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## Special Issue

INTEGRATED RELATIONAL TOURISM AND TOURISM  
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Guest Editors:

Razaq Raj  
Claudio Vignali  
Giovanni Ruggieri  
Clara S. Petrillo

10<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary  
Issue



College of Tourism  
and Hotel Management

Tourism Today  
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**THE COLLEGE OF  
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HOTEL MANAGEMENT**

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# Aims & Scope

*Tourism Today* serves as an international, scholarly, and refereed journal aiming to promote and enhance research in the fields of tourism and hospitality. The journal is published by the College of Tourism and Hotel Management, Cyprus and is intended for readers in the scholarly community who deal with the tourism and hospitality industries, as well as professionals in the industry. *Tourism Today* provides a platform for debate and dissemination of research findings, new research areas and techniques, conceptual developments, and articles with practical application to any tourism or hospitality industry segment. Besides research papers, the journal welcomes book reviews, conference reports, case studies, research notes and commentaries.

# Aims & Scope

The scope of the journal is international and all papers submitted are subject to strict double blind peer review by its Editorial Board and by international reviewers. The journal features conceptual and empirical papers, and editorial policy is to invite the submission of manuscripts from academics, researchers and industry practitioners. The Editorial Board will be looking particularly for articles about new trends and developments within the field of tourism and hospitality, and the application of new ideas and developments that are likely to affect tourism and hospitality in the future. The journal also welcomes submission of manuscripts in areas that may not be directly tourism-based but cover a topic that is of interest to researchers, educators and practitioners in the fields of tourism and hospitality.

Decisions regarding publication of submitted manuscripts are based on the recommendations of members of the Editorial Board and other qualified reviewers in an anonymous review process. Submitted articles are evaluated on their appropriateness, significance, clarity of presentation and conceptual adequacy. Negative reviews are made available to authors. The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent those of the Editorial Board of *Tourism Today* or of the College of Tourism and Hotel Management.

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# NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the tenth edition of *Tourism Today*, the journal of the College of Tourism and Hotel Management. As has been the case for years, the journal is available to everyone free of charge from the College of Tourism and Hotel Management website.

This edition is an out of the ordinary for us for *Tourism Today* for two major reasons. The first reason is that this is a celebration of a decade of being in print. Because of the hard work of many people, including the Editorial Board, those who have submitted articles to the journal, and the dedication of the management of the College of Tourism and Hotel Management, the journal has continued to be in print and improve in quality over the years.

The second reason this edition is extraordinary is that this is the first edition in the journal's history that has been a special edition. We have been fortunate to have had the offer to create a special edition and are glad that the topic is one that is of interest and importance to many. We are especially thankful to Razaq Raj for proposing the idea to us, because it resulted in a high quality end product, as I am sure the readers of this edition will agree.

Although this edition is unique for *Tourism Today* in that it focuses upon on a region, the Mediterranean, the focus on a geographical area will definitely be of interest to those who are interested in the Mediterranean region's tourism and will also have implications for those who are not particularly focused upon the Mediterranean region.

We continue encourage the readers to be part of the process of improvement of *Tourism Today* by submitting quality submissions to us. As has been the case for a decade now, constructive comments that could help us improve the journal are appreciated.

We wish you a good reading.

Craig Webster  
Editor-in-Chief, *Tourism Today*

## NOTE FROM THE GUEST EDITORS

The papers selected in this special issue are reflective and dedicated to specific geographic areas. The main topic is tourism but behind the topic is the importance of research activities necessary to produce the final result.

Integrated Relational Tourism (IRT) has the principal objective to realize statistical studies and documents of research in order to identify current issues of Tourism in European islands.

By analysing IRT provision within tourism, insights can be gained into not only what the European islands want to present to visitors but also what the destination aspires to be. European islands thus serve to provide potential visitors and other tourists with an insight into a European islands vision of their past, present and their future.

European islands can position themselves through events tourism hosting and staging in marketing terms to reach niche as well as mass audiences, not simply through increasing visitor numbers at events but by creating powerful associations of the European islands as a destination in the mind of visitors. These association of European islands may be connected to the nature of events, such as religious festivals, but event associations can also result in an overall perception of a country or locality as ‘dynamic’, ‘youthful’, ‘historic’, ‘sporting’, ‘showbiz’ etc.

The purpose of the collection of papers is not to discuss the importance of primary and secondary data; the use of quantitative or qualitative instruments; to develop positive or phenomenological approaches, but to see that from sincere research, articles and papers can be produced with the emphasis of an end result.

Furthermore, the purpose of the edition is to provide a practical and theoretical insight into the Mediteranean region’s tourism by providing an opportunity to discuss conceptual frameworks for sustainable events, planning and policy models, economic feasibility, environmental policy and social impacts. The special edition is intended to support practitioners in their operational and administrative duties and educate undergraduates/postgraduates within their industry sectors throughout the Mediteranean region and on an international basis.

Razaq Raj, Claudio Vignali, Giovanni Ruggieri, and Clara S. Petrillo  
Guest Editors



# Multiplier differentiation between small and large tourism and hospitality business: a case study on Egypt

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## ABSTRACT

A great deal of literature has dealt with the economic impact of tourism. Trails to define tourism multipliers have been limited. Bukart and Medlik (1976) referred to the amplitude that occurs in the national income via tourism expenditures. Their work entailed the macroeconomic aspect of tourism in Great Britain, so did Lickorish concerning Greece, and Wahab (1980) for Egypt. However, no literature so far has dealt with the structure of the multiplier from a micro economic perspective. Archer and Owen model (1971) is adopted in this paper to differentiate between small and large tourism and hospitality businesses in Egypt concerning income and employment, size and patterns of tourist expenditures as well as revenues generated.

Results indicate that smaller tourism and hotel businesses generate more income, employment and governmental revenues than large internationally owned operations. Therefore, the role of such SME's in overcoming such problems associated with the global economic slowdown and decline becomes evident.

**Keywords:** Multiplier, Revenues, Employment, SME's, Integrated tourism.

## INTRODUCTION

During the early 70's of the past century there was a growing interest in the assessment of national multipliers as a means of predicting the impact of tourism expenditures on designated destinations' economy. Archer and Owen (1971) introduced a multiplier for Neo-Keynesian regions. To do this they adopted an approach that obtained differential income and employment multipliers for the various groups of visitors. Later, Henderson and Cousins (1975) applied the same model over various destinations from Scotland to the south west of the Pacific (Archer and Owen 1977, Vaughan 1977 and Milne 1985). Henderson and Cousins (1975) further explored the validity of the model over different types of communities and levels

of destination aggregation. In a more recent approach the model was adopted to use input/output tables so as to permit for the analysis of income and employment generation of tourist expenditures over individual sectors of destinations' economy. This allowed the model to be applied to a firm scale of analysis (Liu and Var 1982).

It goes without saying that destination planners will be interested to obtain such information concerning the impact of tourism upon specific sectors of the destination economy. This information relates to the ability of various economic sectors to generate both revenues and employment and will also help tourism authorities and planners to decide the appropriate path to follow. This gains evidence in light of the propensity of international firms to generate less local revenue than local ones due to importation of products and services.

The requirement to use input/output approach to obtain such information proved to be a very difficult obstacle in many aspects since the level of accuracy and details is suspected and the difficulty to obtain national based statistics. Moreover, even upon their compiling, they contain incomplete data or obscure one. The major difficulty, however, is represented in the attempt to assign tourist expenditures to the appropriate input/output categories in the case of developing countries, that does not clearly define how the tourism and hospitality sectors interrelate to the other sectors of the economy, the eventual subsequence is the trial of these countries to replicate successful developing strategies of other destinations that might not work for another destination or remains here, the other alternative that is allowing the development to be spontaneous in a way that could result in chronic problems in the future or at least hinders the tourism and hospitality sector to significantly contribute to the total destination economy.

The purpose of this paper is to ascertain the implication of the tourist expenditures over the destination economy without the presence of sufficient data to carry out full input/output tables. This approach used is less expensive since it uses sample surveys and it does not necessitate the full break down of the destination economy.

## STUDY AREAS

Egypt is an African country that is situated in the north east of Africa. The country has a population of 80 million inhabitants according to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMS 2008). Only 6% of the total area of the country that amounts to 1 million kilometers is inhabited. This small size together with the scarcity of natural resources have precluded to a large degree attempts to develop the country along the traditional path of export promotion or imports substitution. The country economy – till the last decade- was hanging on Egyptians remittances from the Gulf area, as well as revenues generated from the Suez Canal (CAMPS 2006). More recently, the problem of raising petrol prices as well as the political instability of the Middle East region and the propensity among Gulf area countries to employ far eastern citizens led to a marked decline in the nations' earnings. It has been only recently that the tourism and hospitality sector started to play a major role in the Egyptian

economy. It was not until the beginning of the boom in hotel construction during the last decade that tourism and hospitality began to hit significant inbound flow. Visitors increased from 3.5 to 13 million during this decade averaging an annual increase of 16.68% with the last few years in particular showing significant growth. Meanwhile, tourism expenditures rose from 3.7 to 11.6 billion dollars during the same period with an average increase of 14.95% annually as illustrated in table (ETF, 2009a).

Simultaneously, accommodation capacity during the same aforementioned period escalated from 80 to 201.7 thousand rooms with an average annual increase of 9.8%. The hotel sector currently utilizes 135,000 employees (direct) and if indirect employment is accounted for the figure may jump up to 1.2 million placements thus the importance of the sector becomes significant. In short, it could be concluded that tourism and hospitality is a very important sector to the national economy now. In 2009 for instance, the sector generated as much as 10.5 billion dollars from serving 12.2 million visitors (Central Bank of Egypt "CBE" 2009a) who in turn generated 11.2 million tourism nights (Ministry of Tourism 2009). The revenues above stated represent 11.3 % of the Egyptian GDP (The Egyptian Tourism Federation "ETF" 2009b) and as much as 40.3% (ETF 2009c) of the country's non-commodity exports and adds as much as 19.3% of foreign currency generated by the Egyptian economy. To add to this, the sector generates as much as 12.6% (The Egyptian Tourism Federation, HR unit "ETFHRU" 2009) of total employment opportunities in Egypt and further achieves an annual growth of investment of 22% (CBE 2009b).

Moreover, the significance of the sector gains evidence in light of some other economic facts, these facts include but are not restricted to the negative impact of the international economic crisis that started to throw its shadows on the global economy and peaked up during August 2008. Negative aspects of this crisis over the Egyptian economy could be monitored and resulted in a decrease of 7.6% in commodity exports, 13.4% in non petroleum goods exports and an 8.5% decrease in tourism receipts. From another respect, other sources of the Egyptian economy that included remittances of Egyptians working abroad dropped by 23.5% and revenues from the Suez Canal dropped by 7.2% during the last year of the crisis (2008-2009). Further and above, according to Caterer and Global (2009), 21% of the sector employees lost their jobs due to the economic crisis.

The recent growth of the sector and the lack of input/output data added to the nation's inability to finance a detailed economic analysis all have proven to be a great barrier to any attempts that tries to test the applicability of the destination development plans. It was the lack of data that inspired the author to conduct this multiple analysis so as to provide basic structural information that are meant to be a good base for short term planning and development of the destination.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

As Milne (1985) indicated that in order to present a detailed analysis on the impact of tourism on destination economy, it deems necessary to obtain detailed data on tourism expenditures and employment, sector by sector, the overall size and the aggregate pattern. On the other hand, business surveys allow the measurement and employment generation ability of the various business sectors related to the tourism and hospitality sectors. Archer (1977) and (1979), Archer et al., (1977), Henderson and Cousins (1975) and Vaughan (1977) all failed to obtain national input/output tables, however, since data is available on local sector for a fully representative survey to be carried on a sample of 10% of tourism sector operators and a 5% of enterprises in other sectors of the economy were interviewed as appears in table (1)

**Table 1: Coverage of the Business Survey\***

<i>Industry Sector</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Restaurants/ Bars</i>	18
<i>Transport services</i>	19
<i>Tour operators</i>	30
<i>Duty Free</i>	3
<i>Handicrafts and Bazaars</i>	50
<i>Clothing Manufacturers</i>	8
<i>General retail</i>	10
<i>Small retail shops</i>	40
<i>Petrol stations</i>	18
<i>Night clubs and Discotheques</i>	10
<i>Accommodation</i>	40
<i>Wholesale (food)</i>	10
<i>Wholesale (Others)</i>	10
<i>Construction</i>	15
<i>Motor trade</i>	10
<i>Others</i>	20
<i>Total (311-28)</i>	283
<i>Rejected/Not completed</i>	28

\* Conducted by the researcher

## METHODOLOGY

The model applied in this paper is the same model used by Herderson and Cousins (1985). The multiplier core encompasses both the Regional Employment Generator (REG) and the Regional Income Generator (RIG). For one case, (REG) consists of (wages, salaries, profits and rents) earned by residents through different transactions of the business. It goes without saying that the biggest portion of revenue here is that part generated by establishments that directly receive and deal with tourists and is referred to as Direct (RIG). The indirect (RIG), however, represents the contribution of other establishments that supply hotels with goods and services. Since residents spend these direct and indirect earnings most probably within the destination, therefore, it is evident that some of these earnings will go back to the establishment and will lead to another increase in (RIG) and is called Induced Regional Income Generator (IRIG). Thence, in calculating the (RIG) both first and second rounds have to be included. A dis-aggregated approach to supplier categorization was adopted. Categorization was based on business rather than the commodity type so as to avoid problems associated with joint products. (see table 2 and 3).

REG is calculated based on the accumulation of all employment opportunities created. Same applies for REG's that can be aggregated into direct, indirect and induced. In calculating employment opportunities it was also necessary to include non permanent jobs since they are quite popular in the sector. As did archer 1979 and Henderson and Cousins 1985), jobs were categorized into permanent full time, permanent part time, seasonal full time and seasonal part time. An assumption was made to assess the value of the later two types of employment. A "0.2" and "0.1" values were used to assume their values.

**Table 2: Regional Income Generation for Egypt Tourism Sector**

<i>Industry Sector</i>	<i>Direct</i>	<i>Indirect</i>	<i>Induced</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Handcrafts &amp; Bazaars</i>	0.325	0.121	0.76	0.522
<i>Transportation</i>	0.299	0.135	0.78	0.512
<i>Accommodation</i>	0.229	0.169	0.72	0.470*
<i>Restaurants &amp; Bars</i>	0.251	.0138	0.70	0.459
<i>Apparel</i>	0.255	0.103	0.64	0.422
<i>Duty Free</i>	0.142	0.114	0.46	0.302
<i>Tourism amusements</i>	0.132	0.101	0.40	0.273
<i>Internal Air</i>	0.126	0.102	0.41	0.269
<i>Retail shops</i>	0.145	0.63	0.36	0.244
<i>Total</i>	1.90	1.48	5.23	8,61

\*For example \$0.47 of regional income (salaries, rent and profits created per \$1 of turnover)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interest to local planners will be the ability of certain sectors to generate public revenue out of tourist expenditures. This type of information paves the way for the comparisons for example between government expenses on specific sectors and certain businesses in terms of incentives and provision of infrastructure and the public sector revenue that can be gained from their operation. This is a simple procedure to be in operation. The factor income component of the (RIG) is replaced by the Gross Government Revenue component. Thus the government itself is treated as a business establishment that provides goods and services for monetary remuneration (taxation on income, duties, electricity and other utilities payments and so forth). Regional Government revenue Generation (RGRG) coefficients can be divided into non-trading (direct taxation components only), and trading components (none trading plus government revenues from sales of utilities and services).

### *Differential Multiplier at the Sectoral Scale*

The ability to generate local income and employment out of the tourism expenditure varies widely among the various tourist and ancillary sectors found in Egypt. (Tables 3, 4 and 5). At the first (direct round), the level of income and employment generation that is the most important determinant of coefficient size

**Table 3: Standardized and Un-standardized Regional Employment Generation Coefficients for Egypt Tourism Industry**

<i>Industry sector</i>	<i>D. STD</i>	<i>R.E.G UNSTD</i>	<i>Indirect STD</i>	<i>R.E.G STD</i>	<i>Induced STD</i>	<i>R.E.G UNSTD</i>	<i>Total STD</i>	<i>R.E.G UNSTD</i>
<i>Handy crafts and Bazaars</i>	0.92	1.58	0.20	0.22	0.20	0.25	1.32	2.05
<i>Transport</i>	0.72	0.91	0.23	0.23	0.20	0.22	1.15	1.36
<i>Accommodation</i>	0.45	0.55	0.25	0.31	0.18	0.20	0.88*	1.06
<i>Restaurants and bars</i>	0.51	0.60	0.15	0.17	0.16	0.18	0.82	0.95
<i>Apparel</i>	0.27	0.41	0.24	0.26	0.18	0.20	0.69	0.87
<i>Tourism amusement</i>	0.25	0.30	0.15	0.17	0.10	0.11	0.50	0.58
<i>Internal Air</i>	0.11	0.11	0.29	0.31	0.10	0.11	0.50	0.53
<i>Small shops</i>	0.24	0.35	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.10	0.42	0.54
<i>Duty Free</i>	0.12	0.12	0.17	0.19	0.12	0.13	0.41	0.44

\*For example, 0.88 jobs are created per 10.000 \$ turnover in the accommodation sector in the first round).

**Table 4: Regional Income, Employment and Government Revenue Generating Coefficient for Suppliers of Goods and Services for the Tourism Sector**

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Total RIG Per \$1 turn over</i>	<i>Total REG (un-standardized) Per \$10,000 turn over</i>	<i>Total (standardized) Per \$10,000 turn over</i>	<i>Total GRG (including trading)</i>	<i>Total GRG (excluding trading)</i>
<i>Wholesalers Food</i>	0.199	0.31	0.28	0.203	0.192
<i>Wholesales Fuel</i>	0.158	0.29	0.26	0.228	0.200
<i>Finance</i>	0.627	0.98	0.94	0.216	0.177
<i>Construction</i>	0.368	0.74	0.67	0.181	0.134
<i>Transportation</i>	0.476	0.92	0.86	0.158	0.111
<i>Bakeries</i>	0.392	0.99	0.99	0.273	0.185
<i>Liquor suppliers</i>	0.323	0.23	0.21	0.22	0.13
<i>Electricity</i>	0.39	0.35	0.33	0.24	0.15
<i>Gas supply</i>	0.199	0.35	0.34	0.132	0.120
<i>Department stores</i>	0.212	0.45	0.42	0.195	0.162
<i>Government Trade</i>	0.435	0.65	0.62	0.44	NA
<i>Communication</i>	0.412	0.71	0.68	0.183	0.70
<i>Government nontrade</i>	0.50	0.90	0.85	NA	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.69</b>	<b>7.87</b>	<b>7.45</b>	<b>2.46</b>	<b>2.26</b>

Table 3 is the degree to which sectors are characterized by labor intensive operations. For example, labor intensive tourism sectors such as accommodation, handicrafts and restaurants, exhibit relatively high direct RIG and REG coefficients (Tables 3 and 4). In these sectors, payments to labor are a major component of total operating costs. Also, important, but difficult to measure at the sectoral level, is the degree to which any profits generated are re-invested in the local economy. Sectors of high level of overseas control will be characterized by high levels of profit repatriation; this is the case for example in tourism and hospitality sector.

In a developing country like Egypt, which has a small manufacturing and servicing sector, indirect coefficients for the tourism sector will be relatively low. This is because many of the goods and services required for the industry have to import from overseas. The other reason for this to happen is the overseas dominance of control over the majority of establishments in the sector. The propensities of the different sectors to import on the first round of expenditures range from 65% for the duty free sector to virtually zero for small hotels and tour operators that are affiliated locally (Table 5)

**Table 5: Egypt Tourism Industry Propensity to Import on the First Round of Expenditures**

<i>Percentage of First Expenditure Round spent outside Egypt per \$100</i>	<i>Tourism sector</i>
1.07	<i>Small Shops</i>
1.43	<i>Transport</i>
1.56	<i>Restaurant</i>
14.80	<i>Handicraft</i>
16.67	<i>Tours, Amusement</i>
17.94	<i>Accommodation*</i>
20.84	<i>Internal Air</i>
49.75	<i>Clothing</i>
65.48	<i>Duty Free</i>
75..33	<i>Wholesale</i>

\*Ranges from \$34 for chain hotels to \$0 for small one and two star hotels.

The sectors with the highest first round import propensities exhibit the weakest leakages with the local economy and add little value to the goods imported, and as a consequence are characterized by relatively low indirect RIG's and REG's. The accommodation, restaurant and other service sectors, which tend to purchase supplies and services locally, exhibit large coefficients. However, the case of the accommodation sector reveals quite clearly the weakness of grouping into sectoral categories which have first round import propensities ranging from 34% of total expenditures ( for large hotels) to zero for very small hotels. The average propensity to consume (estimated to be 0.85) is assumed to be constant across the population receiving income directly or indirectly from tourism. Thus the size of the induced coefficients will inevitably be dependent on the value of the direct and indirect income generation characteristics of the various sectors. As there is no data available on the propensity to consume, or the pattern of resident expenditure in Egypt, a range of estimates was used to test the sensitivity of the model to variations in this component. The tests revealed only slight sensitivity.

Total RIG coefficient for the tourism sector range from 0.52 for the handicraft sector (52% of revenue earned by the firm in this sector becomes local income in the form of salaries, wages or rent), to 0.269 in the internal air sector. Standardized REG's range from 1.32 jobs in handicraft (for each 10.000 LE earned by the firm in this sector) to 0.44 for duty free. This significant difference between standardized and un-standardized REG's in many tourism sectors reflects their reliance upon part time labor.

Within the non-tourist sectors, REG's are highest in the finance and government sectors and are lowest in the distributive sectors. The similarity between standardized and un-standard ized



coefficients is a consequence of the fact that most jobs are of a full time nature. RIG's range from 0.627 for the finance sector to 0.158. This variation in values, as in the tourism sector, primarily relates to labor intensiveness, ability to create local linkages, and the value added content of the sectors concerned.

Overall, these results are similar to those presented by Liu and Var (1982), who in their Canadian based study found that the total RIG for the accommodation sector was exceeded only by those for the restaurant, communications and utility and finance sectors. The coefficients they drive are, however, considerably larger than those presented here.

