds the carrying capacity of local infrastructures due to the high seasonal demand. Pollution also negatively affects water quality in beach areas and drinking water supplies. The human health is affected severely. The negative effect of tourism is also great, as tourism contributes to all forms of pollution (water-waste and atmosphere) and is adversely affected by the impact of pollution on the natural resources they rely upon.

Social and cultural impacts:

A dramatic problem of labor market exists, particularly among youth. The north is not able to absorb the considerable pressure of emigration from southern and eastern Mediterranean countries which are faced by the need to create over 30 million new jobs by 2025.

Talking about tourism in Egypt, as it is my country among the mediterranean area. I noticed that most of the tourists coming from abroad are old people, enjoying the rest of their life visiting different countries, that's why they are not interested to know anything about the culture of the visited places, or the habits of the habitants, or the story of the Monuments they are visiting. If they have a guide, they cannot retain any information; they are coming to enjoy and not to be updated of the problems, the suffering of the people of the visited countries. Getting acquainted with the history, the social, political and religious lives of these people, the visited monuments should be introduced.

### **EGYPT'S SUMMER RESORT:**

#### **THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT:**

God has gifted Egypt long charming beaches, bounded northe by the Mediterreanean Sea and south by the Red Sea. Similary, the River Nile, which the Egyptians used to call "Bahr el Nil" until recent times, extend along Egypt from south to north. They also used to call the two big seas "El Maleh".<sup>(\*)</sup><sup>4</sup>

Egyptians, unlike several peoples, like summer and enjoy its pleasant breeze and river banks. They call it "sea air". Hence, spending summer holidays by moving from internal places to beaches has become a social tradition by all Egyptians. Summer holidays making has a particular nature, due to the climate and features of the country. The climate, as described by late Professor Dr. Gamal Hamdan is "extremely continental", and its features make it open to the Mediterreanean Sea without barriers or obstacles whether on the natural or human level. Spending summer holidays has been related, for a long time, to travel to Alexandria which has been the destination of high classes such as landlords and senior statesmen. But soon, it has become the destination of all classes. It still maintains its charm and beauty that captured the Egyptians'minds and hearts. But soon, the society's cream has moved from Alexandria to other places, and sometimes outside Egypt. Even, other middle classes has begun moving to other destinations along the north or east beaches on the Mediterranean and Red seas. Thus, a tremendous urban revival starts in such untraditional places, such as the northern coast, Hurghada, Sinai and others.

### **RAS EL BAR...A TRADITIONAL STAGE**

Amongst all summer resorts, Ras El Bar is the most special, as it represented basically a transitional stage From pleasure and entertainment which distinguish Alexandria, to a sea-seeking that is now preferred by The Egyptians.

<sup>3</sup> Data Souces : WTO World Tourism Organization (\*)

<sup>4</sup> Tourism in Egypt – Wikipedia (\*)

It is a quiet beautiful small city at the north of Egypt on the Mediterranean Sea. It is Distinguished for being both a summer and a winter resort, for its warm weather. It is also famous for being The meeting point of the river Nile and the Sea, as the Egyptians have used to describe this phenomenon As the meeting point of "Al Maleh and Al Azb" the salt and the sweet, in reference to the drinking water of The Nile and the salty water of the sea.

### **HURGHADA...THE RED SEA PEARL**

It is the red land as called by the Pharaohs due to its reddish mountains, and the colourful coral reefs, particularly the red ones. The Red Sea coast is 1000kms long, whose cities are known for their historical and Charming nature such as Ez-za'faran, Hurghada, Safaga and Mersa Alam. Hurghada is the most attractive For thousands of tourists and summer holiday makers from Egypt and the world, to enjoy its clean water Famous for its therapeutic characteristics, varied blue colours, magnificent sea creatures and entangled Beautiful coral reefs. More than twenty years ago, Hurghada had only one tourist village and a hotel. Now It has more than 350 tourist villages and hotels. It is now the pearl of the Red Sea.

### **MATRUH.. THE BEACH OF LOVE**

It lies in the west north of Egypt on the Mediterranean Sea, It is the city of serenity and happiness where Yellow sands wonderfully embrace blue water. It inspired artists at the beginning of the 1940's, where an Arabic film titled "The Beach of Love" was shot. Since then, it has turned into an attractive beach for Those who seek tranquility and contemplation, whether Egyptians, Arabs and foreigners.

### **THE NORTHERN COAST... A TOURIST ATTRACTION DESTINATION**

It has become an important attraction destination for Egyptians, Arab and foreign summer holiday makers It is widely famous for being the summer resort of the society's elites, artists, movie stars and the rich Egyptians and Arab persons, as it includes all the aspects of splendor represented in villas, palaces and Chalets spread along the coast in the famous villages such as Marina, Marabella, Marakia, Sidi Kreer and Sidi Abdel Rahman where are the tombs of The Germans and Italians of the Second World War.

### **SINAI SUMMER RESORTS BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND ATTRACTION**

After restoring Sinai fully in 1982, a few number of youth visited it to get acquainted with this rich Land that captivated the minds of tourists from all nationalities who prefer to spend their whole journey In Sinai only, provided that they make another journey to the other tourist sites in Egypt. During the period 1982-2009, North and South Sinai have witnessed tremendous development revival, particularly in the Tourist field. Many tourist villages and camps were set up in many locations such as Taba, Sharm El Sheikh And Dahab. Generally, foreigners prefer Sinai beaches at any time of the year for its varying climate whether Moderate, hot or chilly.

### **What is Youth Tourism?**

Youth Tourism is a phenomenon, which was strongly influenced by youth movements born in the peaceful Ideal of the after war period. Today young travelers (aged 15 to 25) represent more than 20% of international tourist arrivals, according to statistics, by the world Tourism Organization. The Youth Tourism industry is divided in two categories: the qualitative and quantitative aspects. The qualitative aspect concerns the aspects linked to quality, security, flexibility and access. The quantitative aspect concerns the growth in youth tourism, its importance in relation to international tourism and the travel expenses of young people.



## HOW TO ENHANCE YOUTH TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA AREAS

As an example of the youth tourism, what have been realized by Salto-Youth Euromed Organization in Giordania, and I hope to form a similar organization in Egypt (\*)<sup>5</sup>

I put forward the following recommendations for promoting youth tourism between arab and European Countries and stimulating economic and cultural capabilities.

- There is a need for facilitating travel procedures and granting visas to arab and European youth tourist groups, especially when many Arab League and Council of Arab Tourism Ministers resolutions pointed out that it is to be focused.
- Deepening cooperation between Youth Associations, Universities and Youth hostels, through mutual Collective youth visits and facilitating conditions for residence in youth hostels or university accommodation in order to lower the cost to youth groups.
- The focus should be on scientific academic trips with the support of universities and ministries or Higher education, in all arab and European countries, to encourage meeting between arab and euro-Pean youth. Suffice it to note that many foreign universities send student groups and individuals on fa-Militarization trips to Arab universities and pay them travel costs.
- Airlines and other forms for transport bear some of the cost by giving discounts for youth travel.
- There should be agreements between tourism business and universities in various countries for group travel to determinate the facilities provided by each party.
- There should be a focus on scientific visits, especially during the study period and trade fairs, to expand. The knowledge of young people and promote tourism product.
- Tourism facilities, such as hotels and tourist villages, play a major role in facilitating accommodation the tourist group in terms of discounts and provide appropriate programs.
- We stress the importance of exchanging training for agreed periods, within tourist facilities.
- The Council of Arab Universities and Ministries of Higher Education can play a role through exchange.

Visit with foreigner universities and by sending student delegations throughout the year, thereby attaining scientific, tourist and economic objectives.

- Organizing joint activities such as exhibitions and joint scientific projects.
- The need for presenting youth tourist programs in television channels, magazines, newspapers in the forms of competitions and activities.
- Considering cultural tourism competitions between arab colleges and departments of tourism and supporting these programs with tourist incentives and promotion through tourism channels, to spread awareness and promote tourism culture among the young.
- A symposium, sponsored by the Arab Tourism Organization and the involvement of television channels tourism companies, tourism enterprises and airlines can contribute to enhancing youth and student tourism and putting it on the right path.

Tourism can help to bring peoples together, it can also help to drive them apart by widening the gulf that divides them. It can regenerate but can also be a factor of deterioration. (\*)<sup>6</sup>

Students and young people all over the world need means of attraction, to receive informations, culture And knowledge about other people, they need to enjoy their vacations beside having lessons and informations about the visited country, During these journey they will make friends from young students from Different nationalities. They will feel at home as all of them are coming from a foreigner country, they will enjoy the informations, the knowledge and the culture they receive from the visited country, and they will be acquainted with its social problems. They will have the opportunity to meet special personality of the visited country, they will live for 30 days (or less) among the people of the country, they will have the opportunity to visit some of them at their houses, they will eat their food, and enjoy their music and dance.

