

## **Sustainable development and tourist promotion of the territory**

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*Territorial promotion policy must be oriented towards a sustainable development based on the respect of the present needs without endangering the future. (W.T.O. Desarrollo Turístico sostenible, Madrid, 1993).*

Today, the flows of tourists stop being a marginal subset of the modernization and post-industrialization process. They stop representing a peculiarity which belongs to a wealthy elite and they enter into the economic and cultural process of most of the countries of the world. Therefore they represent, in a global point of view, one of the axis of conceptual consideration and common policy for the development of each territories.

The tourism of today can be compared with the exchange of goods, since each territory should offer the market its peculiarities, hoping to become interesting in the eyes of curious visitors.

During the set in of the Industrial Society, tourism reproduced the rhythms of work over the leisure in the participation to the productive structures. The society of that time considered itself as a idol (Savelli, 1999) proposing its customs and idealizing them in the holiday. The travel or holiday resort was a kind of anticipation of the final paradise, a well-earned award after a long period of hard work in the productive structures which were asphyxiating and completely absorbing. Then we began to talk about some new social needs that did not exist in the former societies or maybe they were present only in some ranges of the population. During that period, there was an uncontrolled expansion of cities which have created a blasé person, someone who is indifferent to motivations (Simmel, trans. It 1995), a person for whom the ostentation of his spare time could belong to a leisured class (Veblen, trans. IT. 1960) that had the possibility to idle about.

Then, during the period of advanced modernity, there was a need to move to distant places, to travel to exotic locations in order to discover lost landscapes far away from the delirium of the modern Industrial Society (Levi Strauss, trans. It 1996). The travel began to be a pursuit of authenticity (Mac Cannell, trans. It 2005). It is an intellectual travel to the centre of a new society in order to set in relationships oriented contemporary inside and outside the system of ordinary belongings.

Today, with the radicalized modernity and the global tourism, we have a new conception of the space mobility, that is the mobility all around the world. The dialectical matching between host-guest, frontoffice-backoffice, sightseer-vacationer is difficult to interpret. In fact, inside these words there are old and new models and they constitute an unavoidable mix of difficult interpretations. Formerly the simply otherness was the most important thing and the marked diversity of the locations was a *conditio-sine-qua-non* to tell in a showy way one's tourist experiences. That is the reason why there was a proliferation of holiday villages and chains of hotels intended as non-places and they represent the decomposition of the concept of space (Augé, trans. It 2001).

Today, tourism must go over the offer of encode destinations, and over the pursuit of the exotic that leads to

the uniformity (Turner-Ash, 1976). Tourism must also build channels and networks of communication in order to promote the inter-ethnic dialogue. The Industrial culture created some ruptures and divisions, that is the reason why now tourism has to establish a common spirit. It is the moment to draw away the model of the 4 S (Sun, Sand, Sea, Sex) and to offer something that enables to make new and all-engaging experiences. Tourism is leading to a territorial co-presence process and it represents the iceberg of social transformations. It is the moment to distance oneself from Eurocentric and Urban-centric ideologies that had characterized the great western industrial development, it is the moment in which the identities mix and assume new characteristics. We are in the epoch of heterophyly, where happiness can be translated in the optimization of choosing between more destinations (Bauman, trans. IT.. 2000). The pilgrim as a reassuring person, always in the search of a right dimension in time and space, is substituted by a wanderer- flaneur who is less reassuring because of his uncertain behaviour. This is a figure that probably looks like the blasé character of Simmel, who prefers the constant pursuit instead of staying till the end of his day in his town of birth.

In this context, a place can be a tourist resort of great interest, only if it respects the environmental inheritance with historical and cultural factors of interest, and if there is a network of services and if it shows itself dynamic and open to the market through a series of strategic relations.

These factors are not useful if there is not a perspective common interest of the local community, which is the real actor of these process of promotion.

The problems we usually talk about concern the use of these resources because they are used and spoilt in order to have immediate returns, and more often they are used impoverishing and degrading the peculiarity of the territory through commercialization.

The specialized literature asserts that each destination has a structural limit and over that limit it is impossible to offer hospitality. The limit is established by a Carrying Capacity Assessment which was firmed up by the Environmental Program of the United Nations. This analysis instrument considers all the components of the local tourist development: environmental and structural characteristics, urban assets, policies and the dynamics of the actors involved in this process. This method is so interesting that it has been implemented in many tourist areas that have a feverish development. This method is constituted by a fixed maximum number of person who visit the location in the same period without endangering the environmental, physical, economic, social and cultural characteristics of the place but also without reducing the tourists satisfaction. It is a concept connected to the type of tourist product, to the characteristics of the offer, to the visitor profile and it varies from a situation to another.

It is important to underline that always more often and with serious consequences, the local community takes the movements and flows revenues on itself; sometimes all the citizens are firstly involved in the strategic planning of industrial activity and it is necessary to finalize policies aimed at a perspective and long-lasting orientation.

The axis of intervention and the conceptual axis go to sustainable concepts such as: *environmental*

*sustainability, social and cultural sustainability and economic sustainability*. This aims at ensuring an efficient economic development and the management of the resources in order to ensure the preservation for the future generation.

The development we intend, is a process that mobilizes resources and hidden capacities that are wasted and used in a wrong way. The mainspring of an hypothetical growth will be the practice of pressures suitable for “waking up” these sleeping resources that are capitals, technologies, know-how, entrepreneurial spirit, ethics, training, real services, etc. (Hirschman, trans. IT. 1968).

Local development is not a linear and taken for granted tendency which gains ground in a uniform way. On the contrary, it presumes specific conditions that support the strategy capacity of the local actors who commit themselves in promotion process and it is a system that allows to attract external entrepreneurial activities and these activities choose a specific area for obvious reasons of costs and investments. The process at issue, presume an organized action of the mobilization of social, economic and administrative resources. They develop concerning all the human life elements helping the diffusion of welfare and the progressive satisfaction of immaterial needs.

Direct and indirect benefits come out from territorial policies and promotion for the community and for the whole economic sector. The first are: the creation of job; the increase of economic revenue; the openness of new markets for local products; the improvement of general services and job qualification; the technological qualification; the enhancement and preservation of the culture and the environment. The second instead are: the diffusion of a local culture and the enhancement of its characteristics; the improvement of the level and grade of knowledge of the territory; the growth of a global-local ethos aware of its distinctiveness and thrown into the possibilities offered by the confrontation with other social realities. All this presumes the presence of a high grade of knowledge and cultural assertion of the actors involved in development process.

In summary, we can assert that the challenge of global tourism is to understand if the look of the traveller can always be comparable with the *discoverer settler* who presumes to be superior. A look of the tourist (Urry, trans. IT. 1995) who looks for the aesthetic search of the different, and who follows the simple heterophyly of the discovery.

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