Sectoral variations of the values of RGRG coefficients are much smaller than that found in the RIG's and REG's. Within the tourist industry, RGRG's vary in size from 0.158 for tour operators to 0.382 for restaurants as displayed in table (6)

**Table 6: Government Revenue Generation Coefficients for Egypt Tourism Industry per \$1 Turnover**

<i>Industry Sector</i>	<i>Direct</i>		<i>Indirect</i>		<i>Induced</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Industry Sector</i>	<i>Includ ing*a trading</i>	<i>Exclud ing*b trading</i>	<i>Incl., trading</i>	<i>Exclude trading</i>	<i>Incl., trading</i>		<i>Exclude trading</i>
<i>Internal Air</i>		0.169	0.163	0.097	0.093	0.034	0.022	0.030
<i>Handicrafts</i>	0.136	0.121	0.029	0.026	0.084	0.056	0.249	0.203
<i>Transport..</i>	0.110	0.102	0.065	0.058	0.065	0.043	0.240	0.203
<i>Duty Free</i>	0.171	0.162	0.012	0.010	0.038	0.026	0.221	0.198
<i>Apparel</i>	0.146	0.137	0.021	0.020	0.054	0.036	0.221	0.193
<i>Rests &amp; Bars</i>	0.256	0.093	0.068	0.057	0.058	0.039	0.382	0.189
<i>Accommod.,</i>	0.215	0.079	0.055	0.047	0.059	0.039	0.329	0.165
<i>Tour Operators</i>	0.078	0.054	0.065	0.045	0.042	0.028	0.185	0.177
<i>Retail shops</i>	0.109	0.068	0.035	0.021	0.029	0.020	0.173	0.109

\*an including trading functions (electricity, government services and utilities) and non trading (taxation, duties).

\* b Excluding trading functions

In other words, for every dollar of tourism revenue earned by restaurants, 38 cents of gross government revenue is generated. In turn, it is estimated that approximately 40 cents in every dollar received by the government will leak from the national economy (Milne 1985). The picture changes somewhat when trading functions are removed from the calculations, and only the governmental taxes are taken into consideration. In this case, the internal air, land transport, and handicraft sectors generate the most revenue.

The direct components of the RGRG's depend upon the basic operational characteristics of the sectors. Revenue generation (including the trading functions) will be largest in sectors which rely heavily on utilities, electricity and services supplied by the government in their daily operations. Direct figures (both including and excluding trading functions) also indicate the degree to which a sector imports its supplies directly from overseas and the level of taxation to which it is subject. At the indirect and the induced levels, factors such as the ability to establish backward linkages with the local economy, and the overall income generation capabilities of the sectors, will play the major role in determining coefficient size.

#### *Differential Multiplier at the Individual Firm Scale*

Sectoral analysis, such as the one undertaken above, can hide as much as it can reveal. While this type of analysis reveals the ability of certain groups of firms to generate local income and employment, it inevitably blurs distinctions between individual firms. A study at the individual firm scale is required if factors such as firms size and industrial organization are to be considered when evaluating income and employment generation capabilities.

The major determinants of variations in the ability to generate local incomes and create linkages with the local economy are the size of the firm and its organizational and ownership characteristics (Hoare 1985), work done within the sector (Liu and Var 1982) and within other economic sectors. Gilmour 1974, Keeble 1969; Lever 1974; McDermott 1979; Taylor and Woods 1973, generally support the hypothesis that small firms will be more linked to the local economy than their larger counterparts. As a consequence, smaller firms are shown to generate relatively more local income and employment opportunities. Larger operations are also generally shown to be more cost efficient due to economies of scale, such operations are characterized as being more capital (and less labor) intensive than their smaller counterparts.

At the same time organizational, and, in particular, the ownership characteristics of firms will affect their ability to generate local income and employment (Lever 1974; Liu and Var 1982; O'Farrell and O'Loughlin 1981; Taylor 1978). The general conclusion reached is that simply organized, small locally owned businesses will have a more localized input linkage orientation, and will have larger RIG and REG coefficients, than larger, often overseas controlled firms. Small local firms will have few contacts outside the region and will rely heavily upon local inputs, therefore, any profits made will normally flow back into the local economy. On the other hand, larger, overseas controlled enterprises will tend to rely on imported goods and services. A large portion of profits obtained by these firms is often repatriated to their bases outside the destination.

The multivariate analysis of (Liu and Var 1982; Taylor and Wood 1973) has shown how closely intertwined these issues of size, organizational complexity and ownership type. The differing coefficients presented in table 6 reflect the fact that the size and organizational structure of a firm will directly affect its ability to generate local income, employment and direct government revenues in Egypt. Within the accommodation sector the large hotels are owned and operated through a joint venture (or some symmetrical form) between the government

and the international hotel chain consortiums that control these hotels day to day operations. The relatively small amount of local income and employment generated is a reflection of the enterprise's high propensity to import, and its relatively capital intensive operations. It must also be noted that a portion of any profits will leak out of the country to the overseas interests of the international chains. Hotels (both large and small) that are locally owned, are heavily labor intensive, and rely almost totally upon local suppliers of goods and services. If trading functions are included, the large hotels generate the most government revenue (a function of the hotel's high electricity and utilities requirements). However, in terms of pure taxation (non-trading) revenue generation, the hotel is the weakest performer in the sector. Similar trends emerge within the tour operation sector. The large firms that are controlled by overseas interests and exhibits comparatively low RIG's and REG's. The majority of its profits and a great deal of its operating expenditure leaks from Egypt. The incorporation of computer assisted booking systems as well as accounting software has reduced the number of employees required. The differences in RGRG's are most marked in this sector with non trading coefficient ranging from 0.097 for the large operations to 0.183 for local operations (see Table 7).

**Table 7: Income, Employment and Government Revenue Generation Coefficients with-in the Accommodation, Tour Operation and Handicraft Sectors**

<i>Sector Category</i>	<i>Total RIG</i>	<i>STD</i>	<i>UNSTD</i>	<i>With Trading* a</i>	<i>Without Trading* b</i>
<b>Accommodation</b>					
<i>Int., 5 Star Hotels*c</i>	0.366	0.70	0.77	0.317	0.136
<i>Local 5 Star Hotels</i>	0.459	0.70	0.79	0.343	0.171
<i>Int./ local, 4 star hotels</i>	0.505	1.02	1.35	0.371	0.205
<i>Local 1,2&amp;3 Star hotels</i>	0.552	1.48	1.74	0.306	0.197
<b>Tour Operators</b>					
<i>Int., Large*c</i>	0.146	0.25	0.32	0.130	0.097
<i>Local</i>	0.428	1.16	1.69	0.245	0.183
<b>Handicrafts</b>					
<i>Large</i>	0.388	0.49	0.56	0.193	0.164
<i>Small</i>	0.767	2.45	3.20	0.287	0.244

\*a including trading functions

\*b Excluding trading functions

\*c Denotes overseas ownership

Both large and small operations in the handicraft sector have relatively high RIG's and REG's when compared with other sectors. However, the small operations have a far greater ability to generate local income and employment. Small operations are labor intensive, often relying on part time workers and sell crafts which are made with little mechanized resources. Their heavy reliance on local materials creates strong linkages with the local economy to the contrary of the case of larger handicrafts. Consequently profit repatriation is not a deciding factor in the relative sizes of the coefficients.

This firm scale analysis confirms the findings of the literature cited above. The size of the RIG's and REG's is inversely related to the increasing levels of overseas control, organizational complexity and firm size. Smaller, locally owned enterprises also generate more tax (non-trading) revenue for the local government.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study showed that the Archer model and a simple survey can replace the tedious, expensive input/output data required for the assessment of multipliers and to analyze the economy wide effects of tourist expenditures. These effects can and should be measured at both the sectoral and individual firms scale. On applying the model to the Egyptian case important findings were explored; first that MSE's in hospitality and tourism sector are capable of generating income, revenues and employment than do their international counterparts however in terms of pure taxation (non-trading) revenue generation, the hotel is the weakest performer in the sector. Similar trends emerge within the tour operation sector. The large firms that are controlled by overseas interests and exhibits comparatively low RIG's and REG's. The majority of its profits and a great deal of its operating expenditure leaks from Egypt. This calls for a restructure of taxation and tax exemptions given to large international operators in the sector. From another perspective, this role enforces the redistribution of national income in a way that it filters down to the lower segments of the society hence it helps to create employment opportunities for locals. This works in co ordinance with the inflexible work allocation dictated by such agreements as the ASEAN and The NAFTA. Moreover, it helps retain profits from tourism within the borders of the hosting community. And second, that these SME's can work as safety valves against upsurges and downsizes of the international economy, moreover, third, that these MSE's potential calls for a reviewed and thorough allocation of investments within the national development plan of Egypt in a way that makes these SME's a major player in generating local employment and better utilization of authentic resources within a new framework of integrated tourism in a way that better drives the Egyptian economy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A preferential treatment in terms of taxation and exemptions should be given to local other than overseas affiliated tourism and hospitality operations for the following reasons:
  - a. Total RGRG ranges between 2.46 including trade functions and 2.26 excluding this function, which means that every one dollar of tourism investment generates an average of 2.36 dollars in other industries in Egypt.
  - b. Total RIG for hotels are (0.505 and 0.525) for large international versus small local hotels, (0.482 and 0.146) for large tour operators versus small ones and (0.767 and 0.388) for large versus small handicrafts and bazaars. The figures above mentioned gives evidence that small tourism businesses are more productive in terms of creating employment opportunities than their counter parts large scale operations with overseas ownership
  - c. Total Employment opportunities created amount to 2.75 for each \$10.000 round of which 1.30 belong to hotels, 1.15 belong to handicrafts and bazaars and 0.574 belong to tour operators. This assessment is somehow different from the previous estimates of Wahab (1992) (2.75 jobs per each hotel room).
2. From a more specific overview, this study has shown that small local tourism and hospitality operations are more capable of generating both income and employment opportunities.

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# Rural development and social network sites: a case study in Marche region (Central Italy)<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

Websites, blogs and SNSs are important tools implemented by “active” web users who are willing to build their own “social network”. Many SMEs are seemingly using some of these tools in a “non active” manner that refers to an “adaptive behaviour” instead of a more favourable “proactive behaviour”. The paper investigates the actual use of web tools by private entrepreneurs acting in the rural tourism sector to strengthen marketing and communication programs. The authors analyze collected data in order to enucleate some “proactive behaviour” among local entrepreneurs to design future common and feasible economic choices. The real acting of SMEs in the web seems to be non active and in danger to loose great opportunities coming from enlargement and deepening of markets. Probably, the future best practice will be the building of durable relations with customers in order to achieve their retention and satisfaction by improving SNSs use in conjunction with others Web2.0 tools.

**Keywords:** rural tourism, Internet, social network sites, rural areas.

## INTRODUCTION

The use of the Internet has an increasing diffusion in urban areas both for leisure and business purposes and it is largely studied, while the diffusion and use in rural areas or in agriculture is less studied and we know little about the possibility of use the Internet in rural development programs.

The goal of the paper is to investigate the factual possibility of improving the use of the Internet in rural areas, focusing the Marche region (Central Italy) as a case study. The Internet may be an adequate tool to upgrade the competitiveness of the entire agricultural sector, but in particular of the rural tourism, for improving quality of life in rural areas and encouraging

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diversification of rural economy. In the local framework of the Marche region (Central Italy), considering the specific development model based on a large diffusion of SMEs, that use the set of skills, the experience and the know how that results from information, knowledge, learning capabilities of the employees, the authors discuss the possibility of a better and larger diffusion and use of new technologies related to the Internet.

The attention is mainly focused on agriculture and rural development, in order to describe the actual diffusion and the economic potentialities of web tools if used in the marketing management in a rural context, both in the agricultural firms and in the other productive sectors located in rural areas, such as tourism. In 2008, Italy has a turnover of 157.5 million euro from tourism and produced 61.5 billion euro of GDP from travel and tourism sector, while the employees were 2.5 million. Agritourism farms are round 18,000 with a turnover of 880 millions of euros.

In the Marche region, tourism raises to an increasing importance in the economy framework. In 2007, the Added Value of tourism was the 4% of the total; tourism employees near 39,000 people (6% of the total) but following a descending trend. The number of arrivals is today near 2 million people per year. The most notable feature is the great increase in the number of agritourism farms and the development of bed and breakfast (B&B), in which the average lasting of visit is 14-15 days for Italians and 9-10 days for the non-Italians in comparison to the average stay in hotels that is equal to 4-5 days. Rural tourism attracts families and those who spend less money than some other tourists, and different types of people, most notably, those who are environmentalists, those who enjoy wild-life and those with an interest in nature.

Referring to the Marche region (Central Italy), characterized by a specific development model based on the large diffusion of SMEs, the paper discusses the possibility of a larger and deeper diffusion and use of new technologies related to the Internet. Italy, in recent years, faced the very fast diffusion of agritourism and some authors (Casini, 2009) delineate the actual possibility for farmers to implement an innovative model of multifunctional agriculture. Thus, our main attention has been paid to agriculture and rural development, with the aim to describe the actual diffusion and the economic potentialities of web tools if used in the marketing management.

First of all, it is necessary to specify some definitions in order to avoid any ambiguity and misunderstanding as in the Italian context it is possible to distinguish between the definitions of “rural tourism” and “agritourism”. The legal definition of “agritourism” states as an activity legally and strictly pertaining to farms and farmers. On the opposite, “rural” refers to any activity located in a rural area that could not be regulated by agricultural policy and not benefit by public subsidies.

Accordingly to the Marche Region Law, we consider the legal definition of Agritourism and Rural Tourism that includes Agritourism farms and Country Houses so that Rural Tourism could be consider as the presence of travellers and visitors in areas dedicated primarily to

agriculture. The specific object of the research is the Agritourism farms (AFs) and the Country Houses (CHs) of a local economic system and their practice of new technologies based on the use of Internet.

The rural communities traditionally have specific kinds of social networking and would be crucial to investigate if new forms of social networking could be optimized also in rural areas and if they would be used in a different manner than in urban areas.

The paper reports the first findings on diffusion and use of web-sites, social network sites and other web-tools among the AFs and the CHs in the rural areas of the Marche region. Some comments are added on future opportunities and public intervention to ameliorate the use of SNSs for rural development.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The European population lives mostly (over 56%) in rural areas, which cover 91% of the entire territory. Thus, rural development is an important policy area for the EU economic policy. The fundamental rules governing rural development policy for the period 2007 to 2013 are set out in Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005 (EC, 2005) that focuses on “improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector; improving the environment and the countryside; improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy”.

The national and regional programs differ from the EU Rural Development Policy primarily for the deep differences in the land use policy due to geographical, historical and political reasons.

Territorial cohesion is an important concern for national and supranational institutions of governance in the European Union, with the consequent enlarging of importance of the Regional Policy in the European political context. One important concern arises from the unexpected growth in spatial imbalance in social and economic terms in the European territory, with no or very scarce results of convergence.

The EU policy general framework encourages a larger diffusion of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) for the enablement of economies of scale, facilitating ICT take-up by farms and rural businesses and the adoption of e-business and e-commerce in agriculture. Nevertheless, some authors refer (Gilbert, Karahalios and Sandvig, 2008) that history repeatedly demonstrates that rural communities have peculiar technological needs, and we do not have sufficient information on how rural communities use modern technologies, such as the web-tools.

The current way of thinking about rural development reflects the *bottom-up (local)* process of development emerging in theories of economic development proposed at the end of the 70's, since several economists realized the failure of traditional theories, based on *exogenous*

development, whose implementation, often increased, instead of reducing, the differences between regions (Nomisma, 2003). The rural EU policy affirms that: "The key to the sustainable development of rural regions lies in the development of an independent perspective and the discovery of indigenous potential." (EC, 1999).

In analyzing local social and economic phenomena in the so called *Third Italy*, that includes the Marche region, sociologists (Bagnasco, 1977) and economists (Becattini 1979, 1987, Garofoli, 1983), signalized an alternative way of intending a development model, not suiting the traditional one. The local paradigm of development considers the rational and sustainable exploitation of local resources being crucial for theory making (Bagarani et alii, 1992) so that the population of SMEs, resulting from local initiative, is the authentic agent of regional economic development and the effective one that can match public goals. In this direction, increasing attention has been paid to external determinants that constitute the firm's environment favourable to innovation, yet traditionally researchers classified determinants of innovation in internal and external to the firms (Davelaar and Nijkamp, 1989). This *innovative environment*, within which firms operate, has been named in many diverse ways: industrial districts (Becattini, 1987), regional innovation systems (Morgan, 1997), network regions (Camagni, 1991), regional innovation milieux (Maillat, 1992), and clusters (Porter, 1998).

Apart of any name differentiation and approaches, our task is to analyze if and how the local agricultural entrepreneurs managed their own web site and other web tools as an innovation and if they take information from the local environment. Empirical findings show that the most part of the farms of the Marche region offering tourism and meal serving services initiated a private web site.

In carrying out a field research, we faced two difficulties: (i) the absence of sound studies on rural use of modern technologies for marketing development and promotion and (ii) the scarcity of information on how design web tools for rural communities.

Official data (Regione Marche PSR, 2007-13) recognize that rural areas are less attractive as a tourist destination in comparison to urban and littoral areas, but in recent years the urban hotel bed stock increased by the 5% while the farm and B&B beds stock increased by the 30%. These findings enlighten the potentialities of the rural areas in future tourism development and in social cohesion.

## **A RURAL-INDUSTRIAL REGION**

The Marche region extends over an area of 9,694 km<sup>2</sup> of the central Adriatic slope between the regions Emilia-Romagna to the north, Tuscany and Umbria to the west, Lazio and Abruzzo to the south. The entire eastern boundary is formed by the Adriatic Sea. Most of the region is mountainous or hilly, with the Apennine chain along the internal boundary and an extensive system of hills descending towards the sea boundary. The hilly area covers two-thirds of the region and is interrupted by valleys with numerous but very short rivers and by

alluvial plains perpendicular to the principal chain. The region is subdivided into five almost similar-sized provinces: Pesaro-Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, Fermo and Ascoli Piceno. Only the regional capital, Ancona, has over 100,000 inhabitants.

The population density in Marche is below the national average. According to official census in 2001, it was 151.7 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, compared to the national figure of 192. Nowadays migration from abroad of Italy inverts the traditional decreasing rate of population growth.

The best known economic strength of the region is the so-called *Marche model* for economic development. This type of development has its roots in the quality of human capital employed in the manufacturing sector and in the territorial diffusion of many SMEs as in an industrial district. The industry gained undoubted advantages from this form of organization, the entire economy of Marche benefited from a slow economic revolution which is related to strong networking of social relations.

People living in the Marche meet very low crime, while unemployment rates are lower than the national average. On the opposite side, the local development is somewhat weak for using low technologies that exposes it to strong competition from developing countries, for an aging population and for a transport system which preferred the north-south axis along the coast to the communications with the interior.

Marche's contribution to Italy's GDP is 2.6% (2001) and its population represents a share of 2.6% of the national total (Census 2001). Per capita GDP is about the same as for Italy as a whole, and is 2% above the EU average. Many SMEs are active in the region. Footwear and leather goods are produced in a large area straddling the provinces of Macerata and Ascoli Piceno, furniture in the Pesaro area and Fabriano, household appliances and textiles in the province of Ancona, in which the main engineering companies are also located, including ship building, petrochemicals and paper, as well as consumer durables.

According to the OCSE classification Marche is to be considered a predominantly rural (PR) territory. The density of resident population in the five Provinces is ranged between 15% and 50% of the value benchmark, that is 150 inhabitants per squared kilometre. This method is too simple and does not reflect the Italian local complexity. Indeed, at the Italian national level a specific method has been proposed by the National Rural Development Program (NRDP), firstly excluding the provincial capital cities with more than 150 persons/km<sup>2</sup>, then adopting the OCSE classification in the rest of the municipalities, avoiding the provincial borders, but considering altimetric zoning.

According to this classification in the Marche, seemingly, there are no areas with "specialized" agriculture (adopting intensive and specialized technologies) but the land may be classified in three areas: Capital Cities, Apennine Mountain Municipalities, while the rest of the territory is classified as Predominantly Rural in Hillside, that faces a large diffusion of industrial SMEs in Intermediate Rural Industrialized Areas (Regione Marche, 2007).

## WHAT IS A TOURISM DESTINATION?

A tourism destination is to be considered as a constellation of specialized companies, organizations and communities gathered into a confined geographical location, even if its boundaries are often poorly defined and it can be also seen as a form of industrial cluster or district (Baggio, 2008). This statement is consistent with the definition adopted by the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2002) as: “A physical space in which a visitor spends at least one overnight. It includes tourism products such as support services and attractions, and tourism resources within one day’s return travel time. It has physical and administrative boundaries defining its management, and images and perceptions defining its market competitiveness. Local destinations incorporate various stakeholders often including a host community, and can nest and network to form larger destinations”.

Thus, it is arguable that the *innovative environment* of a constellation or cluster or of a district may be linked to the concept of social networking as in the *milieu innovateur* (Maillat, 1992) or in the *network region* (Camagni, 1991). In the *milieu innovateur* the economic contiguity is paired to a specific socio-cultural contiguity, the latter depending on shared behaviours, reciprocal trust, common languages, cognitive model diffusion and specific relations. This type of relationship is named as *relational capital* and constituted by cooperation attitude, trust, and social cohesion that expresses the *sense of affiliation* to the local territory (Camagni, 1991) so that the social environment they form is highly homogeneous. Geographical proximity joined to socio-cultural proximity determines high probability of interactions among economic agents, informal and trusted agreements, punishment and subsequent lacks of opportunistic behaviours, labour division and cooperation. The milieu then builds and accumulates a *relational capital* based on social cohesion, sense of belonging, identification and membership (Camagni 1991).

Development itself stems largely from the combination of different individual local systems growth. If the local systems in turn stem from the interacting and the feedback of original local forces in a continuous circuit that creates new forces of development, then, the definition of a valid theory of local development could be the reconstruction of the socio-economic change in its local pattern and in the basic unit; this pattern being embodied by the evolving mechanisms and processes of transformation of local systems (Becattini and Rullani, 1997).