<sup>5</sup> Salto Youth Euromed Magazine (Juillet 2009) – Bernard Abrignani- coordinator of SALTO Youth Euro.Med RC

<sup>6</sup> Towards an international policy on tourism for youth (Venice – 30 March 1983) – UNESCO

They will discover another world, different of their world but very interesting to discover and to know. We can learn a lot from books but we can get more culture by travelling, because it is unforgettable, as it. Will remains always in their hearts, even when they became old. As memories (especially good ones) remains always in our mind. These kind of summer courses realize the followings:

- Solidarity between the Mediterranean countries.
- An opportunity to know the other .
- Exchanging experience and knowledge
- An atmosphere of love and peace will dominate.
- Students will be acquainted with the social and economic problems of the other countries.
- At the end they will feel as one family and will regret to leave.
- They can find an opportunity to work later on in the visited country.
- They will respect oneself, the other, our earth and the earth of our children.
- Transfer of technologies, knowledge, ideas and experiences without making money profit.
- They will help to save the Mediterranean area from pollution, lake of water, by making campaigns
- Of sensibilisation to tourists, hotel owners and travel agencies.
- Use polluted sites to sensibilise the people and then explain the impact of pollution through meetings  
Between citizens, scientists, NGO's and politicians.
- Initiate common laws and an emergency fund for the whole Mediterranean basin in order to avoid

Massive pollution and to restore the environment.

- Normal tourist enjoys the beauty of the visited country but his journey usually adds nothing to his knowledge. Eventhough he visits the monuments which have been explained by the tourist guide, nothing remains in his mind because most of the tourists are old in age, and are not interested to know about the other countries, their interest is to have fun, to relax from work or from boredom of their retired life. The normal standard tourist is searching for luxury, quietness, good food, beautiful weather, nice atmosphere and that's all. On the other hand, we have to work hard in order to offer more to the tourist in terms of culture and knowledge and not focus on the material side only. Thus my research seeks to redefine tourism in a more cultural way. The following are the points to be followed in order to realize an ideal tourism in the area.
  - Summer and winter courses for the tourism of the students in the Mediterrean Area:
  - Exchanging students is a mean to enhance cultural dialogues between people of these areas.
  - Creating big Organizations for this kind of tourism having the aim to enable the young students to visit the different countries in these areas with reduced expenses. These Organization shall be sponsored by Private Universities, Businessmen, big private companies, and even people who are willing to help the new generation to discover the world before it is too late.
  - These Organizations will have branches in all the countries in this area, in order to organize this kind of trips for the students twice a year. And the High honored student is exempted from all fees.
1. These Organizations Reduce the adverse territorial and environmental impacts of tourism.
  2. Strengthen the implementation of the recommendations on tourism adopted in 1999 by the Contracting parties, identify good practices and produce an in-depth assessment of the progress made by 2008.
  3. Promote within countries, on the basis of studies of carrying capacities, a more balanced distribution of tourists in term of destination and seasons. Developing Summer courses through high schools and Universities, exchanging students from allover the world, this project must be

sponsored by international companies and businessmen, having the aim to facilitate to the young students the opportunity to know other countries' culture, traditions, social problems, languages and beliefs.

4. Exchanging summer houses, by forming an international Association based on non-profit aims developing the exchange of families all over the world. For example, in Egypt there is the North-coast area from Alexandria till Sidi Abdel Rahman and Marsa Matruh) where the Mediterranean sea is exceptional in beauty (color and safety), all this coast is full of inhabitant villages, which could be an ideal place for summer courses and exchanging summer houses.

Promoting the products and the supply of sustainable tourist facilities and increase the added value of tourism economy for local communities:

I will talk about my personal experience in this field, as I went to Italy through the summer courses organized by the Catholic University of Milan, I got to know Italy even more than Egypt. I visited the countries of the north Italy (Toscany) the south of Italy (Campania) and the north-eastern part (Friuli) I used to know everything about the people of these countries, their habits, culture and social life. I used to know young people from all over the world, and they became my friends till this moment. After this beautiful experience I feel that I am Italian and Egyptian in the same time, because all barriers has been demolished by this experience. I was so attached to Italy where I studied publicity in the catholic university of Milan and now I am waiting impatiently to visit it as if it was my native country. I wish to realize this feeling of happiness for all the youth all over the world, especially in the Mediterranean area, because people in these surrounding countries are all alike, they have common patrimonies, history, culture and so on. Therefore, I wish to repeat this experience nowadays, and during this conference I am inviting you all to collaborate to realize this wonderful aim, i.e. to know each other and transform tourism in new way to spread peace and love to the world instead of being a commercial environment only. Let's forget for a while the material part of life and concentrate on its moral side.

### UNDERSTANDING THE GLOBAL PHENOMENON OF YOUTH TRAVEL

Understanding the Global phenomenon of Youth Travel offers a global overview of the youth and student travel industry, by revealing the latest trends in youth travel destinations, products and innovations. The report, developed by the world tourism organization (UNWTO) and the world youth student & educational travel confederation (WYSE Travel Confederation), a UNWTO affiliate member, shows that the unique motivation of young travelers make this market extremely important to the key objectives of the global tourism agenda and that the personal social and economic value of youth, student and educational travel is increasingly being recognized by educational institutions, employers, official tourism organizations and governments worldwide.

This report explains the uniqueness of this segment, its wish to explore and engage with culture. It focuses on the special mix of their travel ambitions with study, work, volunteer placements and adventure. It also explains why they tend to stay much longer and therefore spend more than the average tourist, interacting more closely with the communities that they visit and making a direct contribution to local business.<sup>(\*)</sup>

### Conclusion:

Promoting sustainable tourism:

Tourism in the Mediterranean is a major industry in terms of employment and incomes and cultural exchange in the region and it is concentrated mainly in the seasonal seaside resort.

Mediterranean Strategy for sustainable development in order to promote Tourism:

<sup>7</sup> UNWTO Media Officer: Marcello Risi(\*)

- Draw up, as soon as possible, not later than 2010, a 10 year promotional framework programmed for the Mediterranean together with the Ministries concerned, the private sector, sustainable tourism professionals and promoters, highlighting the assets of the Mediterranean cultural and environmental heritage. This awareness campaign will aim to develop a "Mediterranean tourism quality label" promote a pilot action at the regional level to support the implementation of national and sub-national programmed.
- Develop "tourism- pay-back" formulae so that tourists contribute to the preservation of the natural environment, cultural heritage and the sustainable development of destination.
- Explore the possibility of implementing taxation systems based on transport, especially sea and air transport to islands as a mean of contribution to the sustainable development of these regions.
- Adapt tourism more effectively to the constraints and opportunities offered by protected natural areas, especially with a view to preserving bio-diversity and the natural and cultural heritage in regional parks, biosphere reserves and protected coastal areas.
- Encourage countries to promote rehabilitation programmed in destinations where hotel facilities and tourism infrastructure are becoming obsolete and where historical sites are poorly maintained. Improve governance for sustainable tourism:
- Improve coordination between countries and major operators to improve the harmonization of regulations and develop synergies at the regional level.
- Improve cooperation mechanisms between tourism and environmental authorities and strengthen the capacities of local authorities to manage the development of tourism and promote sustainable tourism.
- How to proceed to enhance the tourism of students in these areas:
- All the previously mentioned points involve the Tourism as a mean to improve the economy of the countries in the area. On the other hand my research is about a different kind of Tourism, it is the most and unique one, because it gives the human beings an outstanding richness that cannot be obtained by money. In addition it concerns the youth who has no mean to travel and to discover the world. The nns will deal with charters aéro plans.
- Summer schools on the shore side, touristic villages, and small motels are to be ideal places for the summer or winter courses dedicated to give the student a large scale of knowledge and to give him the joy and happiness for an exotic vacation, where he can obtain both culture and leisure.
- The aim of this kind of tourism is to exchange, culture, and experiences, and young students all over the world could share other students their social and economic problems.
- This is an ideal way to spread love and peace allover the world.

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## TOWARDS A WELLBEING CENTRED APPROACH FOR ENHANCED TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY

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e-mail: f\_senia@hotmail.com***Abstract**

The sustainable development approach to tourism is based on the idea that the majority of the resources upon which the industry depends are regional and local in nature. Thus, recent approaches to tourism development put the community at the centre of the development process through a framework that advocates for community development and micro-entrepreneurial models, using approaches such as participation and consultation. At the heart of the process is an emphasis on self-sufficiency and local control over change with the declared aim of enhancing the wellbeing of the communities involved.

Despite an equity component supporting the integration of local people and broader communities into the development process, this model has been criticised since micro-enterprises development projects are being used to legitimate increasing tourism development by creating linkages between growing foreign investment of tourism multinationals and small-scale entrepreneurs. Although, sustainability of community-based projects has been questioned if not linked to mainstream industry, with market forces and government allocations determining where the costs and benefits of tourism are directed. Ultimately, therefore, encouraging actions to remove barriers to market access and enhance governance is essential. This article uses critical literature review to induce and contribute to the theory stressing the need for a multidisciplinary approach to tourism development. The article does not mean to criticise one approach or another but, it stresses the idea that the implementation of participatory strategies can only be put into practice with a deep knowledge of economic, political and social structures of the destination under study, rejecting pre-conditioned models either them bottom-up or top-down.

Furthermore, although the industry appears to have made progress in coming to terms with the importance of preserving the beauty and viability of landscapes and ecosystems, it still lags behind in the reconciliation of these efforts with local people's needs and aspirations. This derives from the fact that at the centre of the existing tourism system lays the tourists' satisfaction and industry profitability, with little consideration being devoted to the long-term wellbeing of the host population.

It is argued that tourism development projects tend to focus on single aspects such as economic benefits or socio-cultural impacts, but more often than not, a broader picture on livelihood issues is missing. A holistic view of political structures, economic processes and anthropological dimensions can generate better policies and strategies to maximise gains for local people that would help switching to a wellbeing perspective and create a win-win loop where the wellbeing of the guests and the hosts is enhanced.

**Key words:** Sustainable tourism; community development; human wellbeing; multidisciplinary approach.

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<sup>1</sup> The findings, interpretation, and conclusions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the UNWTO.Themis Foundation, its Board of Trustees, and the governments they represent.

## INTRODUCTION

With the spread of tourism from the developed to the developing countries during the 1960s, the connection between tourism and development was established under an optimistic premise that led to the description of tourism as a 'passport to development' (de Kadt, 1979). In those days tourism was predominantly seen as a source of monetary benefits, job creation and impetus for infrastructural development (Dann, 2002); later, with the lack of substantial economic benefits for the recipient countries and the abundance of socio-cultural and environmental tangible dilemmas, the significance of tourism with respect to development was sidelined (Ibid). More recently, the renewed recognition of tourism as a major global economic force, coupled with the shift of focus in the development discourse towards effective strategies for sustainable and more equitable growth, has led to the expectation of harnessing tourism as a driving force for the alleviation of poverty<sup>2</sup> (UNWTO, 2004). As a result, tourism has definitely entered the debate on growth and is considered a fundamental element of the global development policies for poverty alleviation. Specifically, recent approaches to tourism development put the community at the centre of the development process through a framework that advocates for community development and micro-entrepreneurial models.

These approaches use methodologies such as participation and consultation to concentrate on income generation. Nonetheless, there seem to be serious socio-cultural costs associated with the economic benefits of tourism and such methods can be criticised mainly from two main points of view. First, in spite of an equity component supporting the integration of local people and broader communities into the development process, such claims are made in an instrumental manner since micro-enterprises development projects are being used to legitimate increasing tourism development by creating linkages between growing foreign investment of tourism multinationals and small-scale entrepreneurs. Secondly, by increasing the number of "stakeholders" in tourism development, micro-enterprise projects are helping to institutionalize existing inequalities of gender, class and ethnicity (Ferguson, 2007).

It follows that given the constantly increasing volume of tourists in developing countries, it is legitimate to continue to investigate new strategies and keep tourism in all its forms (including those claiming to adopt an ethical approach) under attentive scrutiny. This is particularly important in relation to development issues, if the attempt to promote responsibility among travellers, operators and governments is to become a genuine one, as well as making sure that the economic benefits of tourism are definitely and indisputably contributing to the livelihoods and wellbeing of the communities involved.

## METHODOLOGY

The research has been conducted using a critical literature review methodology. The focus of the literature review was driven by the topic of each section and followed from the findings and conclusions of previous sections, in the attempt to link three main areas of enquiry: tourism and development in context; the global-local nexus; the human wellbeing perspective to enhance sustainability in tourism development. Hence, we looked at the evolution of the different theories<sup>3</sup> and the debate among them. This piece of literature review concludes with the discussion about the most recent strategies for the development of tourism in developing countries: community-based tourism and micro-enterprise.

From the analysis of theory and practice, participation of the community in the development process was found to be an important element. Therefore, we also looked at the limits to community participation in

*2 After disbanding its tourism department in the mid-1980s, the World Bank renewed its interest in the sector in 1998 and now supports investments in tourism infrastructure and training, site development and heritage as part of a new focus on poverty alleviation (Mastny, 2001). As noted by Geoffrey Wall in "Tourism Development and Growth: The challenge of sustainability" (Wahab and Pigram, 1997), sustainable development is considered as an example of alternative development paradigm in contrast with modernization, dependency and neoclassical theories of development.*

*3 Modernization; Dependency; Neoliberal and Sustainable Development theories.*



the tourism development process in developing countries. We concluded that a link seems to be missing in the complete understanding of local realities and the bridging of multiple ones – cultural, ecological, economic, social, political, personal and collective, local and global - that at various levels construct human wellbeing. Based on these conclusions a literature review on wellbeing has been conducted, with the attempt of proposing a new framework to enhance sustainability in tourism development. Overall, the literature review covers many different aspects that were not discussed in great depth due to the limited space afforded by the article.

### TOURISM: A DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

Tourism is a socio-cultural, economic and environmental phenomenon, serviced by the travel and tourism industry, which comprises all the activities of tourists away from their home environment (Holloway, 1985). From an economic perspective, the tourists represent the demand side whereas the supply side includes all the facilities, programmes, attractions and land uses designed for and managed on behalf of the visitors (UN, 2003). The supply side factors are generally under the control of private enterprises, non-profit organizations and governments (ibid). The supply and demand sides are linked by flows of resources such as capital, labour, goods and tourist expenditures into the destination; and flows of marketing, promotion, and tourist artefacts from the destination back into the tourist generating regions (ibid).

Tourism flows are continually increasing worldwide (UNWTO, 2007), and in developing countries tourism is increasing with growth rates exceeding those of developed countries (ibid). Cultural and natural environments in particular are continually attracting increasing numbers of visitors to countries which are rich in attractive resources such as sunny weather, beautiful beaches, unique wild life, tropical forests and exotic cultures (ibid). As a result, there appears to be growing recognition of the important role tourism can play in developing economies, to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development (UNWTO, 2004). A UN report on pro-poor tourism states that (2003, 1): “[s]everal governments and international aid agencies have experienced first-hand the positive impacts tourism development brings to a country by creating economic opportunities which improve people’s quality of life”.

This positive view contrasts with much of the tourism literature which often paints a depressing picture of tourism impacts, thus supporting Gossling and Hall (2005, 305) observation that “tourism cannot claim to have any moral high ground”. Specifically, it has been repeatedly noted that the economic arguments do not appear to be as sound as claimed<sup>4</sup> (e.g. Mowforth and Munt, 2003) and tourism can differentially affect development outcomes by increasing inequality of wealth and social stratification in countries which already experience great levels of inequality (Crick, 1989; Ferguson, 2007). By giving an example related to tourism development in Turkey, Tosun and co-workers (2003) highlight spatial and social inequalities particularly from the perspective of balanced regional development related to tourism, advocated as an alternative growth strategy but shaped and directed without considering many fundamental developmental issues. Consequently, there is recognition that tourism “is not the smokeless industry it claims to be” (Gonsalves 1996, 19) and that there is the need to find better ways to practice tourism (e.g. Whelan, 1991).

Recent approaches to tourism are embraced under the notion of sustainable tourism which advocates for “harmonious relationships between local communities, the industry and the tourists” (Zhang et al. 2006, 182) therefore, true sustainability should include the human dimension as well as the natural one (Cater 1993). However, there are many sustainable tourism approaches (see for example Stabler and Goodall,

<sup>4</sup> The proportion of money captured from international tourism by developing countries is usually low, with only 20-40% of the retail tourist price paid for a package tour remaining within the economy of the destination country due to the out-flow resulting from imported services/goods and foreign ownership. This is referred to as the ‘leakage problem’ (Gossling, 1999).