The terms *cluster* and *district* have not the same meaning as the two concepts fundamentally have been clearly differentiated by two main scholars. Industrial clusters are “geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular field” (Porter, 1998) and their basic feature is the belonging to a specific sector and the participating firms are connected by horizontal or vertical relationships and concentrated in a geographic area. They are complemented by some “external” entities such as the public institutions even if the central focus remains the entrepreneurial and business dimensions. On the contrary, a “district” is an extension of the specialized spatial concentration idea, adding the importance of the social environment, including regional governments and trade associations of the area in

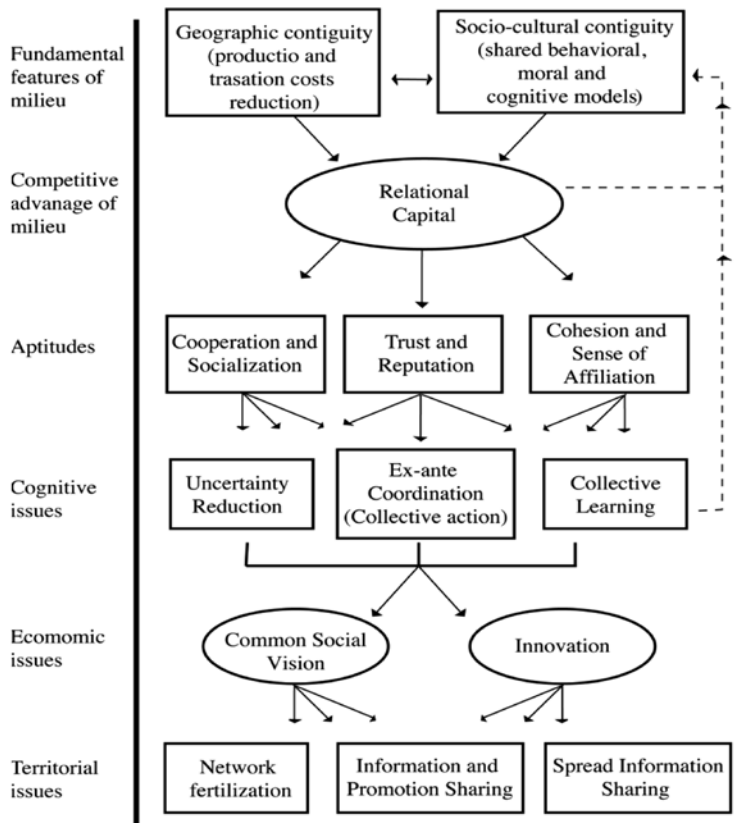
which the district is individuated (Becattini, 1987). The feature to be understood with more accuracy is the role of the linkages with the “external” world.

Becattini’s approach appears closer to the reality in rural areas and it is also more suitable as a theoretical framework for the study of a tourism destination. Considering recent studies on tourism (Baggio, 2008) and on system’s general connectivity properties (Boccaletti et al., 2006), a tourism destination is to be considered as such a system.

Thus, this paper tends to consider a rural tourist destination as a *milieu innovateur* in the perspective to understand if the introduction of tourism in farms is to be considered as an innovation and if the adoption of modern types of social networking would be an opportunity for the local development in a selected territory.

The main determinants and the fundamental features of *milieu innovateur* with some networking linkages are described in the Fig. 1 that follows.

**Figure 1: – Main determinants and feature of Local Milieu (adapted form Camagni, 1991)**



## THE RELATIONSHIP PERSPECTIVE IN MARKETING

For decades, the “quality movement” placed customer satisfaction as the ultimate goal of marketing programs, till the marketing thought had a changing evolution in the last ten years. In realizing that satisfied customers could defect to alternative brands or sellers at relatively high rates, marketing strategists looked to the actual possibilities of creating a greater commitment with the customer. In order to sustain customer commitment it is possible: (i) to build brand equity, for consumer products; (ii) to build relationships, for industrial products.

Brand equity used mass media advertising, corporate citizenship and public events sponsorship to build a brand image. On the contrary, relationship marketing sought to build interdependence between partners and relied on “one-to-one” communications, historically delivered through the sales force (Sorce, 2002).

As marketing databases use spreads and the Internet is becoming friendly, the capacity to reach individual customers became a viable strategy for a wide range of firms, including consumer products companies and in general for SMEs or even for farms, traditionally insulated in local economic relations. In preceding case study carried out in the Marche region it has been pointed out that local agritourism entrepreneurs (Corinto, 2009) declared to prefer a word-of-mouth communication practice as it is considered the best efficient for business improvements. This is a partial validation of the above mentioned increasing attention to relationship marketing, but the interesting point is if the Internet will unfold the development of agritourism farms economy my means of more active pattern of relationship.

Some empirical experiences suggested more attention to one-to-one communication (Bottinelli, 2004) oriented to “share of customer” rather than “share of market.” The suggested perspective is to consider soundly the company’s information on single customer’s interests so that the “one-to-one” interaction will lead to improve the life-time value, through the building of customer’s commitment and enforcing their loyalty (Hallberg, 1999). Small improvements in customer retention can as much as double company profits (Reichheld, 1996) and this is because (Sorce, 2002):

1. it costs less to serve long-term customers;
2. loyal customers will pay a price premium;
3. loyal customers will generate word-of-mouth referrals to other prospective customers.

These are actual targets for any firm, and with much evidence for tourism firms, agritourism farms and B&B. The hypothesis to be validated is that if farmers managing a tourist service do implement the Internet or any other web-tool to improve businesses in a one-to-one marketing perspective.

## METHOD AND DATA

To carry out the task of the paper, quantitative data at local level on a tourism sub-sector such as agritourism and B&B have been gathered in Marche region, collecting official statistics data and adding original ones by a direct survey. According to official source (PSR, 2007-13) in the Marche region there are near 400 agritourism farms, that is near the 3% of the national total number. The 83% offer lodging accommodation, the 53% only food serving, and the 30% offer free-time and cultural services, though the services types are gradually changing.

The meal serving is becoming the main businesses in comparison to accommodation, while cultural supply is losing its preceding importance. In the 498 agritourism farms detected by an official study carried out by Marche Regional Administration in the 2005 (pair to the 0.8% of total farms) the total turnover evaluated is up to 27.5 million euros and is equivalent to the 3% of the national turnover of the sector. The same sources update the total number in the 2006 to 700 agritourism farms, considering also the number of country houses.

The specific aim of our study is to investigate the actual use and the potential growth of the Internet, i.e. websites and other web-tools, also in the rural areas for the development of tourism. The first problem we faced is the reliability of sources in order to set out a useful data-base. Indeed, the Region Marche Administration issues an extended data-base on regional tourism supply, named "I.ST.RICE", according to the regional law on rural tourism (Regione Marche, 2002) that differs from the Italian national rules while it considers both Agritourism Farms and Country Houses within the same law framework.

Furthermore, the official data-base is not annually updated and the phenomenon could be underestimated or overestimated at all. Furthermore, many of farms registered in the official White Page of phone directory is not inventoried the Istrice's data-base. The contrary occurrence is detectable too. In order to avoid the most possible causes of mistakes, the statistical data used are a cross results from the both sources by considering the actual existence of an economic enterprise. Thus, we inventoried the main features of use of web tools by Agritourism Farms and Country Houses located in Marche region and the method applied follows these steps:

1. inventory of total number of the agritourism farms located in Marche region using both the official online Italian White-Pages (<http://www.paginebianche.it/index.html>) and the Istrice regional data-base (<http://istrice.turismo.marche.it/>);
2. use of search engines to inventory if the above selected farms did activate web-sites, e-mail address, blog sites and social network site (SNSs) by means of:
  - a. Google (<http://www.google.it>);
  - b. Bing (<http://www.bing.com>);
  - c. Ask (<http://www.ask.com>);
3. set out of a data base on WSS use and actual features:
  - date of registration;
  - used languages (I - Italian, EN - English, D - German, O - Others).



For the aim of the present paper, the method adopted ensure to set out a reliable and up-to-date data base in front to plural official data, issued by Italian public Statistical Bureau, by regional and provincial offices or by tourism or farming syndications.

The registration on the White Pages directory is an indicator of the factual existence of the firm; indeed it is a sound indicator of the willingness of each agritourism farm to be found and located by customers. For this particular purpose, official data do not ensure enough information. The choice to manage agritourism services in a farm is an available indicator of the innovation ability of farmers, and the registration of WSs and SNSs is an indicator of the adoption of modern communication techs in agriculture.

## RESULTS

The results of the field research are collected in the following tables or graphs and commented upon.

**Figure 2: Marche region 2009. Total Nr. of Agritourism Farms (AF) and Country Houses (CH), AF and CH with Web Site (WS), with E-mail (E-m), with Corporate Blog, with Face book account, with You tube and Flickr; per Province. Source, Istrice (Marche Region), White Pages online, Web engines.**

Province	AF+CH	with WS	with E-m	Blog	FB	YT	FL
Ancona	181	130	133	0	6	0	0
Ascoli Piceno	150	97	100	4	4	0	0
Fermo	120	89	93	1	2	0	0
Macerata	252	157	165	3	7	0	0
Pesaro Urbino	329	214	221	1	8	1	1
Marche region	1032	687	712	9	27	1	1

**Figure 3: Marche region 1998-2009. Nr. of WS registrations per year and per Province by Agritourism Farms (AF) and Country Houses (CH). Source, Istrice (Marche Region), White Pages online, Web engines.**

Province	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Ancona	2	2	4	6	7	14	19	25	16	19	11	1
Ascoli Piceno	0	2	3	4	4	11	8	18	14	19	5	5
Fermo	0	0	4	5	5	7	10	4	22	13	9	4
Macerata	2	0	5	10	8	6	15	23	28	32	16	7
Pesaro Urbino	0	1	8	18	20	23	28	20	40	29	17	4
Marche region	4	5	24	43	44	61	80	90	120	112	58	21

The province of Pesaro-Urbino locates most of the AFs and CHs, while Macerata, Ancona, Ascoli Piceno e Fermo are followers.

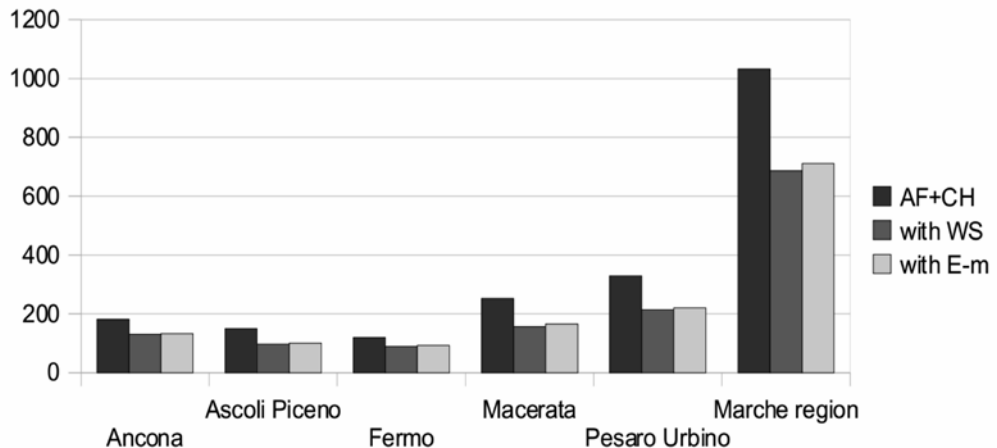
It is important to observe that near the 50% of the total sum of AFs and CHs did register a firm Web Site during the observed period. In the same manner, it is important to notice that greater is the number of firms which have an e-mail address and that very few are those with a Blog or a Face book account.

Obviously, the first language used in the WSS is Italian, but near the 75% use English, 30% German and near 30% Other languages, first of all French.

Rural Tourism in a relatively young sector in Italy and the Marche Region Administration demonstrated some delay in implementing the national law (1985) and supporting the farmers' initiative. Yet, in recent years, the local entrepreneurship caught the new businesses and the great subsequent opportunities. Just in this direction, it is notable the total amount of new registrations per year during the 1998-2009 years. The higher rate of growth of registration number has been reached on the year 2006.

The following graphs expose the data at regional and provincial level.

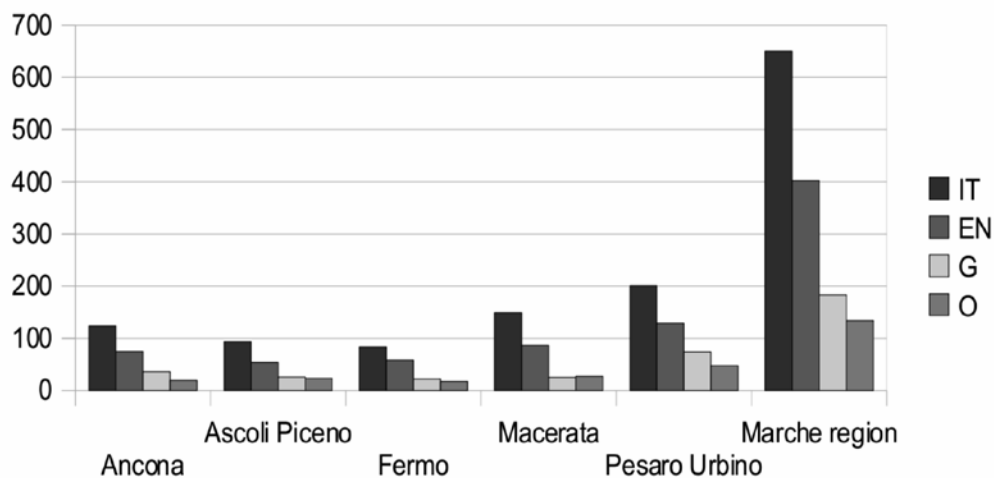
**Figure 4: Marche region, 2009. Total Nr of Agritourism Farms (AF) and Country Houses (CH) and AF-CHs with Web Site and E-mail.**



**Figure 5: Marche region, 1998-2009. Index Nr (Y 2000 = 100) of WS Registrations per year and per Province.**

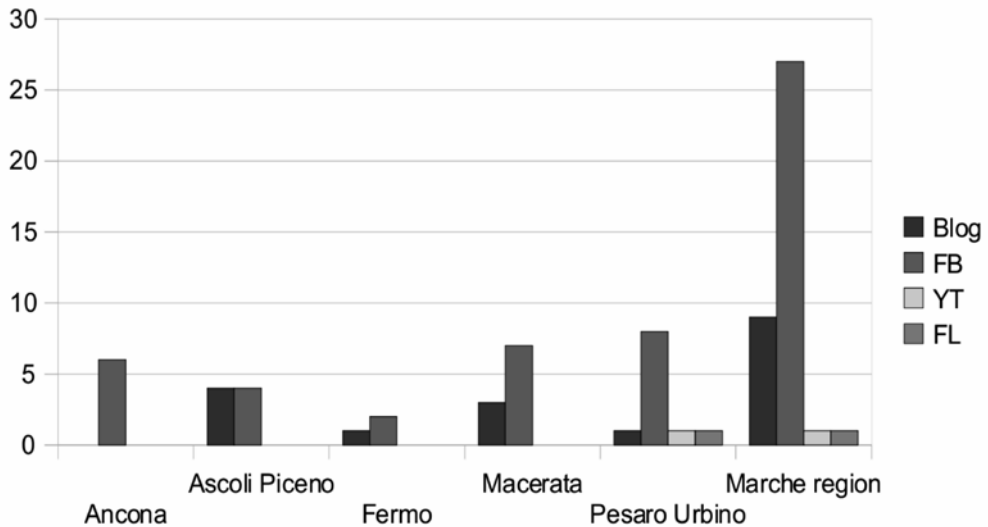
Province	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Ancona	100	150	175	350	475	625	400	475	275	25
Ascoli Piceno	100	133	133	367	267	600	467	633	167	167
Fermo	100	125	125	175	250	100	550	325	225	100
Macerata	100	200	160	120	300	460	560	640	320	140
Pesaro Urbino	100	225	250	288	350	250	500	363	213	50
Marche region	100	179	183	254	333	375	500	467	242	88

During the first three years of the considered period, the rate of growth of the number of WSs registrations strongly increased, due to the novelty of the phenomenon. Considering the annual Index Number of WS registrations (Tab. 3), both at regional and province level, it is possible to see that the couple of years, 2005-2006, are crucial. Before and after this turning point the IN is lower, yet the total number is increasing long the entire decade. Seemingly the actual number of AFs with a WS is reaching the total potential willingness of the entrepreneurs.

**Figure 6: Marche region, 2009. Languages used in AF-CH Web Sites.**

About languages used in the WSs, besides Italian, with any evidence the foreign preferred language is English, followed by German, as expected. The French is loosing its appeal among tourism suppliers.

**Figure 7: Marche region, 2009. Nr of Blog, FB account, You tube and Flick used by AG+CHs.**



As the specific purpose of the paper is to investigate on the actual and potential use of modern web-tools for marketing, it must be pointed out that 67% of existing and operating AFs registered a Web Site, but very few entrepreneurs are using a blog. In the all region, 27 agritourism farms manage a Facebook account, corresponding to the 3% of total AFs and to the 4% of AFs with WS. The use of an e-mail address is very large, greater than the use of a WS. Only a singular case indicates the use of Youtube and Flicker in the province of Pesaro Urbino.

These findings are to be interpreted as a general willingness to adopt “modern” innovation induced by the Internet, but also of a sound delay in catching the “very modern” capabilities by the rural society.

## DISCUSSION

The present research has at least three limitations. First, the absolute lack of previous similar research both in the general field of SNSs and with specific respect to the use of the Internet in rural areas in Italy. The same observation is more valid with respect to the use of web-tools by rural tourism firms.

Second, the specific official survey on agriculture and rural society are not always reliable. Frequently, alternative sources often differ in data collecting method and the unclear distinction between “rural tourism” and “agritourism” due to legal constraints is a further uncertainty.

Third, the analysis do not consider the economic behaviour of non “rural”, i. e. industrial or commercial entrepreneurs located in rural areas but considers only Agriturismo Farms and Country Houses.

Notwithstanding, the research validates the hypothesis that local farmers, as firms pertaining to other production sectors, are willing to manage the Internet to improve businesses, although they do not yet use all the disposable web-tool and only few entrepreneurs implement blog and SNSs in their relationship marketing program.

The hypothesis that the Internet is capable to unfold the rural tourism (AFs and CHs) possibilities to perform a modern pattern of relationship is validated only by the large diffusion of firm WSs. But, if only very few and scattered entrepreneurs have registered a FB account or manage relations with their network of actual and potential clients by the Internet, it is very clear that relationship marketing in rural tourism of the Marche region still prefers traditional forms of communication.

It is to be investigated if the high entrepreneurship of the Marchigian people, historically proved, will be applied also to rural tourism and to a more modern pattern of marketing. A further a deeper study is the necessary and will be carried out a dedicated case study on the few farms located in the Marche region which usually use a blog and a SNS as a relationship marketing tool.

## CONCLUSION

Commencing from the early ‘80s in Italy *agritourism* (rural tourism in agricultural firms) demonstrates developing capabilities, performing an increasing annual rate of development, both in terms of number of specialized firms and in number of tourists visiting rural areas spending their leisure time there. In this sense, the Marche region is facing a big trend of development and new economic features pertain to farm management also in the managing of ICT tools. Websites, blogs and SNSs are the most important tools implemented by “active” web users who are willing to build their own “social network”. For an entrepreneur it is a positive marketing tool in the perspective of the building of a relation network.

A tourist destination is to be considered a network of actors, businesses, and social aims, and economic goals, environmental and cultural assets. In rural areas the agritourism business is spreading out rapidly in few recent years also in the Marche region, for years its development was delayed in comparison to other Italian regions, such as Trentino, Bozen province, Tuscany. Thus, rural tourism is an innovative activity for farm management and furthermore for the local social network of rural areas.

The SNSs are to be considered as the *virtual* extension of the *real* social network (Gilbert, 2008) as:

- (i) the dimension of the network is not locally constrained when using the ICT (Di Bernardo, Pilotti, 2000);
- (ii) the modern marketing thought, besides quality and brand policies, focuses on market relationships to increase the level of customer's loyalty and thus revenues and profits.

The field research confirms that most part of rural tourism firms presently is willing to catch the opportunity of modernity. But such "*Modernity 2.0*" is still far from an actual practice in managing business, and especially in rural area and in agritourism farms.

The Marche region pertains to the *Third Italy* and its economy is based on industrial districts and the diffusion of SMEs. The entrepreneurship is a typical figure of the society and largely diffused in several productive sectors and industrial modernizations are frequently detected at present and in the past.

The real point is if the rural society is willing to promote its modernity. Indeed, many agricultural entrepreneurs are seemingly using some of modern tools in a "non active" manner that refers to an "adaptive behaviour" instead of a more productive "proactive behaviour".

Rural tourism in the Marche region demonstrates great developing potentialities but still faces difficulties due to digital divide and lack of a common strategy. The local SMEs acting in the rural tourism sector are clearly under-utilizing the Internet and the "proactive behaviour" is not yet diffused among entrepreneurs.

The current evolution of marketing tends to relationship marketing in private firms. In rural communities, SMEs using web-tools seems to follow a non-active model, apart from only a few pioneers. Nevertheless, it is arguable that the future will face the sudden explosion of the use of blog and SNs also in rural areas of the region, due to sporadic initiatives that actually play the role of an economic leadership. Sooner or later, these pioneers will be followed by other entrepreneurs in building durable relations with customers in order to achieve their retention and satisfaction.

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*Figures in the text*



# The small business and the smart relational network by a territorial thematic itinerary “the Pilgrims, Knights and Travellers Path” in Sicily

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## ABSTRACT

In order to build an alternative to the abstract and de-territorialized growth of financial capital, it is necessary to review many aspects of the changing of the territorial dynamics. The article shows how, starting by the reflections on the *décroissance sereine*, the application of the concept of Integrated Related Tourism (IRT), it should be able to create a different economical reality. The field of our analysis is the Sicilian inland; through the remittances from cultural resources it is possible to arrive to a new role for the local economies. In this way, the small business are encouraged and promoted by the “smart relational network,” capable to convert territorial thematic itineraries (as “Pilgrims, knights and travelers path in Sicily”) into opportunity not only for economic growth, but also for the inhabitants, the local cultures and the places with which they are connected.

**Keywords:** Thematic itinerary, sustainable tourism, local economies, relationality, hinterland development.

## INTRODUCTION

The topics dealt with in this paper regard the complex relationship between territorial resources, related economies and new types of tourism. The reference in the work is mainly a criticism to today’s society of “development” and to the consequent use and transforming of the territory. The worldwide and European economic crisis has repercussions at the national level with very serious consequences, as the news has lately reported in the case of Greece.

The economic crisis and improper use of the territorial resources (not only natural but also cultural in the wider meaning of this word) gave birth in the ’70s to a new way of thinking in opposition to this economic model. Serge Latouche in his “*Petit traité de la décroissance sereine*” explains the theory of a “concrete utopia” that provides a complete overturning in

the actual economical model (of development) aware of the fact that “*today more than ever, development sacrifices people and their actual and logical well-being on the altar of the abstract and deterritorialized possession (being VS having) devoted to the compulsion and growth of the financial capital*” (Latouche, 2008:42). In this passage it is possible to locate the breaking off of the link between territory and local economies, caused by the globalized economical development model (imposed by the multinational and transnational corporations).

The lack of relationships between economy and territory have caused a depressed phenomena in some areas in favour of others far away (also from a geo-political point of view) as far as production and profit are concerned.

This economic system brings to a uniformity of the territories image through the location of big shopping centres as moulds. “*From the environment point of view, the price to pay due to the birth of these big shopping centres is unsustainable. Each area close to the highway systems has become a dirty patchwork where also the non-urbanized and gated areas are of a very low value*”, as Bottini reminds us (Seneghini, 2008:17). From its exploit as an economical phenomenon the so-called tourism industry, born from the research of the territory, has shown its own intrinsic relation with it.