1996) and some researchers are arguing that the industry has redefined it merely to suit their own needs and to 'green' their own image, for example: "sustainable tourism may represent the mainstream industry's attempt to invent a new legitimization for itself: 'sustainable' and 'rational' use of the environment, including the preservation of nature as an amenity for the already advantaged" Mowforth and Munt (1998, 96) quoted by Saarinen (2006, 1132) and also "at this moment sustainable tourism seems little more than a marketing instrument, making the ethical nature of its use in advertising dubious and more a marketing ploy" Lansing and De Vries (2007, 83).

From the material reviewed, it is clear that tourism is not an easy 'passport to development'. The concept of sustainable development of tourism may not be as sound as it promises to be and the focus on either sustainability of the industry or the environment means that the local socio-cultural dimension is often underestimated (Carrier and Macleod, 2005). As a result, there is a need to reconcile the concept with the human side which would require "much more than simply estimating the direct effects of tourism on the physical and human environments of destination areas" (Butler, 1999, 20).

#### THE MISSING LINK

Undoubtedly, tourism is a global process that is consumed locally, for this reason a key issue is the way in which tourism expansion, development and in some cases retraction, can influence communities. The economic geographers Milne and Ateljevic (2001, 371) argue that "it is essential to look at how interactions between the global and the local shape development outcomes for individuals, households, communities and regions". Tourism is a transaction process which is driven by the global interests of multinational corporations, geo-political forces and broader forces of economic change which at the same time involves the complexities of the local, "where residents, visitors, workers, governments and entrepreneurs interact at the industry coal-face" (Ibid, 372). Such complex mix of processes, act simultaneously in a multifaceted way on more than one scale making the analysis of tourism in relation to development issues difficult. For instance, Steiner (2006, 1) on poverty reduction associated to tourism in Egypt, argues that there is "a missing nexus between micro- and macro-perspectives" resulting in deficient consideration of local socio-political structures and their influence on development problems. Moreover, given that development is inevitably a multidisciplinary field where anthropology, ecology, economics, politics, psychology and sociology interweave, promoting collaboration, cross-fertilisation and integration across of all these and other related subjects becomes vital if major advancements in tourism related development policies are to be devised and implemented.

Some progresses in this direction have been accomplished thanks to the mounting evidence and awareness of the danger of seriously straining the ecological and social capacity of tourism destinations in parallel with the emergence of alternative development practices to tourism particularly centred on the concern for eco-sustainability and local participation (McLaren, 2003). In particular there has been great expectation from ecotourism products and community-based tourism development, which often have been coupled together because the community level is considered a key factor in influencing positive outcomes for both the industry and the community involved<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, it has been argued that governments should place communities at the centre of their development strategies in an attempt to "create economic regeneration and remedy social ills, challenging the atomizing nature of free market liberal economics and its detrimental consequences for socio-economic wellbeing" (Milne and Ateljevic, 2001, 374). However, "meaningful participation necessitates a systematic local autonomy" (Tosun, 2000, 628), but too often development projects focus only on the visible aspects of the processes.

*5 It should be noted that the success of ecotourism products is more likely to happen when communities are involved (Tosun, 2000). This sanctions communities as resources to be developed and it shifts the attention again to the interests of the industry.*

Even if one of the assumptions of these models is that all parties must have an equal opportunity to participate in the policy process, it ignores broader issues such as the real spread of costs and benefits of tourism development (Joppe, 1996). Moreover, Tosun (1998 and 2000), analysed the limitations of community participation in the tourism development process (TDP) highlighting three groups of causes: those related to the operational level; structural limitations; and cultural limitations. These limitations ultimately, severely compromise the livelihoods and wellbeing of local people in the tourist destinations (e.g. Mowforth and Munt, 2003).

Therefore, even if tourism presently embodies a great potential for sustainable development by supporting genuine growth and conservation activities through participatory approaches, it is reasonable to assume that there is a lack of glue to bind these approaches together and coherently drive the various disparate efforts to move beyond the 'business as usual' approach. Although, it would be easier to carry on with conventional sectoral approaches, this may jeopardize any chance of successfully improving conditions in tourist destinations in developing (as well as developed) countries through the industry itself, undermining its own future.

The challenge of development is always to do better. This is usually tackled by identifying problems and developing enhanced policies. In this manner, different approaches to tourism development appear to aim at establishing sustainable tourism policies and operations to obtain beneficial outcomes from tourism. However, something is restricting the effectiveness of these efforts. A link seems to be missing in the complete understanding of local realities and the bridging of multiple ones – cultural, ecological, economic, social, political, personal and collective, local and global - that at various levels construct human wellbeing. A focus on the complex multidimensional processes that lead to human ill/wellbeing outcomes could provide the much needed glue for a new, more functional trans-disciplinary/multidimensional integrated approach as well as reinvigorating and improving existing ones. This proposition however is a very challenging one. What exactly does a wellbeing approach entail and how can it be made operational from a tourism perspective? In particular, how the tourism industry can be developed while also ensuring that quality of life is maintained or even enhanced for the communities involved in the tourism industry? This is not a straightforward task, nonetheless these are very compelling questions that need to be addressed in order to shift the centre of attention towards wellbeing as a valuable concept for tourism development in line with the industry's declared objectives of sustainability.

### **WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL OBTAINABLE FROM A WELLBEING CENTRED APPROACH?**

Attempts to broaden the scope of tourism planning in developing countries have focussed in particular on education, conservation and participation (e.g. Lodge, 2003; Hewitt, 2002; Vaughan, 2000), for example in community-based projects (e.g. Stem et al. 2003). These are very important endeavours. However, they are likely to suffer from the sort of problems mentioned above. On the research side a deeper analysis of tourism has been derived from the sustainable livelihoods approach, here exemplified in the words of Ashley (2000, 14): "tourism is often seen by economists as a route to macro-economic growth, by the private sector as a commercial activity, and by conservationists as an element of sustainable use to create conservation incentives. But none of these prioritise livelihood concerns of poor people, nor, therefore, suggest ways to enhance local impacts. A fourth approach adopted by some NGOs, is to view community involvement in tourism as a strategy for rural development, but in practice this too often focuses on cash income and employment generation. A livelihoods perspective helps to shift the focus to a broader range of tangible and intangible costs and benefits".

This represents a major breakthrough which challenges conventional approaches. Hence, why advocating a wellbeing centred approach then? Would wellbeing provide simply a replica of this? The livelihoods approach sets a good basis for advancement towards a more responsible tourism, however wellbeing could lead much further and offer a truly holistic 360° vision which certainly encompasses the livelihoods perspective (see Gough

and McGregor, 2007). For instance, wellbeing with respect to poverty builds on the work from the sustainable livelihoods tradition (e.g. Lawson et al. 2000), and enables to look further into what poor people have and are able to do, rather than just focussing on their deficits (Camfield, 2006). In addition, it is a dynamic and multidimensional notion which integrates the material, relational, and cognitive dimensions of people's lives allowing for a deeper perception of what people value and to what they aspire (ibid). From a sociological perspective, wellbeing represents a paradigm shift towards person-centred and dynamic understandings of people's lives, whilst recognising the importance of their entrenchment in particular socio-cultural contexts (Gough et al. 2006). The novelty is in the focus on people's feelings and judgments of their life satisfaction ('subjective wellbeing'), which can be directly accessed to complement assessments done through objective evaluations (i.e. use of 'objective wellbeing' indicators). This can help to obtain more credible and respectful representations of people's lives and inform tourism policy and practice, hopefully leading to tourism which helps to create the conditions for people to experience wellbeing, rather than undermining it.

The attractiveness of the wellbeing concept lies in its openness, which could allow moving from several mono/multi/inter-disciplinary views to a trans-disciplinary unified approach with greater possibility of success (Albrecht et al. 1998). It could also lead beyond the self-damaging, anthropocentric deterministic view of the world. This is conceivable precisely because, by putting human wellbeing at the centre of the picture rather than only wealth, and considering the overall determinants of human happiness, all other dimensions are more likely to coalesce around it and not only include but also positively re-evaluate the ecological and social dimensions (Dodds, 1997).

Human wellbeing comprises many elements/determinants and although money, commodities and economic growth are a component of wellbeing they are only a very limited part of it (e.g. see Offer 2006). Such great complexity is an obstacle; however limited views of wellbeing are more likely to produce only sub-optimal and unsustainable policies (Gough and McGregor, 2007). Additionally, a dichotomised view separating anthropocentric from bio-centric welfare seems to persist which hinders the understanding of human wellbeing as deeply interdependent with that of other non-human species and the whole of the earth's spheres. Understanding the complexity of the interactions between the various economic, socio-cultural, and environmental components of wellbeing would require integrated research strategies that go beyond multidisciplinary frameworks. As a result, a crucial challenge for progress in this field would be the move towards a more integrated trans-disciplinary wellbeing approach drawing from the most advanced existing multidisciplinary research frameworks<sup>6</sup>.

In theory, it should be possible for almost any tourist attraction or product to strive towards sustainable tourism objectives (i.e. operationalising sustainable tourism policies through the application of different strategies for local development, such as pro-poor, community participation, environmental and ethical codes of conduct, etc.). In practice however, agreement on strategies and demonstrable examples of real and long-term benefits are rare (Ashley and Goodwin, 2007; Ferguson, 2007; Milne and Ateljevic, 2001; Tosun, 2000) and the main focus on economic and technical issues appears to cause limitations. To overcome these difficulties, attention to Integrated Relational Tourism (IRT) strategies concerned with supply and demand convergence through fair management of interpersonal relations, could provide a synergy to drive participation and consultation to a meaningful level and onto the centre stage of tourism policymaking to enhance governance effectively. This seems particularly relevant for countries on the southern Mediterranean coast for instance see Caffyn and Jobbins (2003) for examples from Morocco and Tunisia.

Furthermore, keeping in mind that tourism has the tendency to resemble prostitution<sup>7</sup> and that too often fragmented forms of business are conflicting or self-contradicting by carrying the danger of ultimately 'loving to death' the very places that should aim to preserve, it is greatly desirable to press for greater

*6 A trans-disciplinary approach differs from the interdisciplinary approach, which studies phenomena at the intersection of two disciplines that are usually close to each other and it is not equivalent to multidisciplinary, in which researchers from different disciplines work side by side, enriching their own understanding as a result of their colleagues' input, but where coordination does not necessarily lead to integrated actions (Lebel 2003).*

*7 This connotation wishes to imply misuse of talent for gain.*

attentiveness to be directed towards local culture/history and the environment through deeper social relations with the local populations. The great potential of IRT is to be found in the chance to drive attention to the importance of the relational component of human wellbeing and in the multidisciplinary formation of professional personnel to place at the complex interface of tourism development and management. To fasten together these promising approaches with valid development goals consideration and use of the notion of wellbeing (for instance by incorporating it in the educational components of professional specialised IRT operators) would allow for protection from the mere exploitation of the historical, natural and cultural resources targeted by touristic consumption. Creating unique tourist products, rich in history and tradition is desirable only if the capacity to foster positive relations between host and guests and the wellbeing of the entire recipient community can be guaranteed and possibly enhanced in relation to sustainable development objectives.

## CONCLUSIONS

Tourism development takes advantage of the rich cultural and biological diversity of host communities but grants limited attention to the overall wellbeing of the destination. This attitude can backfire because intertwined economic, ecological and social costs arising from tourism can create deep ill-being in the host communities which ultimately can threaten the sustainability of the tourism business itself (Gossling, 2002a,b). Hence, the call for shifting attention to the notion of wellbeing for the ultimate benefit of all the parts involved in tourism planning, supply/production, delivery and fruition.

From excessive leakages to insufficient linkages, tourism is far from bringing economic prosperity to the developing world. Nevertheless, 'new' tourism practices (from both demand and supply sides) are viewed benevolently and are attracting most of the attention aimed at alternative forms of fruition and management. Yet, if tourism is to contribute not only to economic but also to social development, and the human wellbeing of both hosts and guests, the environmental, economic, social, cultural, and ethical domains affected by tourism would all deserve equal attention for further research which can help structure a comprehensive and responsible tourism strategy.

The wellbeing literature shows that there is a large spectrum of concepts and research related to human wellbeing; what transpires is that understandings of wellbeing processes can facilitate the design of enhanced strategies for development, therefore it is important to appreciate that researching and understanding wellbeing can have important repercussions in relation to the sustainable development of tourism. The importance of a well-balanced 'anthropo/bio-centric' vision highlighting the inter-relatedness of all earth and human systems could also be supported by a holistic/integrated approach to human wellbeing. This should be facilitated by trans-disciplinary investigations of the subject.

Another important idea introduced is that of a synergy between sustainable development and IRT strategies by incorporating the notion of wellbeing as a potential overarching and unifying concept under which there is scope to identify and weave together in a coherent way all the vital elements and necessary means to support and regulate a good quality of life by developing integrated research/knowledge and education/training.

Wellbeing could also help reorient tourism development from its strong concern with growth to a more unambiguous goal of improving the condition of the less fortunate in society, by making all the stakeholders more aware of those practices/developments paths which are detrimental to human wellbeing<sup>8</sup>. The difference from currently devised practical approaches lies in the study and recognition of the complexity of human wellbeing processes, from which new and better tools and techniques are

*8 Although the notion of wellbeing recognises the importance of economic security, it suggests an orientation of tourism quite different from what presently exists where the emphasis is on prioritising the profit enhancement of the products and the tourist satisfaction before the local needs and expectations.*

more likely to ensure a no-nonsense system to deal with the problems currently afflicting the supply side of tourism activities. In synthesis four key practical features/functions of wellbeing can be identified which are relevant to tourism, these are:

1. Analytical in particular for tourism and the human/nature relationship.
2. Integrative to facilitate the integration of different disciplines, stakeholders and approaches.
3. Monitoring (and evaluation) of different dimensions of tourism development (i.e. economic, environmental, socio-cultural) via the use of objective and subjective wellbeing indicators.
4. Planning (policymaking design) to improve policies but also implementation; not only through improved understanding of localities but also through a responsible wellbeing approach.

A synergic use of these four aspects can help in the identification of the benefits and costs of tourism which support and undermine wellbeing and hence help to limit or avoid negative impacts and threats to human wellbeing from the outset of planning to the implementation stage.

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## TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

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In the Mediterranean basin the tourism represents one of the main productive sectors around the economy of vast coastal areas revolves, but at the same time it configures itself as one of most powerful agent of territorial and environmental change, able to upset the coastal scenery, to compromise ecological balances and to set at the local level diffuse processes of de-territorialization with negative repercussions on local dynamics of development. Tourism competitiveness of the Mediterranean Area resides in the capacity of promoting a sustainable tourism able to raise the present well-being of coastal people, preserving environmental, landscape and cultural qualities of the relative territorial contexts.

Any valuation about the competitiveness of the Mediterranean tourism cannot apart from an in-dept analysis of bonds that the respect of these conditions puts to the development of the supply from local scale to transnational scale. As a consequence the sustainability and the competitiveness are indissolubly tied in a relationship of reciprocity that the tourism development, in the Mediterranean area as in the other areas of the world, has always undervalued or unheeded –further to the building aggression stood in the last years by our coasts.

Regarding to the tourism the Mediterranean Area represents a geographical complex reality where divergent tourism configurations alternate in the same coast as in term of environmental sustainability as in term of competitiveness, making impossible every strategic or interpretative generalization. The unit analysis of a tourist and differentiate region may seem contradictory, however it is justified by to two different valuations: competitiveness and environment. On the one hand, the presence of a global competition, where the Mediterranean basin must match against other emergent and attractive tourist regions, suggests a strategic cooperation among Mediterranean countries; on the other hand environmental and territorial questions related to tourism development are a transversal reality in the Mediterranean area and they need strategic and conjoint answers by coastal countries.

Analyzing deeply economical and occupational role of tourism in the Mediterranean basin and its environmental and territorial questions, the aim of the article is to individuate the strategies at the regional level able to promote a redistribution of tourist functions and a territorialization of policies of interventions. This purpose can be reached focusing the tourism development on the local communities in order to promote endogenous developmental models which must be efficient interpreters of the territory and save it from speculation and homologation of globalization.

**Key word:** sustainable tourism, tourism competitiveness, Mediterranean area.

**INTRODUCTION**

In the Mediterranean area, tourism is one of the main activities for many coastal economies but at the same time, it is one that has the power to change the local area and the environment and, if pernicious, can damage the coastal landscape, jeopardize the ecological balance and finally trigger “local de-territorialization processes” with negative effects on local development.

The competitiveness of the Mediterranean region’s tourism lies in the countries’ abilities to promote sustainable tourism, in order to increase the present and future well-being of coastal communities, and

preserve the quality of environment, landscape, and culture. These local features are considered, in their richness and variety, the potential draw card for the Mediterranean tourist region and its main competitive asset.

Any evaluation on Mediterranean tourist competitiveness must necessarily include an in-depth analysis of the threats on a local and transnational scale. Sustainability and competitiveness are also involved in the relationship of interdependence which is often underrated in tourism developments, as shown by the building boom along the Mediterranean coast during years of economic growth.