Today facing the “decrease” challenge a suitable predisposition (reuse, conversion, etc.) of local economies together with a “soft” territorial infrastructures with tourism purposes can be a “regional performance” element capable to influence the territories competitive final balance, also at international level (Presutti, 2009).

The picture of this situation regards the Sicilian Region, where the theme of the use of the territory to activate tourist productive chains (endogenous), has always been the main object of the political and social debate.

It has been estimated that, at the moment, about 60% of the Sicilian territory, corresponding to a large inland area, delimited by the island plateaus and mountain ranges (Gulotta, 2004:20), must face a chronic situation of economical and infrastructural isolation compared to the coast area where, on the contrary, the impact of the tourist demand subdues the general receptive system according to the tested plans of the big tour operators. The idea of cultural tourism that links “slow theme itineraries” to an integrated net of widespread micro and medium economical centralities can permit to overcome this system. On this basis in 2007 ITIMED (Itinerari del Mediterraneo - Cultural Asociacion) started meditating on the possibility of activating a thematic itinerary aiming at the development of new forms of cultural tourism. The research and the experimental activities carried out in Sicily underline the existence of the Cultural Heritage and its territoriality due to its particular interpretative reading.

The “wide” thematic field in which this idea has been set is that of the journey seen as a “Pilgrimage”, which is here used with its meaning of an *aiming walk*, far from everyday life, and, in this sense, the pilgrimage can be seen as a discovery or re-discovery Journey. The

territory welcome system is a fundamental feature in the pilgrimage experience, both in the past and in present time, (as for Santiago path or for the historical devotional and penitential ones as for instance *Francigena route*). A deep sense and meaning of the places and sites can be discovered during the pilgrimage and its slow proceeding through the territory. Actually, the surplus value lies in the fact that the same territory describes itself through the activities and resources that bring it back to life. In this way a self-reproduction process of social and economical value will start up.

It must be clear that the theme itinerary should be developed and implemented by the local *intelligentiae*. In fact, as Sorrentino (2006) said, pilgrimage could be defined as a journey (real or metaphorical) that involves memory or spiritual research. Furthermore, this meditation has its origin reading Marcel Proust (1998): “*A real voyage of discovery is not looking for new lands but looking with new eyes*”. The author describes with extraordinary sensibility what today could be used as a precise definition for a tourism bearing strong relationship features. The very old origins of routes and pilgrimages are essentially connected to a religious and spiritual meaning of the act of walking. What really is important here is the relationship that this type of journey can establish with the places involved.

The “Path” and the intermediate stops are important elements of this aiming walk, linked together in a logical-functional way as a kind of map of the territory that gives a sort of *orientation* to the path itself. So the places along the path are able to create in the visitor an “intuitive” ability to interpret, that leads to an intangible net. Another feature of the aiming walk is its ritual meaning: myth builds reality, rite perpetuates it and presents several analogies that strengthen relationships among the visitors-pilgrims with the large heterogeneity of its final destinations. Nowadays, the reduction of time, risks and travelling costs, as well as the loss of primitive spiritual value in different cultures induce pilgrimage to mingle with mass tourism.

ITIMED promotes a theme itinerary called “The Holy Sepulchre Path” that ideally and physically goes from Sicily to Jerusalem and would like to activate again, through an efficient communication system, the inner symbology of these places. The subscription of an agreement between our Association and the Italian-Sicilian Lieutenancy of the Equestrian Order of the knight of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and further partnerships with the regional Curia give birth to our project, since, as owners and managers of several cultural heritages, they are “unable” to promote and exploit by themselves their own property. The aim is to re-establish the ritual value of the journey, in connection with the holiness of places and historical buildings.

## **AIMS AND THEORETICAL/METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

The Mediterranean path project “The Holy Sepulchre Path” aims to connect Sicily to an important destination as Jerusalem through an invisible line symbolized by its own cultural heritage, re-establishing the stages of a complex, historical and architectonical identity. In Sicily this path is called “the Pilgrims, Knights and Traveller path” as a part of the largest Mediterranean itinerary. The real and symbolic network that represents this itinerary and

activates the routes becomes “processor” of formal and informal relationships among actors who join together their commercial trades linked to the existence of the itinerary itself.

Through a semantic connection (between things and people) it is possible to transfer each single attractiveness (economical and cultural features), and influence the productive chain and the facilities organization. The final aim of the local human resources re-evaluation, seen as promoter of its own resources, is a territorial “economic autonomy” that together with the “political innovation” (as Latouche underlines) can achieve a “decrease as local project” process (Latouche, 2008:56-57).

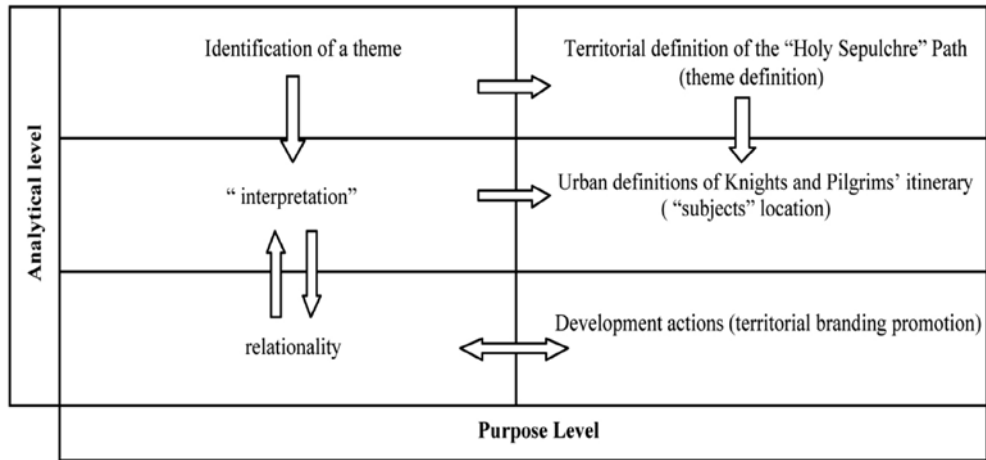
Compared (for example) to the Santiago path, human resources play a strategic role within the territorial system under Itimed analysis. The territorial welcoming system (that takes care of both technical and emotional aspects) supports the relationship and communication system and leads to the “revelation”; who moves the operating level of “acknowledgement” is the “messenger”, the news bearer, that helps to discover and see with different eyes. Therefore, the inhabitants are “actors and authors” of the “welcoming” relational system which is also capable, above all, to attract flows of tourists acting as an endogenous flywheel for the territory. The semantic connections suggested by the theme itinerary are able to enhance and “make more complex” the global system relationships. From this point of view, can be very interesting the experience of the theme itinerary Abraham’s Path whose motto is “*connecting the human family step by step*”; recently (in May), an agreement has been signed in Lucca between this itinerary and the “*Vie Francigene*” Association and therefore becomes part of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe. This program (since 1987) aims at demonstrating in a visible way, by means of a journey through space and time, how the heritage of the different European countries and cultures represented a shared cultural heritage. The theme itinerary (on the common basis of its territorial root) spreads out producing additional attractiveness. So, in Sicily, the implementation of said system can cover a double role:

- 1) to offer a qualified tourism through a thematic itinerary able to overcome the barriers of globalization and mass tourism, and establish an immediate synergy between the voyager and the place visited, full of different elements (the lands, the inhabitants and local identities);
- 2) to promote the evaluation of inland territories abolishing the clear economical discrepancy between the coast and the inland areas.

The research consists in organizing and interpreting the cultural heritages resources (material and intangible) and in recognizing and singling out the subjects able to form the economical and social network. Afterwards, an appropriate training and empowerment strategy must be developed for these people.

The scheme chart (Figure1) shows an analytical-operational outline that supports the whole project and links the interpretation of the historical-artistic character of the territory with specific development actions in order to improve the attractive power of the system itself.

**Figure 1: Scheme of Thematic Itinerary Development**



A *territorial branding* strategy is conceived through a complex analysis of the Sicilian “cultural territory” features. *The Greater London Council* strategy is a fundamental basic reference for our approach. Specific strategies have carefully been prepared and tested to create new cultural districts with opening out purposes but, mainly, aiming at bringing back to life abandoned urban areas or underused architectural heritage.

A model intervention strategy that leads towards a strong integration between the cultural and tourist industry was studied at the beginning of the ‘80s. In 1987 the first works were built with the private and public financial contribution. A mixed partnership was formed on the initiative of Glasgow District Council. The Glasgow Action, carried out a strategy to improve the city and its industrial tourism image based on better environment conditions and on the cultural offer increase. A strong urban marketing campaign started, based on the heritage and the city cultural activity promotion. At the same time, a very important Congress and Exhibition Centre was set up, and was created a close network of relationships with the “artists associations” to give a cultural contribution to the city, especially during summertime, with international music festivals, street dance and theatres, on the basis of a three year planning.

One of the major limits of the policies adopted depends on the separate interventions, which have prevented the harmoniously utilization of the whole resources of the territory. To sum up it would be useful to exploit all the other resources of the territory at our disposal (natural and gastronomic, etc) starting from the most “precious” one, which could become its “brand”.

To increase the economical impact of this process, the exploitation of all the resources should be coordinated and coherent with research, training, accessibility and incoming services and, moreover, with the characteristics of the local socio-economical system.

## FROM THE RISEMANTICE OF CULTURAL RESOURCES TO A NEW ROLE

In the research, ITIMED has undertaken to build up the development itinerary, the Holy Land is the ending point of the path and at the same time the starting point, the origin.

The interpretation that allows the making of the itinerary uses the theme of the pilgrimage/path to locate the subjects (Cultural Heritage, the territorial organism of connection of the urban itineraries) linked by human resources, history and cultural inheritance.

The holy places joint by this invisible line are all strictly (and still at the present time) connected to the Holy Land and to the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. For instance, the Capitular church of S. Cataldo in Palermo, original and suggestive palatine chapel belonging to Majone of Bari, is the place where Knights were probably conferred knighthood on, and afterwards has become hospice of the Holy Sepulchre for several centuries. The little church of S. Cristina La Vetere which still nowadays stands along the ancient medieval road of the Pilgrims, who used to find here hospitality on their way to the Holy Land. Included in the itinerary, the Oratory of S. Caterina d' Alessandria at Olivella with decorations by Serpotta, which according to the legend, was the Sinibaldi's family house where S. Rosalia was born. Since 1946 the building became the head office of the Italian Sicilian Liutenancy of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre and therefore the place where still today all the humanitarian activities in favour of the Holy Land are promoted and developed.

Going through the inner part of Sicily the path leads to the historical centre of Piazza Armerina, where the Church of S. Andrea Grant Priory of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is the *ónfalos*, the central point of the itinerary. The drawing up of the interpretation plan for this site has met many difficulties in terms of attraction due to the prevalent presence of the near "Villa del Casale" which at the moment is the only brand on the territory. On the coast, cities involved are Trapani with the *Church of Immacolata Concezione* and Catania with the Capitular Church of S. *Giuliano*. Moreover, the Order of the S. Sepulchre is also present with other churches in different Sicilian towns, as Messina with the *Church of Santa Croce* (no longer existing).

Furthermore, there are many other churches which represent pilgrimage destinations as the Church of S. *Nicolò Regale in Mazara del Vallo (TP)*, the *Church of SS. Pietro e Paolo a Casalvecchio Siculo (ME)*.

As it clearly appears, in consideration of the extent and the complexity of the itinerary along the whole regional territory, the fulfilment and the development of the research cannot depend only on the cultural association, but it is necessary to establish each time a partnership with the local institutions and *intelligentiae* that show interest and are able to share the aims and the goals suggested by ITIMED. The need of a wide analysis of "resources", as much as possible adherent to the peculiar characteristic of the territory, makes the use of a "processor" of collected information fundamental in order to edit an interpretation plan of the cultural heritage (Carter 2001).

The interpretation tends to build up again the “sense of the sites” (Carter 2001); once the theme has been established and the “subjects” located, the most delicate moment (that could determine the success or the failure of the strategy) is to give back *cultural value* to the entire itinerary.

Throsby (1999) ascribes cultural value to those elements which are part of the human experience, in which the entire community identifies itself. He also defines “the cultural capital” a *stock* of cultural value incorporated in a good which could be material or intangible. “Interpreting our Heritage” by Freeman Tilden (1957) gave birth to the main theory on the subject in the 50’s in the United States; the author focuses his attention on the principles and motivations of the success on the basis of tourist attraction of American naturalistic parks. The theory tries to find out the motivation that induces a tourist to appreciate or not a site according to his or her expectations. It is important to underline that the interpretation process is purely subjective, so it cannot be considered scientifically univocal: in other words the same input can stir up in the tourist/visitor different reactions as far as emotion, consciousness, knowledge and acquired “revelation” are concerned (Carter, 2001). At the same time the author suggests practical principles on how to draw the interpretation plan:

- build up an offer made up of a set of recognizable network system;
- establish welcoming mechanism that create in the visitor a sort of “revelation” that could positively influence his previous idea about the site;
- organize a system that could favour the relational exchange between the site and the visitor (including local inhabitants and not only commercial trades) in order to let the visitor enjoy the local atmosphere;
- organize the information in such a way that the visitor could intuitively be oriented during the itinerary (posters, maps, leaflets, etc.).

The final goal of the realization of this process is the development of the sense of the site (Carter 2001), which implies two direct consequences:

- increase of the intrinsic ability of relational system;
- increase of the general attractiveness of the territory.

Therefore, it is necessary to carry out a strategic and management network mechanism that leads to the best economical performance system. From this point of view only an appropriate negotiation among the public-administration (political level), associations at all levels (management level) and private sector (trades) can assure important results.

## **A NETWORK TO PROMOTE THE SICILIAN INLAND**

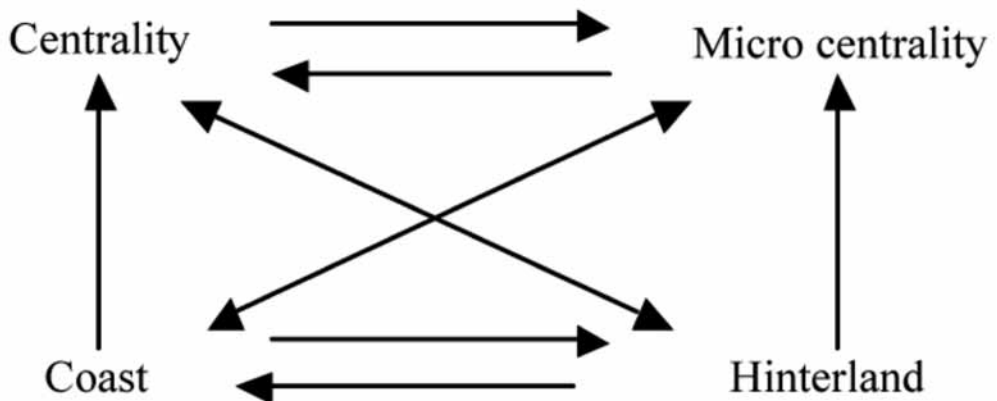
The idea of a “network” as a representative model substitutes and develops the scheme of the “systems”, (intended as an area) and characterized by an idealization of the space itself that, in this way, appears as homogeneous and stable. It involves the idea of discontinuity and

increases with no limits the points of view, highlighting all the meanings presented at both micro and macro level.

These analytical entities have to communicate among themselves through analytical-conceptual organization, but also through rethinking the infrastructural systems. In this way it is important a study of Sicilian hinterland seen as a virgin territory on which make restoring and promotion. It could be useful to transform these micro-centralities in dynamical realities, in order to determine their “development” towards the coasts and in order to create a whole structure able to produce an organic structural fruition.

In this way the internal part of the region can show its own central role, not only representing a service area for the urban zones, but also creating a parallel and inverse flux that moves from micro-centralities to centralities. (Fig.2)

**Figure 2: Semiotic Carrè of Territory Network**

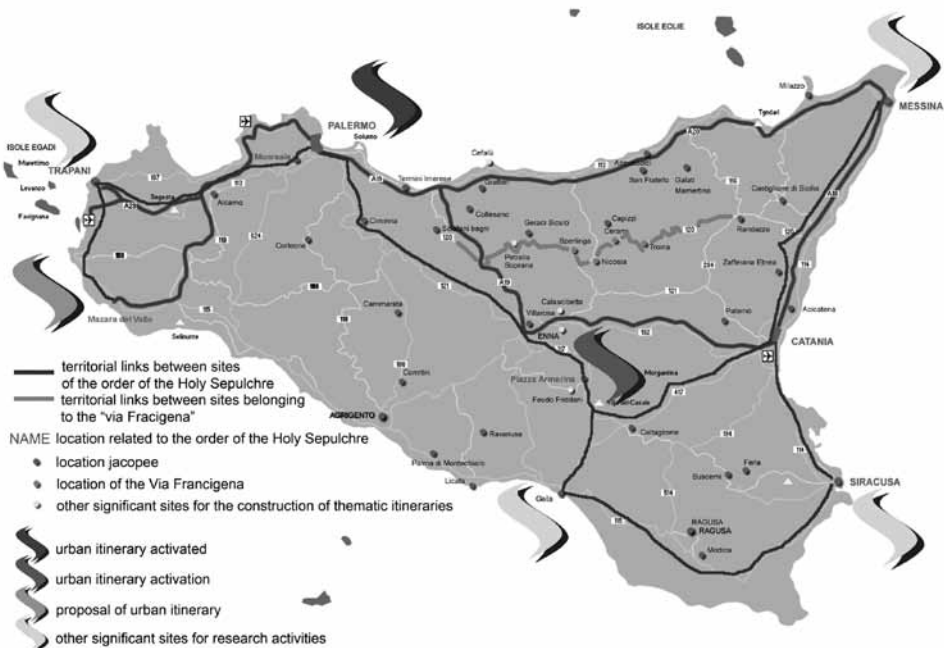


The semiotic *carrè* shows the relation among four elements organized in three logical couples: contrary (centrality/micro-centrality, coast/hinterland); correlatives (centrality/coast, micro-centrality/hinterland); contradictions (centrality/hinterland, micro-centrality/coast). The couples of contradictions underline a two-way correspondence that determines a dialogic space of fruitful “ambiguity”.



ITIMED extends its activity exactly to this domain. The hinterland development is a direct consequence of the relation between micro-centralities and the coast (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: The Pilgrims, Knights and Travellers Path in Sicily**



The “Pilgrims, Knights and Travellers” itinerary focuses its regional “hinge” in the territory of Enna. The implementation first step consist in activating the link Palermo-Piazza Armerina.

The province of Enna is a very clear and representative example to fully understand the economical mechanism for the activation of widespread micro-enterprises structure in the Sicilian inland. As far as extension is concerned, Enna is the fifth province of the region (2500 kmq), it has also the lowest density of population (68 inhab/sq.km) and the least number of residents (173.000) (the data are updated to 01/01/2009 (ISTAT)).

During the centuries, the territory has played a leading role as scene of important entrepreneurial “adventures” as feudal baronage and, at the beginning of the 20th century, the sulphur extractive industry traces of which are still visible nowadays.

The territory still maintains its valuable and precious natural features as the lake of Pergusa and important S.C.I. and S.P.A.

The whole enterprise structure consists of about 16.000 parties (regional tail ender), most of which operate in the services field (Figures 4 and 5).

**Figure 4: Number of Enterprises Recorded in 2009; Chamber of Commerce of Enna (2010)**

PROVINCE	Valori assoluti				Variazioni tendenziali			
	I Trimestre	II Trimestre	III Trimestre	IV Trimestre	I Trimestre	II Trimestre	III Trimestre	IV Trimestre
TRAPANI	49.860	49.899	49.940	49.673	-3,1	-2,0	-1,7	-1,7
PALERMO	97.530	97.933	98.363	98.684	0,3	0,4	0,6	0,8
MESSINA	65.647	65.749	62.028	61.666	-1,3	0,1	-5,9	-6,4
AGRIGENTO	44.929	44.994	44.983	44.356	-1,1	-1,2	-1,4	-2,4
CALTANISSETTA	26.472	26.591	26.640	26.509	-2,7	-0,4	-0,4	-0,3
<b>ENNA</b>	<b>15.955</b>	<b>15.930</b>	<b>15.981</b>	<b>15.949</b>	<b>-0,8</b>	<b>-1,6</b>	<b>-1,3</b>	<b>-0,9</b>
CATANIA	102.873	103.573	103.424	103.515	-1,4	0,3	-0,3	0,5
RAGUSA	33.952	34.001	34.138	34.265	0,4	0,5	0,5	0,9
SIRACUSA	36.404	36.599	36.730	36.243	0,1	1,0	0,8	-0,6
TOTALE	473.622	475.269	472.227	470.860	-1,0	-0,1	-1,0	-1,0

**Figure 5: Principal data on the labour market in Enna province. Year 2009 compared to year 2008; Chamber of Commerce of Enna (2010)**

Provincia	2009	2008	Var. Ass. 2008-2009	Var. % 2008-2009
Forza Lavoro	60.176	58.489	1.687	2,9%
- di cui: Persone di cerca di occupazione	9.122	9.344	-222	-2,4%
- di cui: Totale Occupati	51.054	49.145	1.909	3,4%
di cui: AGRICOLTURA	3.654	3.809	-155	-4,1%
di cui: INDUSTRIA	11.224	12.785	-1.561	12,2%
di cui: SERVIZI	36.175	32.631	3.544	10,9%
di cui: Dipendenti	37.336	37.637	-301	-0,8%
di cui: Indipendenti	13.718	11.508	2.210	19,2%
Tasso di attività totale	52,9%	52,0%		0,9%
Tasso di disoccupazione totale	15,2%	16,0%		-0,8%
Tasso di occupazione totale	44,8%	43,6%		1,2%

Analyzing the data collected in the report 2009 (Chamber of Commerce Enna) on the economical situation of the province we can deduce that we are at a considerable standstill due, in a certain way, to the common caution largely used by the actors. Furthermore, the economic crisis has enhanced this stand-by situation in which the entrepreneurial class in Enna, with its thousands of small and micro- enterprises, often disappointed, is still waiting for answers from the local government. It is also interesting to consider the province plus value which is only the 0,17% of the national datum, and 5,39% of the regional one; these figures show a weak productive structure not capable to exploit and make the territory production competitive.

From simple remarks we can notice how all firms lack of a cluster organization. From this point of view it would be necessary for the firms to introduce innovations and give boost to the research; procedures for the firms empowerment and awareness should be planned. It is a necessary training phase for the whole territory in order to reach a mature and structured sharing of the resources among different enterprises similar as far as products, manufacturing process, sphere of activity, sales proceeds, size are concerned.