The Mediterranean area is made up of a complex geographic situation, in which there are different tourist provisions both in terms of sustainability and of competitiveness, making any interpretative and strategic generalization impossible. So, talking about the region may appear confusing but it is justified by two sorts of factors: competitive and environmental. On the one hand, competition on a global scale due to the entry of attractive new regions suggests the importance of developing strategic collaboration between the Mediterranean countries; on the other hand, environmental and local problems require strategic and integrated choices by coastal countries<sup>1</sup>.

### THE ECONOMIC AND OCCUPATIONAL ROLE OF TOURISM

On the basis of a WTTC (World Travel & Tourism Council) estimate (2008), just under 8.9 million people are employed in the Mediterranean tourism sector, while about 11.4 million employees operate in sectors connected to tourism, or more generally, in a range of heterogeneous activities considered "tourist related". In relative terms the contribution of tourism to employment varies greatly: from 5.6% in Algeria to 28.7% in Croatia. The contribution of tourism to GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in 2008 was over 407 billion dollars and, if we include the indirect economy, this contribution exceeds 940 billion, 12.3% of the total GDP of Mediterranean economies. Tourism's economic impact is evident also in tourist demand. Over 700 billion euro were spent by visitors in 2006, divided as follows: 69.8% domestic spending, 26.4% international spending, 3.8% direct public expenditure. If added to the demand for capital investment, visitor export and indirect government expenditure, this is over 920 billion euro. This level makes tourism one of the main *driver* of the Mediterranean economy. Every year all of the Mediterranean countries attract about 310 million international tourists and domestic tourist flows. Mediterranean tourism is made up of three different types of tourist flows.

1. *domestic tourism*, expression of inbound demand;
2. *regional tourism*, expression of outbound demand from other Mediterranean countries.
3. *international tourism*, expression of outbound demand from countries outside the Mediterranean region.

Although most of the Mediterranean countries have a lot of landscape and cultural attractions available, international arrivals tend to be concentrated in the north-west of the Mediterranean basin. The concentration level of attractions increases with a geopolitical clustering. European countries alone absorb more than 84% of the International flow, reaching 95% if the new EU member states are considered. The low percentage of southern and eastern countries is a consequence of their geopolitical and geoeconomic conditions and, in the same time, of the geographical configuration of supply and demand. While on the one hand, the attractiveness of the north-western countries is caused by their high-level infrastructure, on the other hand, the geographical continuity with the main core area of Continental Europe is of great benefit. European countries bordering on the Mediterranean show a "self-contained" tourist flow: a large

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<sup>1</sup> *The perspective of tourist integration is for many authors a consequence of transnational nature of Mediterranean problems; as is correctly observed "the commonality of problems reinforces the need for a unified effort to share resources, to undertake co-operation promotion, to exchange information, and to co-ordinate actions with regional co-operation" (Apostolopoulos, Loukissas, Leontidou 2001, 10).*

part of the tourist demand is directed to national tourist destinations or destinations in other European partner states<sup>2</sup>. With reference to the European countries, the outgoing expenditure and presence is higher than that of other Mediterranean countries. In fact, European countries can depend on a substantial inbound demand and ability to attract the outgoing tourists from neighbouring countries, while the rest of Mediterranean countries present a low development of inbound demand and little outgoing tourism from neighbouring countries. Therefore, southern and eastern countries show a deficit due to the cultural distance from the main core region.

Mediterranean tourism presents a high level of differentiation. It is not a homogeneous tourist region, and differentiation is present to the same degree at various local levels. Except for some coastal parts of the western area, tourism is characterized by development in certain points and tourist destinations are often surrounded by places with little or no tourism infrastructure.

Tab. 1 – Travel and Tourism contribution to GDP in Mediterranean countries

Country	GDP					
	T&T Direct		T&T Indirect		T&T Total	
	mn \$	Inc. %	mn \$	Inc. %	mn \$	Inc. %
Croatia	6.903,70	12,1	7.653,60	13,4	14.557,30	25,5
Montenegro	425,10	12,7	398,20	11,9	823,30	24,6
Malta	923,60	11,3	958,40	11,7	1.882,00	23,0
Cyprus	2.280,20	9,6	2.797,10	11,8	5.077,30	21,4
Morocco	8.257,90	11,0	5.956,30	7,9	14.214,20	18,9
Tunisia	3.754,50	9,3	3.378,00	8,4	7.132,50	17,7
Greece	21.400,00	7,8	26.000,00	9,4	47.400,00	17,2
Spain	102.500,00	6,4	174.200,00	10,8	276.700,00	17,2
Lebanon	1.357,70	5,7	3.069,70	11,9	4.427,40	17,1
Egypt	11.600,00	8,3	11.000,00	7,8	22.600,00	16,1
Albania	513,20	4,1	1.331,90	10,6	1.845,10	14,7
Syria	2.044,40	6,1	2.840,70	8,4	4.885,10	14,5
Lybia	1.671,90	2,2	7.711,10	10,4	9.383,00	12,6
Slovenia	1.238,00	2,4	4.863,10	9,5	6.101,10	11,9
France	115.700,00	4,1	95.400,00	4,9	211.100,00	10,9
Turkey	26.400,00	4,6	39.300,00	6,2	65.700,00	10,4
Italy	94.000,00	4,0	132.100,00	5,7	226.100,00	9,7
Israel	4.200,00	2,4	7.600,00	4,3	11.800,00	6,7
Algeria	2.189,50	1,6	6.543,10	4,8	8.732,60	6,4
Med. Region	407.359,70	5,3	533.101,20	7,0	940.460,90	12,3
Source: our processing on WB, WTTC, WTO data						

This type of geographical distribution can be seen as the result of a process of evolution from the spreading phase to local forms of tourism (Miossec 1976), but often the existence of these local assets leads to a different, structural interpretation of these imbalances. The concentration of tourist provisions in one area, initially caused by the distribution of attractions and by differences in accessibility, tends to a consolidation with attractions in synergy, thus leading to the expansion and diversification of local tourist provisions. Usually there is an accumulation of tourist functions in Mediterranean coastal regions corresponding to urban centres

2 For example 70% of Italian outgoing tourism is absorbed by European Mediterranean countries.

with some specific attraction, which leads to the tendency to condense basic accommodation facilities in a limited space. Sometimes along the same coastal area there is the alternation of different sorts of tourist places: from international centres, usually characterized by a wide range of tourism options with high quality services, to local centres characterized by poor infrastructure and low-level services. This type of specialization is frequently found in the northern tourist region due to competition between different target groups.

Much more evident are the different findings in the national tourism system. Tourism has a different spatial organization and economic and occupational role inside each Mediterranean country.

In the Mediterranean region tourism's contribution to GDP varies greatly. Nevertheless if we exclude Cyprus and Malta, whose economies depend on tourism for evident geographic reasons, and some Islamic nations, such as Libya and Algeria, which for political reasons have a low level of openness, the contribution of tourism ranges from 4% to 7%. But the role of tourism in the economy ranges from 10 to 20 % in WTTC estimates, where all economic activities directly or indirectly connected to tourism are considered. There are also certain situations that should be underlined. For example, in spite of Slovenia's large potential to attract tourists and recent efforts to increase infrastructural level, it presents a tourism contribution to GDP of 2.4%, not far from Libya and Algeria. In this case, there is often also the fact that activities are unable to activate indirect contribution. Nevertheless there are countries that have a low tourism contribution to GDP, but a good capability to activate indirect activities, like Slovenia or Libya.

Similar considerations can be made about the occupational role of tourism. There is a close relationship between the economic and occupational dynamic. Employment in tourism is higher for *labour intensive* features of the tourist sector. Excluding Croatia, Cyprus and Malta, where the sector for direct or induced activities absorbs about one third of total employment, the contribution in the Mediterranean area is around 13%.

A higher level is reached by Greece and Montenegro where tourism-related employment is over 20%; in the eastern region the best result is reached by Lebanon with 18.4%, while on the southern coast in Morocco and Tunisia, tourism employment accounts for 16,4-16,6% of total employment.

Tab. 2 – Travel and Tourism contribution to employment in Mediterranean countries

Country	Employment					
	T&T Direct		T&T Indirect		T&T Total	
	N°	Inc.%	N°	Inc.%	N°	Inc.%
Croatia	159.000	13,6	177.000	15,1	336.000	28,7
Malta	24.000	15,8	19.000	12,3	43.000	27,8
Cyprus	55.000	13,5	55.000	13,6	110.000	27,2
Greece	496.000	10,8	467.000	10,1	963.000	20,9
Montenegro	17.000	10,8	17.000	10,5	34.000	20,9
Lebanon	80.000	5,9	172.000	12,6	252.000	18,4
Spain	1.427.000	6,9	2.260.000	10,8	3.687.000	17,7
Tunisia	287.000	9,1	234.000	7,5	521.000	16,6
Morocco	1.035.000	9,6	727.000	6,8	1.762.000	16,4
Syria	512.000	6,9	618.000	8,3	1.130.000	15,2
Egypt	1.467.000	7,0	1.366.000	6,5	2.833.000	13,5
Slovenia	28.000	3,3	85.000	9,9	113.000	13,2
France	1.349.000	5,2	2.016.000	7,8	3.365.000	13,1
Lybia	56.000	3,1	160.000	9,0	216.000	12,2
Albania	41.000	3,3	107.700	8,6	148.700	11,9

Italy	1.006.000	4,4	1.485.000	6,4	2.491.000	10,8
Israel	92.000	3,4	125.000	4,6	217.000	8,0
Turkey	679.000	2,9	980.000	4,3	1.659.000	7,2
Algeria	138.000	1,5	368.000	4,1	506.000	5,6
Med. Region	8.948.000	5,6	11.438.700	7,2	20.386.700	12,9

Source: our processing on WB, WTTC, WTO data

\* N°.: Absolute value in thousands of employers - Inc.%: Contribution % of total employment

The considerations made so far are representative of the heterogeneous nature of Mediterranean tourism and, at the same time, of its complex causes, depending on the different level of tourist development or the strategic aim of national tourist system and the political choices involved.

The use of demand growth or other dynamic indicators to analyze Mediterranean tourism, such as accommodation development index, allows us to have information about trends and differences present in present and future positioning of every national tourism system. Using the theory of tourist destination life cycle as the interpretative model, it is possible to see that each Mediterranean country is present in different phases of the development process: from a country where tourism is in an introductive phase characterized by the recent opening of international tourism and a range of undifferentiated service points, to a country where tourism is at a saturation level with negative effects, both on tourist attractiveness and environment and local aspects. The tourist life cycle is a theoretical forcing of an interpretative model, whose application to tourism is a critical constraint.

### COMPETITIVENESS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN TOURIST REGION

Recent years and, above all, the 90's, were characterized by the development of new tourist destinations: some of these, small in geographical size and with provisions for specialized forms of tourism, like some of the archipelagos in the Indian Ocean; others, instead, larger, with integrated provisions that can satisfy a wide range of target demand. Sometime these tourist regions present a supranational extension level as in the case of south-eastern Asia or central America. For transcalarity of tourist effects these regions are characterized by a high level of geographical differentiation of the provisions in tourist sub-regions, each one with a specific form of attraction. The Mediterranean region is representative of this differentiation as a result both of the geographic specificity of each part of the Mediterranean area and of the different historical evolution of different tourist phenomena. Therefore, although a comparison between tourist regions at transnational level is affected by the heterogeneous nature of the geography, this comparative analysis is justified by the presence of competition between Mediterranean tourist places and other regions with a thriving tourist industry.

In recent years the Mediterranean region has suffered from competition with consolidated tourism regions and new tourist destinations; and this is a factor that has had important effects in modifying pre-existing balances (Apostopoulos et al. 2001, 7).

Nevertheless what is needed is an analysis of the factors that, directly or indirectly, bear on market share dynamics.

First, the geographic development of the supply (increasing geographical diversification of tourist destinations) has corresponded to an increase of the number of core areas. Changes in the geographical composition of international tourist flows has substantially created advantages in tourist competitiveness connected to geographical proximity with the core market. In fact, if there has been an expansion of international tourism it has been caused by development of new core areas creating advantages to neighbouring countries.

While in the past the strategic role of the Mediterranean was determined by proximity with main tourist core area (West Europe) or by geographical coincidence between core and destination area, the evolution of international demand has reduced this competitive advantage.

Second, allocentric behaviors of tourist demand coming from western countries<sup>3</sup> that have always helped to enhance Mediterranean tourism. The evolution of tourist demand motivation, has promoted farther destinations, in terms of spatial and cultural distance. The search for “elsewhere” pushes a number of tourist towards areas or destinations that are clearly culturally and environmentally different from the place of residence. This phenomenon is supported by innovations in transport, that make it possible to reduce time and costs of travel, above all for long distance.

As with the evolution of motivation and behaviors, also geopolitical and geoeconomic factors can change flows of geographic distribution and the competitive balance between the attractions of different regions.

For instance, war and terrorism are considered elements destabilizing competitiveness, and tend to reduce national and international tourist demand. The Mediterranean example is the consequence on regional tourism caused by political instability of each coastal country, the war of the 90's in the Balkan area or, recently, Islamic terrorism, affecting, at different levels, the attractiveness of all Mediterranean countries. This phenomenon has determined a redistribution of tourist flows inside the Mediterranean area or a total flow contraction<sup>4</sup>.

Changes in geographical distribution of international demand can be caused by geoeconomic dynamics. An example is the exchange rate; if a country suffers a currency depreciation compared to the tourist source areas, its attractiveness increases at the expense of direct competitors; similarly, a currency appreciation can reduce attractiveness and direct flows to competitors.

The competitiveness of a tourist region, a Mediterranean area, depends not only on political and economic factors but also on aspects of the provisions, such as quality, quantity and type. The attractiveness of tourism provisions depends on political and economic dynamics, but also on the correspondence between the present and future needs of supply and demand. This represents a competitiveness gap for the Mediterranean area; some tourist destinations, above all in the northern area, respond to this gap with a repositioning strategy, with infrastructural and environment improvement and an expansion of the services and attractions *bundle* (Loukissas, Skayannis 2001, 241).

Despite this gap, the Mediterranean basin in the mid 90's increased its market share, going from 20,1% in 1995 to 21,6% in 2000 and 19,3% in 2005. This performance concerns all Mediterranean tourist regions, showing an increase of international tourist demand share, higher than other regions in the world.

The competitiveness of Mediterranean tourism depends on two factors: concentration of environmental and cultural attractors and geographical proximity to the main tourist source area. This criterion generates a geographical overlap of the northern area of the European Union.

The Mediterranean region enjoys of a wide range of competitive advantages.

First of all, environmental attractions; climate conditions have an important role (mild winter and long summer) for the extension of the tourist season. Nevertheless climate conditions are different from south to north; in fact in northern areas the tourist season is shorter. This competitive advantage increases in tourist regions of the tropical belt where positive conditions are guaranteed all year round. In tropical regions, the climatic competitive advantage tends to change during the year (with frequent and intense rain), but in comparison with western countries, can be offered, during the winter season, as sea destinations by tour operators. Therefore, in southern countries tourists can practice seaside activities also in winter. The fragmentation of seasonal periods and their distribution throughout the whole year has promoted a development of seaside tourism, with benefits for tropical countries and, though less, for southern countries.

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<sup>3</sup> The distinction between allocentric and psychocentric destinations was introduced by Plog in the 70's in reference to destination competitiveness (Plog S., *Why destination areas rise and fall in popularity*, in “The Cornell H.R.A., Quaterly, n.15, pp.55-58).

<sup>4</sup> Usually problems of one destination tend to reflect on the border area, often considered as a single entity by the demand.

If climate condition is an important competitive factor, another environmental attractor is the sea. The sea temperature, the beauty of the sea bed, the quality of beaches, the richness and variety of coastal landscape represents the core tourist attraction of the Mediterranean for seaside and naturalistic target. For this reason, the de-qualification of the coastal area represents one of the main risks for Mediterranean tourism. The quality of sea water, the overcrowding of beaches, the building boom on the coast risks jeopardizing these positive competitive factors.

Another competitive factor is the naturalistic and landscape richness of Mediterranean tourist regions: an attractor both in the northern and in the southern area. Recently National parks and protected area have increased due to greater awareness of the environment in the local community, government, and tourist demand that with their behavior can influence business strategies and political decisions. The Mediterranean area has most of the National parks that attract an increasing number of visitors demonstrating alone a capacity to attract tourist flows.

Another positive factor for competitiveness is the heritage resources. The richness and variety of Mediterranean countries' cultural heritage is one of the main competitive factors of this tourist region, both for cultural and seaside tourism target demand.

More than 80% of the Mediterranean sea destinations base their tourist provisions on the availability of heritage attractions in their area or very near them. This are often archaeological and monumental, historical sites and, also artistic resources. The archaeological sites are the most visited in the world. The importance of cultural heritage is confirmed by the Unesco list of sites declared "World Heritage Sites" (Società Geografica Italiana 2005, 53); more than 27% are situated in the Mediterranean area, with a concentration in the north-west part (about 55%)<sup>5</sup>.

The intangible cultural heritage of the Mediterranean community, such as folklore and local typical products, has an importance for the capacity to attract various tourist target demands<sup>6</sup>. For instance, enogastronomic resources must be considered as tourist attractions.