A research carried out in San Diego (California USA), territory full of intangible and enviable resources shows the tourism cluster extraordinary international opening, which as time goes by, it has a great impact on the increase of the local productivity and in terms of attractiveness which *“is linked to the local network made of formal and informal relationships among parties belonging to five different but strictly connected sub-clusters (sport events, attractions, journeys, catering, reception)”* (Presutti, 2009:30).

So, as far as the Sicilian inland is concerned, it is a question of studying a new development pattern re-examining the actors and the elements. As already pointed out, we must underline that this process cannot be successful without both a strategic synergy and, at the same time, a synergy of political intents that involve the institutions, the entrepreneurs, the professional world, the working class and their Organizations, information media, Universities (i.e. the role of Kore University) and the cultural world. To achieve an actual and long-lasting development, the Sicilian territory can find out a strategy creating more or less complex network systems that involve three fields all strictly related to the environment: tourism, bio-energies and agroindustrial.

Combining resources on the basis of a culture that focuses on the territory means to develop its potentiality, to increase the plus-value of its production, to cut down costs achieving economies of scale: in other words it means to make the territory more competitive.

### “PILGRIMS, KNIGHTS, AND TRAVELERS PATH” IN SICILY

The economic development of the area can be facilitated and catalyzed by the actions taken by local *intelligentiae* able to promote integrated relational tourism offer. The path of the pilgrims, of the knights and travellers in this context, allowed to activate a “smart relational network” that tries to promote small and medium-sized companies that get advantage out of the development of a system with different and complementary realities.

A first aspect to be analyzed is purely educational / training: because an itinerary is not deprived of its meanings related to culture and knowledge of the place, the network should be designed and built by whom has the exact cognition of the site: the inhabitants. There are three different levels of training. The first level is related to animation of the area able to educate “in the field” the local population.

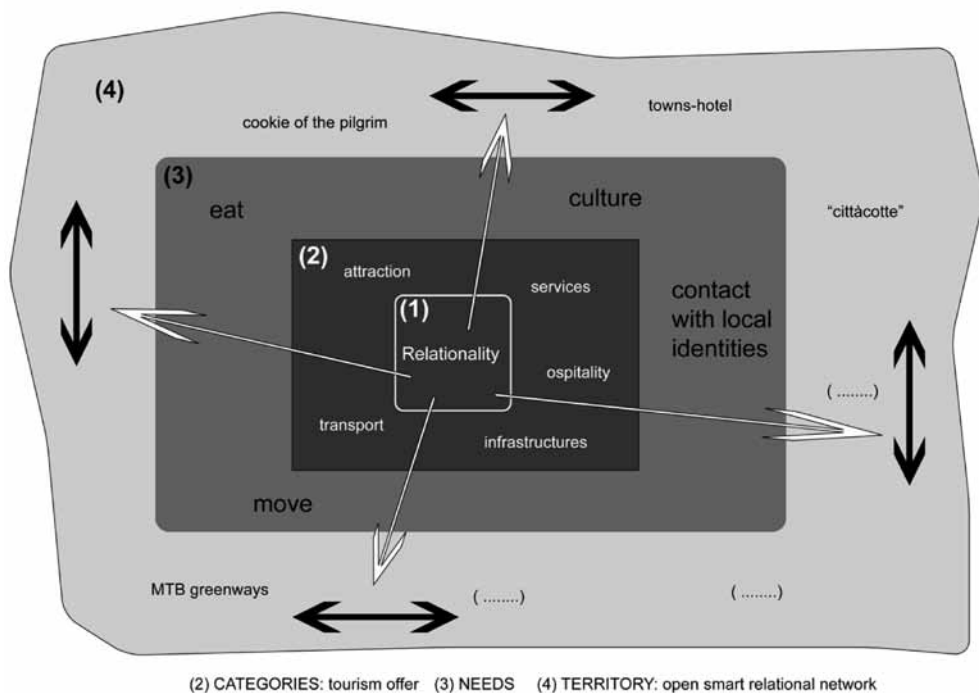
The second aspect rather concerns with the training of skilled operators, for example, through the organization of masters aiming at the development of research in relational integrated tourism (University of Enna, Kore, for example, offers a wide range of training on these topics, and it is candidated as the fourth Sicilian University). The third level finally concerns with the training of entrepreneurs, since, as already mentioned, the dialogue between public and private sectors is crucial to a harmonious territorial development.

Therefore the theme itinerary promotes itself as “local project”, emphasizing “*the existence of a collective project rooted in a territory seen as a place of common living and therefore as a place to care of and to preserve for everybody’s benefit. Then participation, implicit in the action, becomes guardian and promoter of the spirit of the place. The size of the local area becomes “a crux in a network of virtuous and supportive relations aimed at experiencing strengthening democratic practices [...] that allow you to resist to the liberal domain”* (Latouche, 2008:58,61).

Therefore all reflections on the concept of relationality concern as a core, as the nucleus from which, through a theoretical analysis, we revitalize small and micro enterprises that have positive feedback for the use and the knowledge of the territory.

The construction process of the smart network suggested consists of four interconnected coplanar levels that can be summarized in the centrifugal diagram of Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Centrifugal diagram of smart relational network**



### Level 1: relationality

The first level is that of relationality tout-court (intended as the relationships among places, among people and between people and places). In contrast to the proposals of the major tour operators, the involvement of local stakeholders appears to be a winning factor in promoting a theme itinerary planning. Relationality is the plus value of tourism, a value that is required and searched by those travellers who wish to be “present” in a place rather than simply be “arrived” (Landowsky, 1996).

This nucleus is the binding between successive layers, which are therefore permeated by this theoretical-methodological setting.

### **Levels 2 and 3: supply and demand categories in tourism**

The second level is related to an initial discussion about the factors that determine the tourist offer. In fact, to activate a flux of tourists, it is important that a territory (or a system of territories) has a certain appeal. The categories related to the quality of the sites are: attractions, services, transport, infrastructures, hospitality.

These categories are connected in practice to the tourists needs. In this way the attractions are related to the need of culture, knowledge and entertainment; services are linked, among others, to the needs for accommodation and catering; transports and infrastructures are related to the need of moving from one place to another; hospitality is finally associated with the need of getting in touch with local identities, local economies and local *intelligentiae*.

### **Level 4: the smart relational network**

The fourth level is the most pragmatic, it is able to describe in detail the actions made possible by the activation of the enhancement of theme itinerary, which is then linked to different standards of *ciblée* relationality. In the general framework of the built network, the theme path of pilgrims and knights is the glue, the keystone of the whole system, since it is able to attract and connect public and private institutions, associations and medium and micro-enterprises. The application level explained here pertaining to the cultural activities, represents the major field of ITIMED work.

We can distinguish three level of relationality. The standard or basic level of relationality can be represented by the welcoming service that takes place in the sites. The visitor is welcomed by appropriately trained people (through inbound and training sessions on the job, stage with experts and members of the Scientific Committee), who have been provided with the necessary knowledge to be able to report the events and cultural contexts of the places, based on a logical-diachronic history, as a product of communicative-relational most modern methods of effective communication.

The welcoming activity provides also an important dialogical phase stimulated by different parallelisms and comparisons (when possible with the situation of the territory where the visitor comes from) used during exposition. This level of relationality is used by Itimed in the fruition of the Capitular Church of San Cataldo which pushes its reputation up to the representation of the brand in some events in Palermo promoted by the local government. For a so famous monument an interpretative-communication strategy, as above described, has been successful in terms of “revealing” action (Carter, 2001) for the visitors.

In addition, to welcome activities, the need for culture is satisfied by the organization of cultural events. Through the involvement of a cultural guide like Jean Paul Barreaud, it was given the esoteric reading of the church of S. Cataldo; in the same way, it has been organized a concert performed by the group “Ensemble Antiche Contaminazioni” on the Arabic inheritance in Christian and Safardita music and, also a concert for zither in collaboration with the “Opera Siciliana Pellegrinaggi”.

There is a second and more complex level that relates interpretative users and places; this has been experienced for the reopening of the church of Santa Cristina La Vetere to tourist use after twenty years of non usability. In this case, the reopening involved an attempt to reconstitute a relationship between the cultural heritage and urban background: *via dei Pellegrini* (containing probably a part of the walls of the ancient Punic Palermo) which is already perceived as a “testimony” of the basic theme of the path. In this case the interpretative research gave as result an exhibition and a conference in the present lane (degraded and not properly used). The final aim is to experience the first level of relationality, and show a new (potential) image not only of the monument itself but also of a part of the city connected to it. In this case the invitation of the local government and local enterprises aimed to build all resources available that could be involved, since the first programming phases. This second level of relationality is not only applied on an urban scale, but on a territorial one, though it is a work-in-progress process.

A third application level relates to a particular way of using the urban itinerary, in this case, the suggested model of interpretation puts together a successful urban path of the knights and pilgrims with a group sport activity based on intuitive orientation called Orienteering. Here visitors are encouraged to build their own “revelation” of places, through the mechanism of the “game.”

Beyond the cultural activities, of particular interest are the practical applications related to transports and infrastructures. In fact, according to relationality and to regional policies, promoting a different concept of mobility can be useful to risemantice the territory through a slower and more aware fruition. In this context, the network includes the involvement of associations that deal with soft mobility; considering also the theme of the path, important results were obtained through the collaboration with the Association “I Vispi Siciliani”, of Piazza Armerina, that (on one hand through cycling) offers the possibility of knowing the territory, and, on the other, acts with the purpose of converting the abandoned railway tracks in greenways. In this regard, regional policies have recently shown some interest, as demonstrated by the fact that according to the line of action 3.3.2.4. of P.O.F.E.S.R. 2007 - 2013 they approved grants for the activation of a regional strategic plan for non-motorized mobility for a total of 16,5 million euros. This cooperation is also valuable for the building of a physical connection between the macro centrality of the itinerary (Palermo) and the micro one, Piazza Armerina, that should be evaluated. The discussion on category of services shows that this town of about twenty thousand inhabitants, is the second crux of the regional network built up by the itinerary. Known almost exclusively for the mosaics of the Villa Romana del Casale, Piazza Armerina is instead characterized by a rich historical medieval center and by an equally rich district that includes, among other things, the park-mining Floristella Grotta-calda and the Oriented Natural Reserve Rossomanno-Grottascura-Bellia. These features, accompanied by the presence of a number of small hotels and B & Bs, make Piazza Armerina an eligible site for the realization of a town-hotel. Only recently, almost all accommodations have been forming a trade association. Talking about the involvement of medium and micro enterprises in the network, significant are the cases of two companies closely related to the

itinerary: a factory that produces and sells biscuits Modica of Monreale and “Cittàcotte”, a very small handicraft company. In the first case it is a medium company involved in the route of pilgrims and knights in relation to the spreading of the cookie of the pilgrim. This last one is a food that has marked and accompanied the pilgrims, being non-perishable and very energetic. Offered to visitors at the church of Santa Cristina la Vetere, that lies along the path of the Pilgrims, it is also a chance to make an experience out of the product. It calls the idea of hospitality inherent to the site and, in short, helps to understand the meaning of the place itself. The recipe has been identified by Prof. Basil Arona, author of the text “The kitchen of the Via Francigena”. The biscuit, called in the area of Palermo “*Viscotta a lievitu*”, is actually present throughout the Euro-Mediterranean area interested by the passage of the pilgrims. The involvement of the company “Antico Biscottificio Modica” is a case history in the activation of economic flywheels in the territory through the smart network, since it allows the company to extend its sphere of influence far beyond the already consolidated economic relations. “Cittàcotte” is instead a micro-enterprise focused on the selling of copies in miniature scale of Sicilian churches and monuments. Its production, whose store does not enjoy a favorable location, is directed mainly to collectors and admirers. The networking of this company will facilitate the implementation of revenue, intersecting other segments of the network.

## CONCLUSION

All the elements listed in the fourth level of the network talk to each other, reinforcing each other. The strength and the reason why the network can be defined as “smart” are that the dynamics of interconnection, that allow to exploit the territory ideologically shortening distances, shortening the time that otherwise would be necessary to achieve aims related to economic development of individual businesses.

In this sense we cannot avoid to mention the so-called ITC squares, places that for their nature are delegated for meeting and exchange of data. The ITC square creates an electronic link between the virtual and real place, projecting all the possible relationships at a virtually unlimited number of links. To all the web stations that are in a site it is usually related the general idea of a net that by its very nature leads to amplify the interest on individual actions carried out in a distant space and put them in relation.



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# Borgo Pantano: seeds for the future<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The recent history of Sicily has been characterised by a continuous depletion of the natural and historical landscape. The territorial memory of the rural areas has been mainly wiped out. Nevertheless, lots of villages, abandoned since the post-war era, are fairly restorable, but only some of these are coming back to life thanks to the devotion of a few men who are carrying out remarkable projects. One of these projects focuses on Borgo Pantano, a rural village in the Tyrrhenian-Peloritan region. This 15th century hamlet has been abandoned in the Sixties, and so remained until a descendant of one of the old inhabitants decided to bring it back to life. The project aims at recovering not only the buildings but also the culture of the village. In order to reach this aim, a trans-disciplinary study has been carried out in the present paper.

**Keywords:** integrated relational tourism, Sicily, sustainable development, agro-environmental sustainability, ecological footprint, post-modern society.

## INTRODUCTION

The present paper aims at showing by means of an integrated trans-disciplinary project that the traditional activities and lifestyle of Borgo Pantano's inhabitants can be considered an excellent example of sustainable development. For this reason the present study can be thought out as a base for the eco-compatible restoration planning of the village, which could become in a close future a natural laboratory where to recover the equilibrium between nature and man's activities within a harmonized project.

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To reach this aim, first of all, it was necessary to define the history of the territorial dynamics both of the village and of the region where the village itself is located.

This preliminary work was later integrated with an analytical study of the customs and eating habits of the village's residents, analyzing in particular the agricultural aspects of Pantano's territory, highlighting the possibility to reach an economic system in equilibrium with nature by means of a quantitative approach based on the balancing between potential productivity and average consumption per person per product. These data were finally used to calculate a partial ecological footprint, useful to understand the impact of man's activity on the village.

Data were then visualised using a Geographic Information System, able to emphasize, by means of thematic maps, the fundamental aspects which characterised the village in the Fifties.

### **POST-MODERNITY AND TOURISM: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH**

Providing a definition of tourism is not easy. Unless it can be accompanied by a qualifying attribute (such as bathing, cultural, religious, etc.), the concept is too vague and dispersive. In fact, the different features of tourism are combined with the idea of a population moving from their habitual place, for different reasons and periods that are not too short. Nevertheless, until a century ago, there was a very precise idea of tourism: it was a moment of cultural enrichment, something that often lasted several months and was considered, by the ruling classes in Europe as a crucial phase of an individual's educational process. In its highest form, it was called the "Grand Tour". Tourism was no longer the journey towards the unknown, as it was for Homer's Ulysses and the fifteenth-century explorers, but a journey towards the exotic. It was a moment of understanding of the world and its diversity, but more than this it was the rediscovery of one's being, a moment of self-definition. During the twentieth century, with the phenomenon of "the masses", in its most common form, tourism lost its deepest meaning. Only a few segments managed to maintain certain elements of originality. Generated by the growing demand, the market and globalization processes led to the flattening of places, the cancellation of those differences of which discovery was the phenomenal essence. From the second half of the twentieth century, tourists no longer travelled to discover but to confirm those exotic environments, advertised in brochures and offered by tour operators in packages, without losing the comforts and habits of daily life (which, on the contrary were emphasized).

Discovery turned into fiction, just as reality, after all, as required by the post-modern logic (or if you prefer over modern) theorized by contemporary authors such as Marc Auge, Jean Baudrillard and Zygmunt Bauman. Therefore, the twentieth century tourist ends up emphasizing those ethnocentric characteristics already present in the Modern Age travellers. Certainly, we cannot say that this was a sustainable tourism and that it did not leave scars on the ground. The big, multinational, leisure and entertainment companies obviously had a less devastating impact on the environment than the oil companies did, but they also destroyed coastal structures, compromised landscapes, promoted illegal building and modified the economic and social structure, the traditions and cultural values that make up the world's mosaic.

Of course, this was, and is, globalization, its harmful effects, from which we try to defend ourselves nowadays, forcing a change, creating a limit to unsustainable practices, particularly in the “dark times” - to quote Hannah Arendt, but “fortunately” only in terms of economic recession – in which humanity is living, in this early twenty-first century.

Today in this field, as in other economic areas, we need to aim at an economic re-territorialisation. This means reconnecting production activities with places, bringing out the local individuality, ensuring that the economic dynamics are not exclusively handled by the external centres of political and economic power. A different style of consumption regarding goods, services, and production methods must be imposed, a sobriety forced by a difficult economic period. And this also applies to the tourist division, by testing new models, such as the “hands-on tourism”, that aims to recreate a refined and authentic travel experience, or the “integrated relational tourism”, aimed at the redevelopment of rural villages and the replacement of inland areas, or the “heritage tourism”, that aims at recreating an authentic experience of those places and activities that represent the history of people and places, from both past and present. We are moving towards an environmental and cultural sustainability. Man is now starting to realize the abuses committed in the recent past. In his soul, he has always nourished a good sense of transgression, a sense of guilt over the loss of Eden, the end of natural status and the birth of civilization. This sense of guilt has gradually been growing since the industrial revolution, because the impact of human activity on the environment, on the natural and anthropic landscapes has been really quite devastating. A reconciliation between man and nature, the great mother that procreated him (Demeter or Isis in the ancient Mediterranean culture), is needed, as well as the rediscovery of cultural roots that, if not properly managed, are likely to be eradicated by globalization.

### **BORGO PANTANO, MODEL OF SUSTAINABILITY/LOCAL DEVELOPMENT**

The 1950's marked a sharp division in Sicilian history. The failure of the Agrarian Reform and the beginning of the industrialization program in Southern regions, supported by the Cassa di Sviluppo per il Mezzogiorno, opened the doors to profound changes in the area and upturned the urban hierarchy, in Sicily as well as in other Southern regions of Italy. In the space of twenty years the appearance of the South has drastically changed. As Giuseppe Giarrizzo (1989) reminds us, rather than migration to Northern Italy and Europe (the flow to the new worlds had already greatly decreased), it is the internal migration that rewrites the island's geography. The inland mountainous areas were suddenly abandoned, while many coastal centres reported a population growth that had never occurred in Sicily before. The image evoked by Bernardo Rossi-Doria is emblematic: “the meat opposed to the bone”, for Sicily and for all the South. But on the island, much more than for the rest of Southern Europe and the Mediterranean, the presence of substantial urban-demographic concentrations along the coasts is already a historical, long-term, characteristic. However, in those years, the weight of Palermo, Catania and Messina grew even further. Again in the coastal regions, the industrialization policy also created new centres.

In Priolo-Augusta, Gela, Milazzo and Termini Imerese, the development poles attracted the population and emptied the inland areas. Perhaps, the most important example in Sicily is Siracusa, where in three decades - from 1950 to 1980 - the population grew from seventy thousand to one hundred and twenty thousand. But Gela, Augusta, Milazzo and Barcellona were facing a hardly manageable demographic emergency as well. It is quite easy to understand just what these centres had to deal with: urban planning, service predisposition, traffic congestion. At the same time, mass tourism led to illegal building, the gradual cementing of coasts, while in the three main centres of the island, mafia and speculation were erecting one building after another. In Palermo building was not only restricted to peripheral areas: the Viale Libertà bore the brunt of it, having lost many of its valuable mansions, replaced by modern high-rise blocks of flats, that look all the same. Messina grew chaotically, without any town planning criteria, without any logic, torrents were buried and, at the cost of public safety, earthquake safety rules were ignored. Meanwhile, the cement culture spread for emulation and even in the inland areas, the small towns in demographic decline were no longer safe. There is a Sicily that is disappearing, Leonardo Sciascia (1982) wrote, "under the television aerials, the cars, the paroxysmal consumerism, the rural exodus, the disarmament of sulphur mines". Only a few were safe.

Among the victims of depopulation there is Pantano, a small rural village in the Tyrrhenian-Peloritan area. However, it is only a victim of abandonment and certainly not of overbuilding, if we consider that it was the absence of humans that has preserved Pantano from the disasters caused by "Sicilian modernity". This splendid rural archaeological example in Sicily lies in Rometta, a town in the province of Messina. Built on a Peloritan mountain depression, about 300 meters above the sea level, Pantano can be found among the villages of Rapano, Filari and Scarcelli - the latter spreading into the nearby town of Saponara. Its origins date back to the fifteenth century, thus before the age of establishment that is, perhaps, another hinge moment in Sicilian history together with the recent events described above. In fact, between 1573 and 1714, 113 new agro-towns were born on the island with the Viceroy's permission (the well-known "licentia populandi"). In less than a century, the towns doubled from 170 to 340. In 1693, the earthquake in Val di Noto gave further impetus to this period of territorial reorganization. With their perfect geometric plans - as modern standards imposed - the new centres started to stud the island, drawing new urban networks, establishing new hierarchies. So, in addition to the morphology of the area - the orographical aspect - that holds Pantano in a depression, thanks also to these events the village never experienced a significant population growth, which would have otherwise upset its system and architecture. With the Sicilian population increasing from 550,000 according to the 1505 census to 1,020,792 in 1583, the sixteenth century explosion would find an outlet in the recently founded centres, which the barons would then promote in the whole region (Ligresti, 2002). Therefore, it is probably due to the emergence of these new poles that the village has managed to keep its "Y-shaped" urban planning intact, as well as its typical medieval rural housing scheme (Figures 1; 2).

However, in spite of its small size, Pantano did not play a subordinate role in the political and economic dynamics of the Tyrrhenian-Peloritan territory. It was perfectly integrated in

an urban system of small rural centres interacting with each other. This is demonstrated by the fact that, built in the sixteenth century and dedicated to Our Lady of Grace, the village church is more ancient than the San Domenico church, situated in the upper Rapano village and built after 1604.

Therefore, before this date the little church of Pantano is supposed to have been the only place of worship in the district. Furthermore, even though the village has always been self-sufficient, with its own food and agricultural production, its economic relationship with the neighbouring towns has always been considerable. The last inhabitants of the village still remember some women from Saponara and Scarcelli who came to Pantano, singing 'u riddu, loaded with straw and hay. These women then took the road back or went on towards Spadafora, thus drawing the "roads of songs". Pantano was also an important sericulture area.

The village was continuously inhabited until the early Sixties of the last century, when the previously mentioned demographic changes caused the site to be gradually abandoned. The industrial pole of Milazzo-Villafranca catalysed a demographic flow towards the coast and, with less than 77 people, Pantano was finally abandoned. This depopulation caused the end of production, business and life, but paradoxically ended up by preserving the village, making it an exceptional case of rural archaeology in Sicily. Today, Pantano is exactly as it was in the Sixties. Of course the state of abandonment led to the building's decay (nothing that cannot be properly recovered), but not one sack of concrete nor one gram of asphalt have been poured onto Pantano. The absolute absence of man has saved the village from the horrors that have, elsewhere, spoiled the Sicilian landscape. Perhaps because of this, with its singularity and the scientific interest that it obviously excited, the situation of Pantano is without parallels in Sicily. In this small rural town it is possible - more than elsewhere - to understand a recently died world with its logic and its social and economic mechanisms.

Pantano has about forty houses, spread around the renovated church and its small square. The architectural building style is very poor but dignified. Today the village is no longer abandoned. A company called "Incanti & Memorie" has bought all the buildings in the village, with the aim of bringing a rigorous upgrading project to a close. The initiatives connected with Pantano started in 1994. Since then the village, already registered in the MOTRIS plan, has been the subject of various studies led by the University of Reggio Calabria - Department of Architecture. The OSETT (Observatory of Economic and Tourist Development in the Tyrrhenian Area) also contributes, along with "Incanti & Memorie", to the supervising of the cultural aspects of the project. Moreover, for some years, OSETT has been promoting interesting initiatives such as "The roots of memory", an annual cultural festival in which Pantano with its remarkable scenery and its traditions plays the main role. Providing a total investment of more than four million euros (partly supported by public and partly by private funds), the recovery plan for the village is a painstaking and unusual work in a difficult context as Sicily is. Starting from detailed study of materials, building techniques, farming organization, village land, water and tradition management, the goal set by this project is a full and rigorous upgrading of Pantano.

As previously said, to confirm the scientific character of the work, Universities in Sicily and Reggio Calabria have recently shown an interest in this project. Nothing has been left out, from technical to social aspects, the Project is trying really hard to recreate a lost world and its features that run the risk of disappearing from the collective memory. Everything must be faithfully reconstructed: even Pantano last inhabitants' 'nciurii (epithets) will be recovered, and this will define the new toponomastic. Ethical aspects will not be left out either. On the 26th of January 2006, the City Council in Rometta approved the Protocol of Ethics, that establishes the guidelines for the recovery activities of the village. Moreover, there is a pending Charter of Ecology and Ethics, a program where the principles of social and economic sustainability are established in order to regulate the village operations after the recovery. The final goal is to create a model of alternative accommodation, an evolution of the "common heritage village", a concept that is difficult to define, but that is becoming a reality in Pantano. As will be later explained, one of the project's basic principles is the sustainability of the environment, uses and traditions. The latter will be maintained and reintroduced. Staying in Pantano, in a typical Mediterranean rural landscape, travellers will be able to escape from a world that globalization has distorted, renew those roots that modernization has cut off, recover a sober and dignified way of living that consumerism has transformed and that now seems to be the only possible. The typical, traditional dishes of the country will be reproduced, the temporary guest will be invited to take part in the village's traditional activities and, most important, to satisfy his need for community. It doesn't matter if he is German, French or Piedmontese, the reconciliation with nature will take place anyway. In that case, it won't be a return to his roots, but a return to the discovery, to the satisfaction of the inner human need to wonder at the world.

In a region where the development patterns have always been imposed from above, where the power elites have been able to turn to their favour the consequences of every political change, even when apparently democratic and respectful of local identities, Sicilian people gave themselves up to a compulsory inaction, a vain evolutionism - subject of a relevant literature produced by the regional culture. Initiatives such as Pantano Project need therefore to be encouraged and supported not only for their value and quality, but also because they rise in the territory and for the territory and could be an example to emulate, so as to light a path, the only pervious at the moment, which is local development. Only by rediscovering our origins and emphasizing our differences we can live free, as Socrates said in Plato's *Phaedo*, referring to the Mediterranean: such as frogs and ants - with mutual differences - around our pond.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT**

In order to carry out a reliable description of the village, emphasizing the important aspects of its social life as well as the traditional agriculture and the average consumptions activity of the inhabitants in the Fifties, a quantitative study on resources' production and consumption has been here carried out. Yielded results were essentially based on data from the degree thesis of Paolo Bisazza (2009). These data were collected in several years by means of direct research activities carried out by the administrator of "Incanti & Memorie", Orazio Bisazza.



Previous data integrated with new field investigations were then implemented within a GIS database, which allowed a more complete visualisation of the environmental aspects of Pantano territory, as well as contributing in the estimate of a partial ecological footprint based only on the food consumption in the Fifties.

## DESCRIPTION OF PANTANO AND DAILY LIFE OF THE VILLAGE

At present only 10% of the 40 buildings forming the village show a fairly good condition of preservation. 50% are in a very bad state and the remaining 40% are composed of ruins.

The Church, located in the centre of the village, is constituted by a central and symmetrical hall and by an annexed body. Inside, the choir is placed upon the entrance wall. Here the children used to gather to sing the Sunday hymns. The furnishing is simple and devoid of stylistic references, the holy furnishings and the only valuable picture, dating back to 1730, have been stolen. Typical of the houses of the village are the cisterns and the ovens for the baking of bread. Elements related to past dominations are not missing: an example of it is the dammus of Muslim origin in front of the Church, or a vaulted passage in which different architectural styles converge. The village was also provided with a collective millstone where the wine-pressing usually took place. The grape harvest was an aggregation feast: many hands were needed, and the workers used to gather for lunch. The women cooked 'u sugu and 'u pisciscoccu â ghiotta while Cinniredda, the itinerant musician, used to sing and play the accordion.

The working activities were always accompanied by songs, which performed the important task of easing the hard work. The capuani were a typically feminine repertoire, related to the working environment of the ghiummi, groups of six-seven women entrusted to the carrying of goods. A characteristic element of this song was 'u riiddu, which had a basical voice called back by others, and was often used to inform of one's arrival while on the other side of the valley other voices echoed an answer, until all of them harmonized in a common melody. As previously hinted, 'u riiddu was used by working women walking a path which will be soon restored, called «The path of songs». This path started from Saponara and took the women to Pantano's fields.

The most typical element in the village is however the Nurse's Tower. The network of baiu-las, dating to the XIII century, held up at that time the administrative system. Justice was applied by a judge, who usually was the lord of the nearby city of Rometta. At the castle's tower the bailiff, together with jurors from Pantano, had the duty to solve issues related to the agricultural activities, especially those related to the cultivation of corn, linen and silk. As about this last activity, it is to be remembered that Rometta's silk market was very renowned in the area. It was connected with a small local entrepreneurial class headed by the Bosurgi family. This family gathered under its power the small farmers and organized the local weaving of the rough fibres, even entering the largest Messina market and getting to own in its port a commercial organization which exported silk drapes.

Part of the silk and linen was waived for the needs of local families, while the rest of it was delivered to Rometta's commercial organization for selling.

### **FOOD HABITS OF THE HAMLET**

Studying the eating habits and the consumption per person of Borgo Pantano's inhabitants it has emerged how, in the 1950-1960 decade, their diet was mainly based on vegetables. Cereals were the chief nourishment (Table 1). With an average value per year of 181 kg they constituted 54% of the food consumption, legumes and vegetables came second with 92.5 kg per year (27%), followed by fruit 36.6 kg (11%), meat and its derivatives with 23.3 kg (7%), and finally fish (nearly only stockfish) with 5 kg per year (1%). As about cereals, wheat flour was mostly used to make bread and pasta, and corn wheat was used for the preparation of polenta and baludde, the local corn bread.

Among legumes, broad beans, beans and peas were the most consumed, all of them securing a good protein contribution. Among vegetables the favourite were potatoes, onions, tomatoes, eggplants, peppers and artichokes. As for fruit, prickly pears, plums, cherries, apples, pears, pomegranates and grapes.

Cultivation, especially the arboreal ones, was based on the use of cultivars and local accessions, which today are at risk of extinction because of the widespread abandonment of the fields and the introduction of hybrids.

Finally, it should be highlighted that meat and fish represented only about 8% of the food consumption. People mostly ate chicken and rabbit meat, followed by pork, goat and bovine meat. All families at the village used to breed chickens, which guaranteed a production of eggs.

**Table 1: Pantano's Residents Food Consumption per person (average data from the decade 1950÷1960 )\***

Food/culture	consume (kg/year)	tot village (kg/year)	consume tot village consume (q)
wheat	165.0	12,705.0	127.05
maize	16.0	1,232.0	12.32
citrus	6.6	508.2	5.08
vegetables (legumes, eggplants, etc)	60.0	4,620.0	46.20
fresh fruit	30.0	2,310.0	23.10
potatoes	20.0	1,540.0	15.40
tomatoes	12.5	962.5	9.63
oil	5.0	385.0	3.85
wine	109.5	8,431.5	84.32
cheese and ricotta**	3.0	231.0	2.31
milk	36.5	2,810.5	28.11
other fat (lard )	0.5	38.5	0.39
goat meat	2.0	154.0	1.54
bovine meat	2.0	154.0	1.54
pork meat	5.0	385.0	3.85
chicken and rabbit meat	6.0	462.0	4.62
fish	1.0	77.0	0.77
stockfish	4.0	308.0	3.08
eggs (n.)	48.0	3,696.0	36.96
Water for feeding	730.0	56,210.0	562.00
Water for domestic use (20 l/day)	7,300.0	562,100.0	5,621.00

\* data obtained through the elaboration of information given by ancient people of the area, estimated, and derived from bibliographic sources.

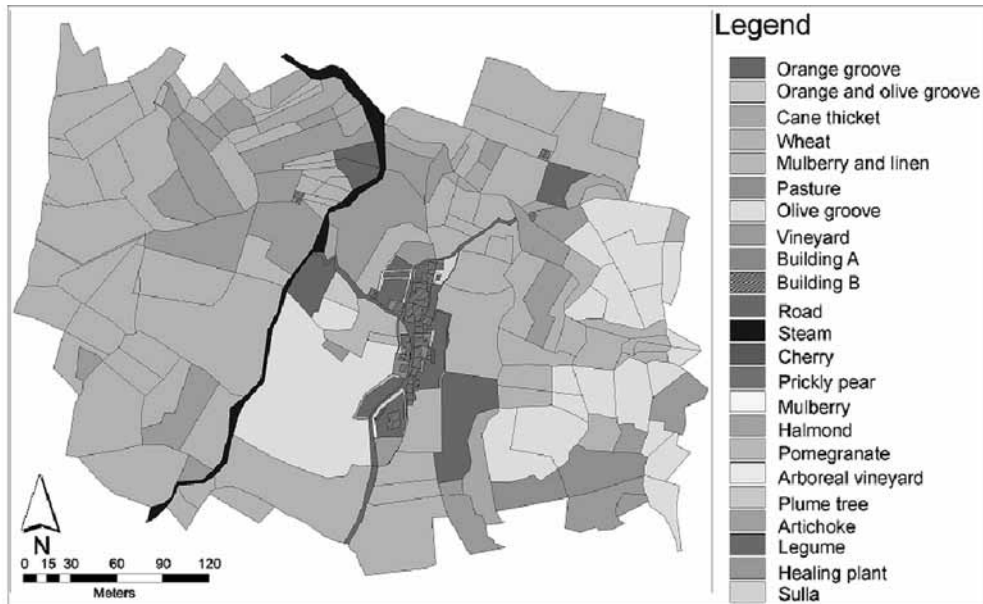
\*\* necessary about 15 l of milk to make 1 kg of cheese and ricotta

## AGRO-ALIMENTARY PRODUCTION

After the Second World War the agricultural productions of the village guaranteed sustenance to its 77 residents. In order to purpose the construction of a natural laboratory able to rebuild up the Pantano's traditional food system, a study on the agricultural productions has been carried out. This study took as a reference a surface of nearly nineteen ha (18.7852 ha) neighbouring the village, where the residents predominantly performed their agricultural activities during the 1950-1960 decade.

The present elaboration (Tab. 2) shows that on this area (18.7852 ha) the practised agricultural cultivations were the arboreal seeding with 7.3672 ha (39%), the seeding with 3.0954 (16%), the olive with 2.9569 ha (16%), the arboreal vineyard and the vineyard, respectively with 1.6470 ha (9%) and 1.5290 ha (8%), the pasture with 0.7530 ha (4%), the cane thicket with a surface of 0.6820 ha (4%) and the prickly pear with 0.0267 ha (less than 1%) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Use of the Soil Map**



The arboreal seeding was composed of herbaceous cultivations (corn, horticultural or leguminous such as broad bean, bean and pea) together with arboreal cultivations (grapevine, plum, cherry, medlar, pear, apple, apricot, mulberry and almond). The seedings were made of corn cultivations and in small part of maize. In the arboreal vineyard the grapevine trees, normally raised as small trees, were joined with fruit trees. The cane thicket was of primary importance because the canes were employed as support for the horticultural cultivations and to build partitions and ceilings for the houses.

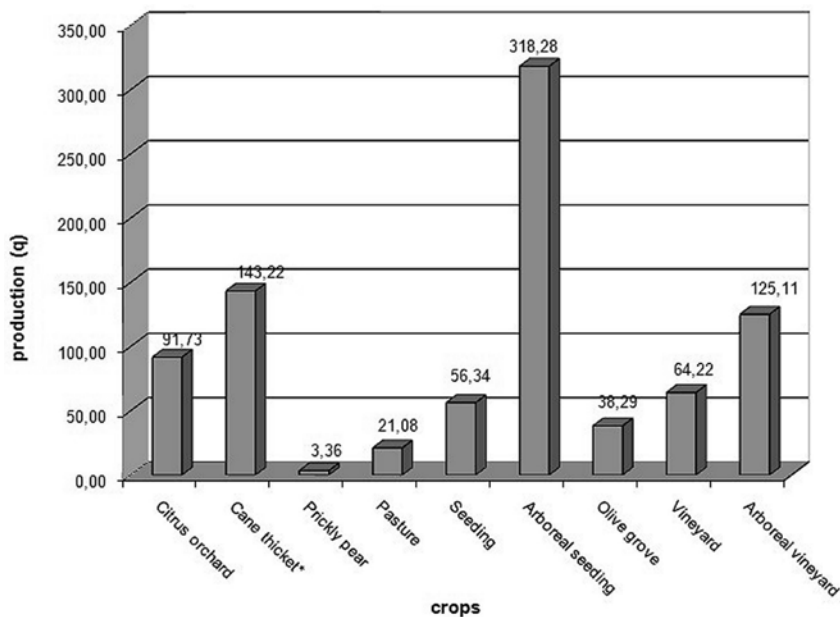
The cattle's feeding was guaranteed by areas destined to pasture and by the forage (mostly sulla), while the agricultural cultivations' remainings (legumes, broad beans, potatoes, etc.) were given to the animals (chickens, pigs and rabbits).

As for productivity, the main cultivation was the arboreal seeding with 318.28 quintals, followed by the cane thicket with 143.22 quintals, the arboreal vineyard with 125.11 quintals, the citrus orchard with 91.73, the vineyard with 64.22, the seeding with 56.34, the olive grove with 38.29, the pasture with 21.08 and the prickly pear with 3.36 quintals (Table 2 and Figure 2).

**Table 2: Agricultural area Farmed by Pantano's Residents, Cultivations and their Related Productions**

Cultivation	Cultivated surface m3	Average production q/ha	Total production (q)
Citrus orchard	7,280	126.00	91.73
Cane thicket*	6,820	210.00	143.22
Prickly pear	267	126.00	3.36
Pasture	7,530	28.00	21.08
Seeding	30,954	18.20	56.34
Arboreal seeding	73,672	43.20	318.28
Olive grove	29,569	12.95	38.29
Vineyard	15,290	42.00	64.22
Arboreal vineyard	16,470	75.96	125.11
tot	187,852		

\* estimated production

**Figure 2: Quantity of Production Obtained from the Farmed Surface Near the Village, Differentiated by Cultivation.**

## FOOD REQUIREMENTS

Considering data related to the consumption per capita and the areas farmed by Pantano's residents, we could further analyze and elaborate. We particularly want to highlight what was the necessary surface to satisfy the village's food requirements, and clarify whether the agricultural area was adequate to guarantee the production needed.

Comparing the villagers' food expenditure (in the considered period of time) and the average productions of the cultivations we got the value in ha of the surface necessary to supply food to Pantano's residents (Table 3). This calculation shows that to cover the food requirement of 127.05 quintals of wheat they needed a farmed surface of nearly 7 ha. Also, about 4.5 ha of grapevine surface, 2 ha of olive grove, 0.6 ha of vegetable garden and some hundred metres of citrus orchard, tomatoes, potatoes and corn were needed (Table 3).

About the meat and its derivatives (Table 4), the latest testimonies tell us that the breeding was mainly based on small animals and pigs. The village also owned two milkers, one of which was destined to the production of fresh milk, collected every morning by the Saponara milkman, 'u lattaru. The other one's milk instead was destined to the production of ricotta and cheese and sold in the surrounding villages. Moreover, the village had five sows, 25 goats, about 300 small animals and five calves fed stalling in the huts near the farmed fields. These calves, once fattened, were sold at Spadafora's fair.

So, the animal consistency in the village was of about ten units adult bovine (UBA). This calculation shows that the cattle load of about two UBA/ha was inadequate for the forage needs of the area under observation. The residents, in fact, got the missing forage from a neighbouring area called 'a valanca (the ravine) where no other cultivation was possible.

Analyzing the water expenditure for alimentary use it was verified that this came from the numerous wells of the village. Water for domestic use instead was collected from the roofs through waterspouts and then gathered in brick underground cisterns present in the houses, while another part of it came from the near wells and from springs. Multiplying the value of the roofs' surface for a coefficient of average outflow of the sloping roof (0.85), for the quantity in millimetres of average annual rain (about 800) and for a coefficient of 0.9 related to the losses that happen during the gathering (in cistern) we obtain a value of 293 m<sup>2</sup> of water gathered from the roofs. It is interesting to observe how this is approximately the volume of rain water collected from roofs, and covers more than 50% of the water requirement for domestic use.

The rain water carried by roofs to the waterspouts was gathered, as before said, in underground cisterns: their number was initially 32, and represents a distinguishing feature especially if related with the number of buildings, as it means that almost every house had its own water supply. In addition to the cisterns, there were two public wells of spring water in the village, which were also used as meeting points by the villagers. Of course the common problems in managing the local resources made this community very cohesive.

Summarizing, data related to the farmed surface necessary to the residents' food requirement show that they needed a surface of about fifteen ha, with five ha destined to pasture or forage. This means a surface approximately similar to the examined one. This analysis obviously doesn't want to assert that other economical and agro-alimentary exchange with the neighbouring towns didn't exist. Some of the village's residents in fact farmed fields in other areas and had commercial intercourses. The economic gains mainly came from the selling of calves and pigs, wine and processed goods (jams, dried fruit, tomatoes, dried figs) and from the supplying of linen and silk. Analyzing this survey's results it can be observed that the expenditure of natural resources was low and adequate to the regeneration ability of the renewable resources. Maximizing the efficiency in the use of resources also meant that eco-sustainable building techniques were applied. An example of this are the already mentioned systems for the gathering of rain waters, but also the terracing and the canalization works present along the village's slopes. The terracing was important for the territory's protection, because it made cultivable part of the land and it improved the stability of the slopes. The terraced landscapes, built to gain cultivable land from the slopes, protected the versants from hydro-geological hazard. Nature and man were then settled as a harmonic one. The drains for the gathering of water, called saje, were used to collect the meteoric waters and lead them to the near creeks. The resident was forced to keep clean the saja to avoid its occlusion and the consequent potential landslides and damages to his neighbours' parcels.

The importance of water in this area wasn't only related to its subsistence function for man and agriculture. For many centuries water was the essential propelling factor for the cereals' crushing system, through the complex network of water mills (now crumbling) diffused in the neighbouring area.

**Table 3: Average Production of Cultivations and Surface Necessary to the Villages' Food Requirements**

Food/cultivation	Tot village expenditure (q)	Average production q/ha	Necessary surface (ha)
wheat	127.05	18.20	6.9808
maize	12.32	200.0	0.0616
citrus	5.08	126.00	0.0403
vegetables (legumes, eggplants, etc)	46.20	73.85	0.6256
Fresh fruits	23.10	101.89	0.2267
potatoes	15.40	210.00	0.0733
tomatoes	9.63	210.00	0.0458
Olive oil	3.85	2.00	1.9250
wine	84.32	18.00	4.6842
			Tot 14.6633

**Table 4: Surfaces and Cattle Necessary to Satisfy the Meat and Derivatives' Requirement and the Water for Alimentary Use Requirement.**

Food/culture	Tot village expenditure (q)	Necessary surf (ha), cattle
Cheese and ricotta milk	2.31	n.1 milker and 25 goats
Other fats (lard)	28.11	
Goat meat	0.39	pigs
Bovine meat	1.54	about 25 goats
Pork meat	1.54	1 calf
Chicken and rabbit	3.85	5 swines
	4.62	about 310 hens, chickens and rabbits
Fish	0.77	bought
stockfish	3.08	bought
eggs (n.)	36.96	about 100 chickens guaranteed the production
Water for alimentary use	56.00	Springs and wells
Water for domestic use (20 l per day)	562.00	293 mc from roofs gathering 269 mc from springs and well
Pasture/forage necessary for the animals' feeding (about 10 UBA)		Considering a charge of 2 UBA/ha about 5 ha of pasture/forage are necessary

## ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT CALCULATION OF PANTANO

The above data can be used to calculate the food ecological footprint of Pantano in the 1950-1960 decade. The ecological footprint is a measure of human demand on the Earth's ecosystems. It compares human demand with the Earth's ecological capacity to regenerate. This index, nowadays, shows as the Western Countries, as well as the emergent ones, use ecological services two or three times as fast as their territories can renew them in order to maintain their present lifestyle. This alarming state could become irreversible and for this reason new patterns of development, based on energy conservation as well as on renewable energy, are required. This alarming state can become irreversible and then it is absolutely necessary to invoke a new model of development, based on the energy saving as well as on the renewable energy production.

In this view, Borgo Pantano's experience can become a natural laboratory for the experimentation of a life in equilibrium with the ecological footprint of its territory, recovering for instance the historical resource production of the village, following the equilibrium with the land and water resources necessary for an equilibrated consumption.



In order to calculate the ecological footprint in the 1950-1960 decade regarding vegetables consumption, the third column data of Tab. 3 have to be subdivided per 77 (the number of inhabitants). Differently, to calculate the hypothetical amount of productive land needed to produce meat, milk and derivatives required, we have to make use of several conversion factors available from literature data. Yielded results have to be added together (Tab. 5), so as to obtain the amount of land required to produce food resources.