The main competitive advantage is the wide diversification of Mediterranean configurations, at regional and local level. The integration of attraction factors in a dynamic *bundle*, offered according to different needs of tourist flows, becomes the best strategic solution to respond to the complexity of the market and to improve the competitive position of Mediterranean tourist destinations.

Tourism in the Mediterranean has a long tradition that allows the development of a hospitality system with services of different qualities. Therefore, this tradition has contributed to develop a hospitality culture. Hospitality is a widespread value in the coastal population, based on open minds and sense of identity.

Accommodation in the coastal area tends to reflect in price/quality positioning the features of the tourist flows it attracts, adopting strategies as a result of local competition processes, a feature that allows Mediterranean tourism to attract a wide range of target tourism.

## THE THREATS TO DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTION

Despite the competitive potential of Mediterranean tourism, there are many threats to tourist development.

<sup>5</sup> Contribution of Mediterranean area, even if is high, is reduced significantly if we consider only coastal administrative regions (20%).

<sup>6</sup> Unesco defines the intangible cultural heritage as the practices, representations, expressions, as well as the knowledge and skills (including instruments, objects, artifacts, cultural spaces), that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. It is sometimes called living cultural heritage, and is manifested in the following domains: oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; traditional craftsmanship. The Unesco promotes numerous initiative in order to increase the value of intangible cultural heritage. For example, "Navigation of Knowledge" programme aims to improve multicultural aspects (see. Società Geografica Italiana, 2005).

The main threat is represented by political and social instability of some regions like the Balkan area, with ethnic war in the 90's, and the middle-east area with Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the fundamentalist terrorist threat. Terrorist risks have negative effects on international tourist demand also in the most moderate southern Islamic countries, hit by "fundamentalists" with the aim of economically damaging "collaborationist" governments, or perceived by tourists as part of the same Islamic region. More evident, but spatially more limited, are the currently latent effects of the Turkish-Cypriot conflicts, or national terrorism, as threats for tourist development.

The pacification of these areas, as verified for the Croatian coast in the 90's, can foresee a tourist development that bears positively on political and social stabilization processes, if supported by an effective territorial infrastructural policy.

Nevertheless, tourism can constitute an "engine" of development for local economies with positive effects on social and political fields, but active participation of local communities must be promoted and the over-exploitation of tourist resources must be forbidden.

An intra-generational and an inter-generational equity principle must be supported with the ethical principle of sustainable development.

Another threat to tourist development is crime, usually linked to social imbalances. This is a risk for the whole Mediterranean area, but in the northern area, crime has spread beyond urban boundaries, where it usually emerges and develops.

A preventive action with a strategy for the control of the local area to reduce the negative effects of crime and to reassure the tourist demand is required in order to maintain the level of attractiveness and to develop tourism. The criminal phenomenon is frequent also in other tourist regions supported by certain socio-economic conditions, often characterized by underdevelopment or cultural conflicts between residents and tourist. These conditions increase tourist segregation processes as is found in a certain form of accommodation, such as a self-contained resort, or tourist enclave: circumscribed areas build on tourist needs where access to the local community is limited and selected with a strong operation of local control.

One of the most important risks that jeopardize Mediterranean tourism development, above all with reference to the northern area is the environmental degradation of coastal areas and sea water pollution. The phenomenon is directly connected to the carrying capacity in the coastal area with excessive tourist use. Tourist urbanization of the coastal area has contributed to upsetting environmental balances and landscape contexts, as the main attraction of Mediterranean tourist provisions (Daclon 1993, 155). In some consolidated tourism countries – but is also frequently found in new destinations like the west coast of Turkey – this urbanization is continuing with penetration into the hinterland. Tourist facilities tend to be concentrated along the same part of the coast, including preexisting urbanized centers with cultural or natural attractions, and with this degradation process contribute to the loss of competitiveness, causing also by the increasing awareness of tourist demand.

Tourist concentration along the coast, although varying in kind, represents a seaside specialization. This specialization that cause negative effects on the environment and the economy resulting in seasonal tourism and is also vulnerable as competitors can base their provisions on the same attractions. Instead, if the Mediterranean region aims for a mix of attractions, it could reach a competitive position, attract new target demand and promote out-of-season tourist flows. This would increase tourism's contribution to employment and the economy.

A competitive re-positioning of Mediterranean tourist areas has emerged after the development of new tourist regions with the potential to attract international outgoing tourism. For example, the Caribbean area initially owed its development to the proximity to the north American target market, but recently has based its success on the market share of the European tourist market, benefiting from the reduction of air transport prices. There are increasing effects of transport price reduction for long-distance tourist



destinations, such as south-east Asia and Polynesia. So the breadth of this region varies, from select points along the Red Sea coast or Indian Ocean area, to the widespread offering of the Caribbean area. The organizational level on offer tends to be higher and features a strong horizontal and vertical integration of different elements on offer, a phenomenon caused by external tourist development processes and the lobbying of big international players, and not systemically and endogenously driven. The tourist provisions on offer can be seen as resulting from tourist colonization, against the sustainable development principle or as a push of competition involving international tourist relationships.

Few levels of Mediterranean tourism offer integration, excluding "all inclusive" forms of accommodation, deriving from the lack of local collaboration between players, and more generally between public and private players.

Collaboration is required due to at least three factors:

1. the need to offer complex *bundles*;
2. the evolution of tourist behaviors, the reduction of travel period and consequent "stress" of fruition periods;
3. the intensification of local competition and need to create shared strategic responses.

For this reason collaboration is a fundamental condition of tourist development and represents a strategic role in all local areas aiming at an international market and interested in consolidating their competitive position in the international market. This strategic coordination must be able to orient and re-orient what the local area offers towards shared aims and long-term actions. Effective governance is required, and its creation is easiest where there is a social and political climate of collaboration. This lack of collaborative culture also has a bad effect on operative coordination.

This phenomenon is generalized in the whole Mediterranean area, but is frequent in areas with consolidated tourism or involved in reconfiguring the local tourist system.

A low level of coordination inside the tourist sector is caused by not using planning tools for strategic direction and governance at local and national level.

Tourist development is characterized by spontaneous actions, not planned or directed by public players, who often passively accept environment and territorial damage. The strategic role of planning, to induce sustainable processes, is confirmed by international organisms like WTO and WTTC, also to maintain tourist competitiveness (WTO 1997). At the local level a lack of planning generates unsustainable effects and inadequate provisions on offer. So private players prefer to include all tourist facilities in a single place with accommodation that can respond to the needs of the tourist market. A phenomenon that reduces the economic and occupational effect on the whole local area creating provisions that are disconnected and limited to select points, thus blocking the cross-fertilization processes that can give rise to and develop endogenous processes and an integrated and systemic offer.

## CONCLUSION: FOR MEDITERRANEAN TOURIST INTEGRATION

Mediterranean tourist competitiveness depends on the solution of problems as described: from environment problems linked to sustainable tourism and goals through to preserving attractive qualities of the local area and the environment, to organizational problems connected to opportunities to offer an integrated system that responds to the needs of the regional and international tourist market. The strategic convergence of processes in the tourist sector all over the Mediterranean area is required, in order to develop Euro-Mediterranean partnership; to promote an economic and social convergence able to guarantee the development and balance of western and southern countries; to tackle coordinated and joint actions for environmental problems; finally to enhance the whole region in the international tourist system, creating a circuit of competitive collaboration between coastal countries and, at the local level, between single destinations.

There are a lot of opportunities to achieve public-private collaboration. The first opportunity is to set up a shared regional project for strategies and actions to develop sustainable tourism. This project would aim to achieve competitive improvement of the regional tourist provisions and to preserve sensitive Mediterranean ecosystems. Economic opportunities for the Mediterranean area exist, such as a co-marketing strategy between countries for tourist promotion, with the aim of promoting the Mediterranean region's attractions on the main international market. Transnational tourist packages or cards offer tourist the opportunity to travel to other Mediterranean areas, promoting tourist mobility and integration processes of tourist provisions.

Infact, the integration as consequence to develop regional cruising product is considered different; in this case, the stimulus of integration coming from the supply and not from the demand. The idea is to create a flexible product to offer tourists, with the possibility of modifying stops (timing extension) on cruising itineraries according to the desires and needs of the demand.

Tourist integration is a process to be promoted at National level, with strategic agreements between countries, but must be carried out at local level, involving all actors involved in deciding the tourist provisions. Developing strategies, such as decentralized planning models, must involve the local economy with active participation of public and private players, with governance that can guarantee the persistence of local partnership and sustainability.

In this way tourism can be considered a stimulus to integration in the Mediterranean region, able to facilitate economic and social processes.

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