In the Fifties the use of the car or of the electric energy was absolutely minimised. For this reason, their contribute to the final value of the ecological footprint of Pantano can be considered negligible.

In this view, the obtained result (i.e. 0.8652 –Tab.5) can be considered a reliable one, which can be compared to the reference equilibrium value of ecological footprint for Italy, available on-line. This value, of 1.78 ha/p, highlights as the Pantano's ecological footprint is significantly below the reference value of equilibrium, and then it is possible to affirm that the economy of Pantano in the Fifties not only was able to sustain 77 inhabitants, but can be considered a good example of sustainable development harmonized with nature.

**Table 5: Alimentary Ecological Footprint**

Food/cultivation	Village expenditure per person (Kg)	Necessary surface per person (ha)	
Wheat	165	0.09	
maize	16	0.0008	
citrus	6.60	0.0005	
vegetables (legumes, eggplants, etc)	6.0	0.0008	
Fresh fruits	30	0.003	
potatoes	20	0.0009	
tomatoes	12.50	0.006	
Olive oil	5.0	0.025	
wine	109.5	0.06	
		Literature conversion factor	
Cheese and ricotta	3	0.007	0.021
milk	36	0.0007	0.0252
Other fats (lard)	0.5	0.006	0.003
Goat meat	2	0.003	0.006
Bovine meat	2	0.017	0.034
Pork meat	5	0.006	0.03
Chicken and rabbit	6	0.003	0.0018
Fish	1	0.041	0.041
stockfish	4	0.041	0.164
eggs (n.)	48	0.007	0.336
Total			0.8652

## CONCLUSION

The paper discusses a model of integrated relational tourism planning based on a transdisciplinary approach, rising from the direct embryonic experience of a restoration recovery planning of an abandoned rural village in the north-eastern part of Sicily (i.e. Borgo Pantano).

The paper had the aim to investigate new methods for restoration planning, able to recover as much as possible of the existing elements, re-contextualising the territory to its original appearance and its ancient productive, agricultural, cultural and religious functions.

For the above reasons, the present paper was based on the development of a synergic investigation between the analysis of the main historical and geographical features of Pantano and the description and quantification of the historical agro-environmental development of the village.

These two aspects were integrated in parallel with the initial development of a Geographic Information System (GIS) project, able to emphasize, by means of thematic cartographies, the promotion of the natural environment conditions as well as the role of the sustainability of resource production in the recent past of the village. It was further demonstrated how in the Fifties the presence of man in Pantano Village was totally satisfied in his needs within a sober and equilibrated food economy, utterly integrated and harmonized with nature. This implies that a more sustainable and sober lifestyle is still possible.

In conclusion the restoration project of Borgo Pantano could actually represent a laboratory investigating different aspects and models of the integrated relational tourism theory. The project's high quality and the ethical principles of "Incanti & Memorie" are the basis for this development model, which could become a replicable model at Euro-Mediterranean level.

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# The legacy of the past: bottom-up planning in Sicily and integrated relational tourism today

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to encourage a reflection upon all the theories and practices which consider the planning process as part of the public domain. In this regard, the legacy of urban and regional planning history can be useful to outline the need of innovative policies, like that ones pursued by Integrated Relational Tourism. This paper wishes to present the bottom-up approach proposed in Sicily during the Sixties as a prerequisite to the formulation of the new integrated projects of local development. Consequently, it is part of a wider reflection on those planning theories which try to combine past and future practices in order to discover common principles to be used by all those who intend to build the new Mediterranean space.

**Keywords:** Sustainable development, Bottom-up approach, Local identity, Community participation, Regional planning.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper intends to recall an important experiment that took place in Sicily half a Century ago; an experiment that presents many similarities with the cultural project embodied by Integrated Relational Tourism's approach.

Among all the development projects, Integrated Relational Tourism has been conceived as a bold planning strategy at the regional scale. Its aim, designed to raise the depressed areas of the low Mediterranean region, by making use of one of the most important economic resources, tourism, appears as an accepted and challenging objective. The words used to name this kind of strategy are representative of a grassroots policy based on local and person-oriented approach. The word "relational", which comes from the sociological and economic literature, recalls directly values as *identity and reciprocity*. These two principles, regarded as the object of the operation and not just as a mere technique bring into focus the value of relations as "exchange *per se*" (and not its corresponding economic benefit), and concentrate on one particular meaning of the word "relational", which is: 'a thing's effect on another', that precious link which is able to promote, among the inhabitants, the start of authentic development processes (sometimes even not predicted) as a direct consequence of the spontaneity and the naturalness of the genuine relationships between human beings (Bruni 2009). The word "integrated", then, completes and broadens the meaning of this approach by pointing

out the positive consequences that such type of tourism could bring to the economic sector, as well to the cultural and the social ones (Gulotta et al. 2004).

Following the same principles, the MOTRIS<sup>i</sup> project was proposed in order to raise Sicily not from its well-known places of the coast but from its less known ‘treasures’: from that ‘sea of lands’ made of manor farms, villages and pastures which usually regional and national policies tend to forget. The ‘treasures’ at the heart of this project are at the same time the most suffering and the most genuine roots of this island: thanks to them Sicily has preserved a solid connection to its territory, but because of them the development of the region has always been very critical. In this regard, IRT has to occur not as the latest attempt to promote the most depressed areas of Sicily, but as a compelling example of local development. The most ambitious goal is aimed at developing innovative regional policies (based on interpersonal relations between the inhabitants) that can concretely start a process of ‘re-territorialisation’ which could identify the new Sicilian identity and which could furthermore determine the new “Mediterranean Regionalism” (Urbani 2009).

Consequently, one of the missions of this programme recalls the need to outline in all those depressed areas of the Mediterranean region a new model of governance able to promote the right economic forces and stakeholders (government offices, businesses and local communities) which can reflect the aspirations and needs of the territory.

A similar attempt occurred in west-Sicily some decades ago, when several municipalities experimented for the first time a micro level planning process aimed at achieving a grass-roots-based economic development of their areas. I am referring to the Sicilian laboratory that occurred during the 1960s thanks to the charismatic work of Danilo Dolci<sup>ii</sup>. Through a successful combination of community actions, cultural initiatives and grassroots projects (and through a capillary network made of immediate relationships, communication and comparison between all these different practices), it was experimented in the central–west areas of Sicily a completely new planning model. This *Sicilian Utopia* lasted almost ten years; it had its peak during the middle sixties and started to decline at the end of the same decade, struck by the terrible earthquake of January 1968, which unexpectedly destroyed most of the urban centres of that area. Fortunately, the legacy of its message had the chance to continue few years later when two urban planners, Carlo Doglio and Leonardo Urbani<sup>iii</sup>, wrote a sort of posthumous epilogue, which, at the same time, set the basis for the beginning of a wider and bolder new project: the MOTRIS project. In their book *La Fionda Sicula* [the Sling of Sicily] the couple proposed to overcome the Sicilian underdevelopment by challenging the two opposite faces of the region, the “absolute island” (which included the poor and abandoned areas of its inner land) and the “interchange island” or the “inner lake” (which, on the contrary, included the more wealthy coastal areas): in more contemporary terms, they claimed the need to find an economic model which could use inhabitants’ ‘local’ knowledge in a ‘global’ vision, starting from a deep inspection of Sicily (Doglio & Urbani 1972).

On the one hand, these past experiences explored to what extent the regional scale could be used as the more appropriate territorial unit for translating economic values into their

spatial dimension and, more important, to what extent spatial planning could be a means to understand the deepest and most innovative social forms. Similarly, on the other hand, the Integrated Relational Tourism theory aims at exploiting the quality of inter-personal human relationships in order to overcome the conflicts generated by traditional tourism 'supply and demand', through a local 'supply' model based on genuine economic forces and resources and designed to help individuals, firms and learning institutions to understand the local dynamics of change. The analysis of this decade of planning activities in Sicily, thus, could be an opportunity to explore the apparent contradiction of planning: how to plan without excluding the spontaneity activities of citizens.

For this reason, this paper wishes to be a reflection towards that branch of Sicilian regional planning in which the cultural identity of Integrated Relational Tourism resides. There are serious reasons for arguing that only through the rediscovery and the comprehension (carefully filtered in from the past to the present) of this historical period of regional planning in Sicily, it is possible to recognize the strengths and the weaknesses that can affect the attempt of building a 'Mediterranean space' based on social inclusion and local development principles. This paper, therefore, is to be regarded as an inspection towards those "yesterdays of nowadays" that can help us to construct the cumulative knowledge which is needed for dealing with the challenges of the future (Mazza 2009).

### **A "SICILIAN UTOPIA" (1958-1967)**

This research does not pretend to be an exhaustive investigation on that part of the Sicilian history; its aim is simply to recall some important topics which are related to Integrated Relational Tourism and to all those planning policies connected to it. In this regard the paper is structured into four sections: the first one, "Planning is not (just) a technical subject", is aimed at introducing the change of paradigms that involved planning theories and practices during the Sixties; the second one, "A cultural framework", is directed at describing very briefly the scopes of Danilo Dolci planning initiatives; in the paragraph "Planning at the human scale" are outlined some results achieved by the group of volunteers and experts working with Danilo Dolci; finally, in "A network of community initiatives" the 'cascade' effect" recalls how, in advance, these experiences exemplified the importance of the network as a means to address and to elaborate common goals. Planning today is strongly affected by all these themes, but it was during the Fifties and the Sixties that these issues started to be analyzed in Italy, by experimenting new models and policies of urban and spatial development.

### **PLANNING IS NOT (JUST) A TECHNICAL SUBJECT**

One of the issues that planners have to face throughout their activity is what role planning can play in developing cities and regions within the constraints of the economic and political systems and why and in what situations they should intervene (Campbell and Fainstein, 1996). This issue became crucial since the early 1960's, when the outcomes of the 1950's plans started to show some weaknesses which demonstrated the lack of understanding, in many cases, real-life cities and regions (Taylor, 1998). As a consequence, the planning activity

started to be regarded mainly 'as a process' and, as a result, the town as a 'living organism'. This concept, regarding the city as an 'alive' functioning thing, implied a double change in the kind of skills appropriate to urban planning (Taylor, 1998): on the one hand planners claimed the need of using a 'system approach', which implied the development of scientific analysis and evaluation techniques of all the inter-related activities of a city or region; on the other hand, because this approach needed a pluralistic way of analyzing problems and a decision making exercise based on judgements (more specifically judgement values), planning practitioners started to recognize that usually, in this process, citizens' values were excluded, especially that ones of the poorest part of the population.

Even in Italy this lack of knowledge started to be particularly discussed between the planners community at the beginning of the Sixties. The IX Congress of the *Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica* [Italian National Institute of Town Planning] that occurred in Milan at the end of 1962 is a significant example. During a debate on the role of urban planning within the economic programmes launched by the central government to support the development of the South of Italy, among the several topics related to this main issue, one seemed to appear very clear: in order to respond to the hierarchy of real human needs, the plan could not be a mere technical matter. As a consequence, the planning activity had to consist of different scales and of an exchange activity that could enhance minor communities, and therefore could be able to foresee a new future based on responsibility and on real answers to local problems. Moreover, the planning activity had to find alternative methods and tools able to create new "civic infrastructures" that could function as a link between local initiatives and the central State and, secondly, the ways for organizing, changing and framing this new social structure (Semerani 1962, 10-11).

With respect to the achievement of this objective, during this period planners focused their research on the 'appropriate planning unit' to enhance all the minor forces that could function as the hub of a regional development process based on and accomplished through inhabitants' social action (Fiorentini 1963). If, on the one hand, the neighbourhood unit was studied as the more appropriate spatial scale for including local needs in the design process of the cities; on the other hand, the wide-area scale (*comprensori*) was considered the best territorial unit for balancing community demands with the economic and spatial development national plan.

During the same period, the pursuit of a territorial unit able to represent human relations (and not just functional objectives) achieved some important results (theoretical, methodological and experimental) in Sicily.

The first one is the institution of a network of community centers for the organic development (the five "Centers for the full employment" located in Partinico, Trappeto, Roccamena, Menfi and Corleone). The second one is the establishment of several Civic Committees to be engaged into the decision-making process which involved several local governments. A further result is the pursuit of new development models through the comparison of similar international case studies; and, finally, the organization of conferences and open forums for the transmission of these planning experiments to the whole Region.

## A CULTURAL FRAMEWORK

The Sicilian bottom-up laboratory was conceived and developed thanks to the “Center for studies and initiatives for full employment” [*Centro Studi e iniziative per la Piena Occupazione*] founded in 1958 by Danilo Dolci, after being awarded the Soviet Union’s Lenin Peace Prize (Bess 1993,180). Because of the cash award obtained through the Prize, Dolci decided to found a proper research center to tackle the situation of economic underdevelopment, unemployment and underemployment of the west part of Sicily of that age. Despite the national policies and aids (e.g. *Cassa del Mezzogiorno*), at the end of the 1950’s in Sicily the illiteracy rate was still at 28%; that one of unemployment was at 14% and the young mortality rate at the 8%; town centers lacked of sewer systems, running water, electricity, and the families that could afford a home were living in overcrowded conditions (Centro Studi e Iniziative, 1961).

The “bottom-up laboratory” could take place thanks to the previous initiatives that Dolci launched after his arrival in Sicily at the beginning of the 1950’s. Danilo Dolci and his fellows had indeed started several studies and projects already well-known by the regional and the national intellectual community thanks to the “Congress on local and national initiatives for full employment” [*Iniziative locali e nazionali per la piena occupazione*] that took place in Palermo at the end of 1957. The great success of this event (and the fund available thanks to the Prize) attracted to Sicily a vast number of national and international intellectuals<sup>iv</sup> and several young local volunteers. This group arrived in Sicily for addressing Danilo Dolci’s research, fascinated by an unconventional methodology based on the motto “learning through experience”. According to Dolci, through the promotion of public participation citizens would have gradually gained the competence and the tools needed to promote forms of innovative grassroots actions.

After the establishment of a leading group (the “social-planning group”), Dolci could start to outline the framework of a more ambitious project of bottom-up development, to be implemented with both experts and citizens.

The role of the social-planning group was aimed at coordinating the whole work: they used to meet every week in the Center of Partinico for a common comparison of the work done, for the discussion of the work in progress, for the elaboration of new proposals, or for studying other planning methods and practices (like the well known *kibbutz movement* across Israel or Swedish and Yugoslav planning systems)<sup>v</sup>.

The first important result achieved by the group was the alliance with local governments. In 1961 they already had several requests of collaborations. Some more forward-thinking institutions decided to engage the Center for arranging a development programmes for their City Plan. As an example, Ludovico Corrao, who was the mayor of the town of Alcamo at that time, hired the Center for studying a plan of industrial development for an area west of Palermo. His idea was to establish “a federal agreement between the three municipalities of that area for enhancing their local energies and turning them into a ‘massive force’ able to accomplish the economic development of that depressed district of Sicily”<sup>vi</sup>.



As Carlo Doglio, one of the main intellectual leader of the Center, wrote, only after one year since the beginning of the bottom-up process, it seemed that the Plan was gradually taking form, embracing “like ripples formed by water” from region to region; and within each region into sub-regional plans (Alasia & Doglio 1961). The aspirations of both experts and volunteers was so high that they worked for officially presenting the results of this uneasy work (that seemed to be finally sustained by public institutions) to the whole planning community through an important international congress headed by Lewis Mumford, the cultural inspiration of the plan. Unfortunately the congress, which should have had hosted by different municipalities in different venues, never took place<sup>vii</sup>.

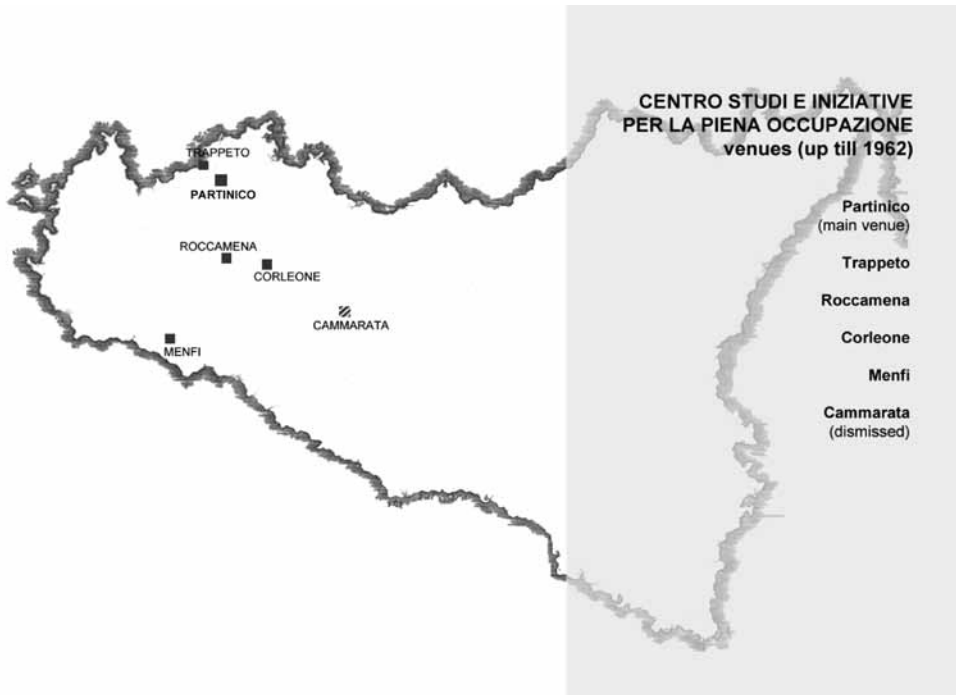
### PLANNING AT THE HUMAN SCALE

*“A plan develops and takes effect from the moment of the research: if this is what we hope for, we need to work all together, [...] everyone with clear ideas and with a holistic approach. [...] There cannot be any authoritative orders that impose a certain planning orientation. A plan succeeds in its task by a bottom-up, voluntary participation of citizens. It succeeds thanks to examples and operational models, which are able to catch the attention of people”* (Doglio and Alasia, 1961).

The work of Danilo Dolci and its group reflected a planning model that finds its roots into the regionalism of Lewis Mumford. According to Mumford, in fact, the task of planning had not to be a system of removing arbitrarily the reality, but an attempt to clarify it, and an effort for achieving the elementary need to harmonize factual, geographical and economic data with human aims (Mumford 2007, 379).

The whole work of the Centers has never been conceived, since its beginning, as just a local action. On the contrary, it was an open strategy that aspired to develop its work by keeping high the interest of the Center’s initiatives both at the national and at the international level (The Economist 1998). On the international level, the main support came from the *Comitati stranieri* [solidarity committees], which brought economic aids and followed each activity through the work of their volunteers<sup>viii</sup> helping the five main civic committees of Partinico, Trappeto, Roccamena, Corleone and Menfi (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Mapping of the Centro per la piena occupazione [ Centers for the full occupation] of the Belice Valley, 1962**

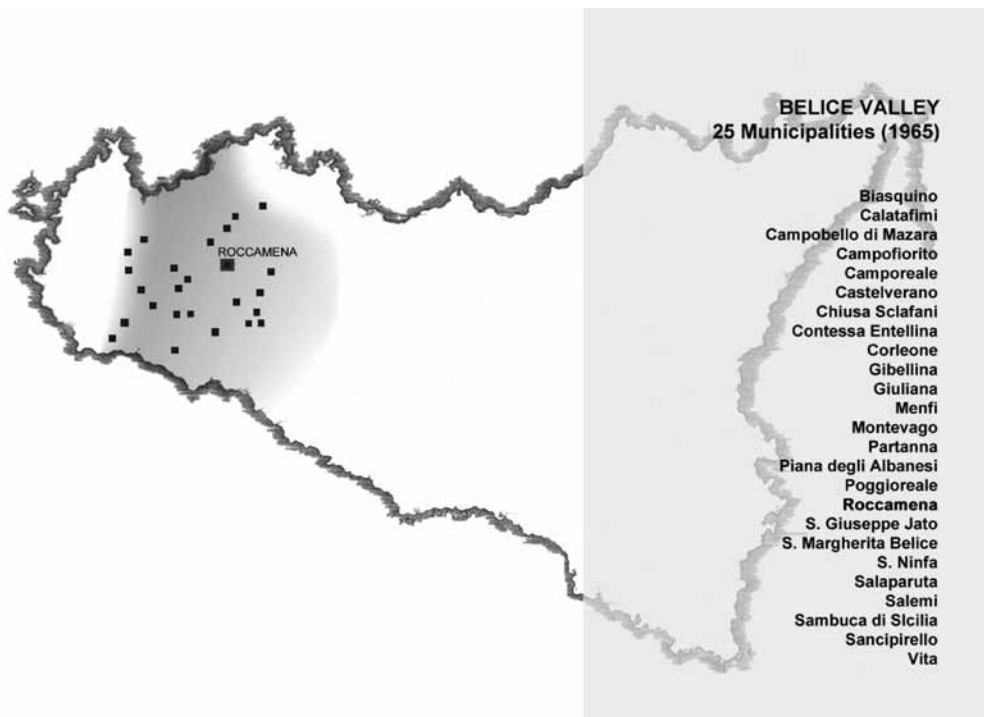


All these Centers worked as a decentralized social organization based on cooperation, and aimed at the knowledge and the study of the local contest, and at promoting meetings and initiatives for a common action. The purposes of those Centers were multiples: to educate the inhabitants to their own living places and to the recognition of common actions as a value; to share citizen's practices and knowledge with public institutions; and to create the framework for implementing a plan for the development of West-Sicily (Mazzoleni 1997).

The 29th of April 1962, in the small town of Roccamena, during a big meeting among inhabitants and local authorities, the spontaneous civic committees became finally not only official organizations aimed at supporting, through educational work, the social and economic transformation of that area of Sicily but, after a long debate, they grew to a confederation of several citizens group merged by a solidary pact into the "Interregional Committee for the organic planning of the Belice Valley" [*Comitato Intercomunale per la pianificazione organica della Valle del Belice*]. This result offered an answer to the concerns of the planning community of that time: it showed how local actions (generated by interpersonal relations) could clearly and unexpectedly define the right territorial unit in order to find common solutions. As Lorenzo Barbera, one of the leading volunteer, remembered, in fact, "all this began in a spontaneous way, after several public meetings. By the time everyone was aware that in order to

defeat the drought a key point was the building of several dams; but these dams would have involved a huge area of the region in order to build new forests, at least twenty municipalities, because Sicilians mountains were treeless and lakes need to be protected. This is how the Belice Valley was born. The Belice Valley was born first of all into its inhabitants' mind<sup>ix</sup>. The bottom up approach had brought to this important outcome and the planning process was finally ready to begin (See Figure 2).

**Figure 2: The 25 Municipalities of the Belice Valley (Interregional Committee for the organic planning of the Belice Valley), 1965**



### NETWORK OF INITIATIVES AND THE “CASCADE EFFECT”

On the regional level, the experiment led by Danilo Dolci in the Belice Valley became an important reference for other community projects. At that time, in fact, many reformers or civil organizations used the concept of community development as the best form of social action designed for including the participation of increasingly large numbers of people both at decision-making and at action stages. Relating economic development to local needs for achieving a long run productivity, community development was regarded by planning scholars

and professionals not as an end in itself but as a way of working (C. and D. Mial, 1959). Among the most important community projects experimented at that time in Sicily, two of them were particularly related to that one of Danilo Dolci.

The first organization is that one led by Salvinus Duynstee, a Jesuit priest who founded in 1960 a community center in Palma di Montechiaro, a poor town on the southern boundary of the Belice Valley, with the aim of supporting, through educational work, the social and economic transformation of that area (Bonafede, 1997). The strength of this experience was its ambition to become a pilot-study for establishing in Sicily and in the other Italian regions a network of consulting centers for social planning.

The other experience was that one of the Valdese pastor Tullio Vinay, who one year later instituted in Riesi, another poor town located in the middle of the island, the *Servizio Cristiano* [Cristian Service], with the objective of translating the evangelic preach into a global development project (Leone, 1993). A key point of this experiment was the conviction of the supremacy of the community as a force able to attract and change the external environment. In this case, thus, it was physically built a community center to host permanently the action programme of the community.

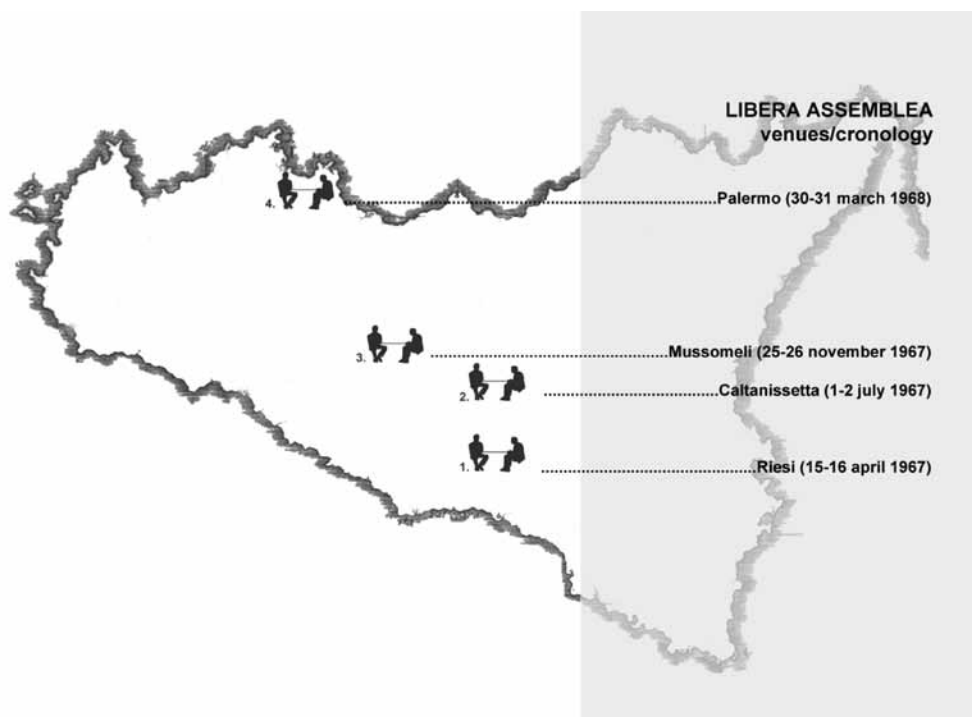
Consequently, in a very short time a profitable network of local initiatives, based on work comparison and goal sharing, entered the planning scene of Sicily. The experiment of the Belice Valley had a 'cascade effect' that brought to the institution of new bottom-up planning laboratories and meetings. But, most important, the community participation approach contributed to stimulate the intellectual debate on the future of the Island and encouraged alike initiatives.

This positive influence achieved very soon another area, that one of Caltanissetta, where, in 1966, a group of intellectuals led by Marco Bonavia founded the magazine 'New South' [*Nuovo Sud*]. The institution of the magazine reflected the optimistic intellectual climate of that time and embodied the common desire of change through a profitable alliance between scholars and civil society, enlarging the opportunities of participation (Mangiavillano 2002, 11). The great interest around these practices of community planning and development aroused the naturalness of relationships and the creativity of people's proposals. In fact, it seems hard to talk about this last initiative without recalling the previous community actions that took place in the centre-west areas of Sicily.

Moreover, this process that brought on April 1967 to the institution of another civil association: the The Free Meeting [*Libera Assemblea*], a public organization supported by the magazine *Nuovo Sud* and promoted by intellectuals, politicians and citizens who, through a series of monthly meetings, wanted to deal conjointly with local issues, development policies and community participation. We could define these meetings as an attempt for engaging the disciplinary, the territorial and the governmental level at the same time: after ten years of efforts and local commitment, the *Libera Assemblea* sought to engage firmly bottom up practices and governmental institutions (see Figure 3). As the memo of the last *Libera Assemblea*

stated, the aim of the meetings was to recall to the Sicilian Regional Government that “the economy is for the person and not that the person is for the economy”, and that “even the most deprived zone with the smallest possibilities of economic development must be considered from a human perspective and not just from a mere economic point of view.” (Libera Assemblea 1968)

**Figure 3: Libera Assemblea: Venues and Cronology**



**CONCLUSION:  
WHAT LEGACY FOR INTEGRATED RELATIONAL TOURISM?**

Unfortunately this great democratic experience did not endure. The project of the *Libera Assemblea* [FreeMeeting] came to an end in the beginning of 1968, the year of the tragic earthquake that destroyed houses, towns, human beings and even what had been built with great effort through the community development work.

Anyway, the *Sicilian laboratory* is an experience that could help us to understand better the role of communities from a grass-root oriented point of view. Even if it lasted less than ten years, this experience is the result of a process that has progressively involved people and places for the creation of a new territorial system.

In addition, the path that has transformed Sicily into one of the most interesting laboratory of ideas of the post war period on political and planning issues, it is a fact that should not be ignored in order to accomplish the mission of Integrated Relational Tourism. From this point of view, the Free Meeting [*Libera Assemblea*] can be seen as an emblematic case study and as an attempt to embrace human and intellectual forces that are usually excluded from public life policies; furthermore, it shows the importance of the role of community action especially in those areas where governments are particularly critical or weak.

Community participation is important non just for the success of a certain policy, but also for linking the different levels of governance, in order to pursuit a shared vision and make it more effective. If we assume that the identity of a place is the result of memories, experiences, events that gradually stratify the individual consciousness till forming its personality (Ferrarotti, 2009), these past experiences have generated a legacy that cannot be ignored by all those who would like to deal locally with the problems and aims of our common future.

Tourism plays an important role in this process, because it helps to keep relationships alive and to develop the narrative dimension of a place, thus generating new identities. But if tourism wants to protect and sustain the world's natural and cultural resources, it should follow a set of criteria which could ensure that it would use its potential as a tool for promoting the sustainable development of the Regions. These criteria should be organized at first around the following four main themes: effective sustainability planning; maximizing social and economic benefits for the local community; enhancing cultural heritage; and reducing negative impacts to the environment<sup>x</sup>. Then, these themes should be included into a wider set of policies which should outline a new model of sustainable governance to be used in Sicily and, with the appropriate changes, in the other countries of the Mediterranean Region.

Therefore, in order to achieve the strength of a scientific theory and to offer a real development strategy, Integrated Relational Tourism should find its solid anchorage (Hempel 1961). The 'anchorage' should be composed of new set of principles which could be based on a different regional planning policy model: 'the planning model of the Sicilian communities'. The interruption of the grass-roots development process in 1968 in Sicily was also a consequence of the lack of this 'solid anchorage', without which ten long years of community actions have been cancelled.

The hope is that projects like that one addressed by Integrated Relational Tourism will be able to recall the memory of that history of Sicily, in order to strengthen the roots which can turn into reality a multi-level local network that self-determines, in the name of the past, the future of the Mediterranean region.

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- i *Mappatura dell'Offerta di Turismo Relazionale Integrato in Sicilia* [Mapping of the Offer of Integrated Relational Tourism in Sicily]
- ii He was a social activist, sociologist, popular educator and poet. He became known as the “Gandhi of Sicily”
- iii With Carlo Doglio (1914-1995), Leonardo Urbani (born 1929) published three volumes on Sicilian regional planning: *Programmazione e infrastrutture* (1964), *La fionda sicula* (1972), *Braccio di bosco e l'organigramma* (1984).
- iv The echo of the work of Danilo Dolci was extremely vast and was followed by a great number of cultural and political personalities. With regard to the project for the organic plan of the Belice Valley, in 1960 the following people gave their support as ‘plan advisors’: for the economic field Sylos Labini and Giorgio Foà; for demographic studies Somogyi and Sauvy; for the town planning sphere Astengo, Caracciolo, Cosenza, Marescotti, Michelucci, Quaroni and Zevi; R. Dumont e G. Haussmann for agrarian studies; the sociologists G. Friedmann e J. Galtung; the geographer Georges; for the educational field L. Borghi, Ross Waller and P. Martin (Centro Studi e iniziative per la Piena Occupazione 1960)
- v These planning practices were studied both indirectly (through seminars) and directly (by study trips)
- vi Interview of the author to Ludovico Corrao (Gibellina, 12/05/2009)
- vii Probably the congress didn’t take place because of the absence of some important scholars like Lewis Mumford, who declined the invitation because of his decision to take a sabbatical year. (Source: Fund Carlo Doglio)
- viii The network of the community centers was created thanks to the financial aid offered by the *Comitati Stranieri* [Solidarity Committees] (Mazzoleni, 1997). In particular, the center of Roccamena was sustained by the Swedish Committee, the center of Menfi by the London Committee, the center of Corleone by the Swiss Committee and the one of Partinico by the German Committee and by several Italian groups (Source: Lorenzo Barbera, Interview, Gibellina, 12/05/2009)
- ix Interview of the author to Lorenzo Barbera (Gibellina, 12/05/2009)
- x E.g. see [www.sustainabletourismcriteria.org](http://www.sustainabletourismcriteria.org)

# For an “integrated relational tourism” in the Mediterranean area at the time of globalization

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## ABSTRACT

Tourism does not represent an exception in relation to the destabilizing issues produced by the process of globalization, such as standardization of consumption and behaviour, but also the dissolutions of social and territorial cohesion and the growing dependence on transnational financial flows and foreigner enterprises. Against these menaces and the standardized models worldwide imposed globalization, Integrated Relational Tourism could be an extraordinary alternative, developing a new sustainable, responsible and balanced action of local development and guaranteeing the preservation of some of the original characteristics and traditions which, otherwise, could be washed away by globalization.

**Keywords:** Cultural heritage, Globalization, Local development, Mediterranean, Sustainability, Tourism.

## INTRODUCTION

We must be aware that the process of globalization is exclusively targeted to the achievement of economic and financial goals. All the forces which are fully involved in this process follow a simple, but at the same time, terrible and cruel rule: making profits everywhere on everything, without liabilities. In other words, the worldwide success of globalization implies, in addition to reducing the world to the level of a single never-ending market, the uncontrolled and un-ruled exploitation of immense resources, also including human beings. In this wild commercializing context “sustainability” is a worthless word and there is no real interest or sensibility towards issues such as health, fresh air, clean water, ecosystems, cultures, languages, tradition and even “life”. All is degraded to the state of “goods” that very few people can grasp and enjoy.

With reference to this pernicious scenario, tourism is not an exception. As a matter of fact, in its accelerated evolution, globalization has fostered a standardization of consumption and behaviour of individuals (mass tourists) living their holidays in resorts, facilities and even itineraries that have taken the form of the Marc Augè’s “*Non-lieux*” (Augè, 1992; Augè, 1997). If the world has been reduced to a global market, people has been reduced to the status of “consumers” who, losing their status of “social individual” and of “citizenship”, live anonymously a solitarily life, split between the immateriality of the timelessness net and the

ordinariness of the “*non-places*”. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that the standardized tourism, being strictly limited to the cities, do not touch the vast territories in the interior and that implies, in addition to the loss of value of cultural capital and property assets, the impossibility in the realization of a full cohesion (economic, social and territorial).

Against those issues linked to the dynamics of globalization it is necessarily to develop a new type of tourism that can re-launch a territory in an innovative and sustainable way, praising highly the local riches, which are often undervalued or forgotten by the economic competition. From this point of view the realization of the Integrated Relational Tourism (IRT) can play an extraordinary role. This paper analyses IRT in the Mediterranean, because in this geographical context it is possible to find an extraordinary treasure of history, culture and tradition. There can be observed a great deal of significance in the Mediterranean, in light of recent experiences in IRT development.

It is proper to point out the structure of the paper. A first section, which follows this introduction, analyses the process of globalization and its impact on the Mediterranean, focusing to those aspects that could be relevant to the study and research on Tourism and, above all, on Integrated Relational Tourism in the Mediterranean. The second section stresses the characteristics of IRT and its potentiality to become a more than valuable alternative to the global market. In the last third section the analysis on the IRT has been tied to the considerations about the historical and cultural richness of Mediterranean countries, analysing IRT in relation to the concept “material civilization”.

## THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBALIZATION

Among the many definitions of the phenomenon called globalization we think that the closest to the reality is the one which has been elaborated by the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman in the end of nineties. According to Bauman, Globalization could be defined as a process of the liberation of capital, with the extraordinary support of the new technologies (transport and, above all, the “net”) from the bonds of “time” and “space” (Bauman, 1998). That entails a preliminary important consideration: the origin of the process of globalization could be found exclusively in the economic sphere and, mainly, its rapid worldwide development is the latest dynamic of transnational capitalism, which follows the flows of financial and economic interests covering places that represent their territorial enclaves. This consideration implies some statements.

Firstly, all those theses which drawn globalization as an unifying process have to be rejected because it regards only the richest countries of the world, mainly the ones in the West, and some country that is considered useful for their richness. In other words, in the depths of its mechanism, globalization divides as much as it unites, creating a deep caesura between the *global world* and a *local world* which is out from all flows richness and from consumerism, where people is “confined” in the territory and can take part to the processes of globalization only in terms of “exploitation” (Bauman, 1998). This dualism coincides to the Bruno Amoroso’s concept of “*Global Apartheid*” (Amoroso, 2003).

Secondly, globalization has created a more and more homogenous world, or better a standardized style of life that is deeply different than the hybrid culture that some authors had hoped for. Standardization must be considered in its wider meaning, in terms of an action which, taking its move from globalization, operates at the different levels of *production* (Economy), *behaviors and consumptions* (Society and Anthropology), *Politics and International rights* (standardization based on human rights). It treats an operational plurality of the standardization that, introducing itself under the false form of neutral trial of homogeneity, hides the fact of subjugation to the economic and financial strengths that drive globalization. And those strengths, aside from their own geographical position, are strongly tied up to Western “values”. Baited by globalization, the standardization affirms, therefore, one “*Western monoculture*” and in such sense, as Serge Latouche sustains, it must be considered as a recent aspect of the *Westernization of the world* (Latouche 1989).

Lastly, the technologies that have supported in the last two decades the assertion that globalization is radically changing the “*anthropological statute of the human race.*” People lives in a world faster than ever, where there are no distances and barriers and, above all, in a continuous present that excludes both “past” and “future”, everything happen in real time. All run on the World Wide Web, even social life and friendships, human beings are changing their own relationships with the outside world. Disconnected from “public space”, the “social individual” has been deprived of his/her “medium” of “public space”, which help him/her to be related to the ambient, and has become a “single” whom has lost the bonds with history, society, culture foundations and territory. According to Pietro Barcellona, the privatization of world destroys two important mainstays of the “*social individual*” and “*public space*”, and concurs decisively with this “disconnection”, indeed meaning the changing of the anthropological statute of human beings (Barcelona, 2005).

## FROM MASS CONSUMPTION TO GLOBAL TOURISM

The standardization of tourism is a trend which has began in the Western world in the early 50’s, when all the sacrifices and hardships imposed by the post-war reconstruction left room for the new extraordinary phase of economic growth, called “*The Glorious Thirty*”, which run to the development of “mass consumption.” In this respect, the adoption of the welfare state, an economic compromise between the Keynesian policies and Fordism, led to important measures of social stability, such as the family-supporting wages and job stability, which played a key-role in economic growth and, above all, to the mass access to the inner market of the re-launched national-States where the domestic mass production could find its own place. In other words, a new social and economic order, based on the systematic creation and fostering of a growing desire to purchase goods or services, best known as *consumerism*, started to improve itself and the newly emergent middle class has been increasingly involved on it. As to this trend tourism did not remain immune and a “*mass tourism*” took the place of the traditional one. Conceived between the 18th and 19th century, tourism once involved only an elites of riches which interpreted their journeys in the Mediterranean as an exotic experience of knowledge, in searching for the fading footprints of the ancient Greece or Roman

Empire, the ruins of the beginning of Western civilization. In the spell of sunny landscapes dominated by the hangover of the classical temples, they enjoyed the “spirit” which fuelled the *voyageurs* and inspired poets, writers and painters.

In its new mass meaning tourism became a short-term movement of people, of different social status, to destinations that were different from the towns and cities where they lived and worked, and with a wide range of purposes targeted to satisfy the “*leisure*”. The searching for the leisure of the mass-tourists was fully sustained by the improvements in technology in transportation (flights, trains and bus) and, at the same time, by the development of the automotive industry and the mass diffusion of private cars. At the same time there appeared for the first time the very first *non-Places* of tourism as the “*Recreational-Resorts*”, inspired to Disneyland, and the various “*Club Méditerranée*”.

In the 80s started the development of the “Pleasure Districts”, as the sociologist Aldo Bonomi defined the network of places and non-places (motorways, car parks, theme parks, clubs, discos, pubs and so on) that are passed through, mainly during the week-ends, by a “multitude” which try to search of “fun”, running away from the conflicts of work, the boring aspects of ordinary life and awkwardness of youth (Bonomi, 1999).

## THE GLOBAL IMPACT ON THE MEDITERANEAN AREA

Up to this point, in regarding to the Mediterranean context, the scenario delineated must be considered in terms of acceleration of existing processes that have been triggered, in the end of 16th century, by the European great powers and their lust of conquest, defined as “colonialism” or “imperialism,” which was purely functional to the imperative requests of their capitalist core. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the fast and definitive implosion of USSR in 1991 have set out, in addition to the worldwide success of neo-liberalist economic dogma, the end of the post-war crystallization of the Mediterranean region. So, over the nineties, the whole region became a strategic spatial context of the emerging European Union that looked at the Mediterranean third countries as its own external space of free trade and economic expansion (Caudullo, 2009). From this aspect the attempt in the November of 1995 (Conference of Barcelona) for the institution in 2010 of a Euro-Mediterranean Free-Trade Zone represented the highest moment of European ambition to improve its global power controlling the Mediterranean.

But things changed in the end of 1998 when Europe and the other global competitors of Western triadic power had to face the first crisis, the one which knocked the Asian tigers down. The end of “roaring nineties”, as Joseph Stiglitz defined that phase of Globalization (Stiglitz, 2003), saw all the Mediterranean countries weaker than ever. Globalization, in its first phase (the neo-liberal one) had aggravated the deep split between the North and South, exasperating and worsening its dualistic form, indeed a colonial legally. The attempts to diversify the economies and production have revealed themselves exiguous and weak too. So, while in the European countries, with some exception for very few “enclaves” in the southern coasts,

remained the high concentration of productions in the high-technological and developed sectors, the economies of the “third Mediterranean countries,” as the non-EU Mediterranean countries have been named, remained strongly linked to the agricultural sector and to the activities of production-extraction of raw materials, such as oil, gas, and phosphates. For those countries the incomes depends on the price fluctuation of the global world and to the taxes imposed on imported products (Gallina 2005, 46; see also Holland, 2002).

Consequent to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the Mediterranean region had to deal with the existing problems and the dangerous consequences of it being one of the most important points of friction in the context of the “Clash of civilization”, a re-thinking of Samuel J. Huntington thesis that followed the George W. Bush’s war on international terrorism. Up to this moment the European Union abandoned definitively their Mediterranean strategy and looked at its Eastern borders, to the East European countries that once were part of the Warsaw Pact, and the USA took the control of the whole area which exasperated the Mediterranean conflicts and, above all, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Today the economic and financial crisis started in the USA at the end of 2006 and culminating in the failure of the Lehmann Brothers Bank, has worsened the dramatic situation of the Mediterranean, which is reaching the peak with the recent financial implosion of Greece, the first by a nation state that could be followed by other Mediterranean countries.

### **IRT: AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE GLOBAL MARKET**

In relation to the market, IRT could be an important factor of adjustment which could fill the gaps and the emptiness that other tourist strategies, by reason of their being tied to the global market, cannot face and overcome. There is really nothing surprising in that. If IRT represents in the field of tourism a well-founded alternative to globalization that may not imply that its actions could be, out of prejudice, necessarily in conflict with the market, which, after all, remains an invention of human societies as Karl Polany has well argued.

#### *The Livelihood of Man.*

Reducing the role of the “market” in the original process of social-building, Polany has remarked the social foundation of the community, demonstrating with cogency that market has always been a form of organization of the community, in other words a social invention. Starting from this fundamental assumption all the thesis about the absolutism of the market, which consider it as the very foundation of all human societies, something that precedes the society, should be considered as groundless allegations (Polany, 1977). Both liberals (before) and neo-liberals (recently), refuse to recognize the existence of a subordination of economy to the foundation of society, and have elaborated and sharpened a conceptual apparatus which subvert such a relationship of subordination. But going in the depths of their interests, another truth emerges and we discover that market and free-trade are not their real priorities. The real aim is to legitimate the freedom of the dynamics of the capitalism from the social

control and from the domain of the state. From this point of view, the process of globalization, which is the latest form of capitalism, has been able to concretely achieve that aspiration (Amoroso, 1998; Barcellona, 1998; Touraine, 1999).

IRT could be an approach capable to bring about a significant reconsideration of the idea and principles of market, attributing to it both social and territorial values. The competitiveness could not be achieved having recourse to extreme and risky measures, at all costs and on the verge of law, but aiming to a respectable, responsible, sustainable and balanced supply, which is not limited to the economic criteria. "Respectability," "responsibility," "sustainability," and "balance" of IRT supply a regard of environmental and culture heritage means the development of a new strategy of marketing which implies an interdisciplinary approach to guaranty high quality products and services and the safeguarding of the territory. From those aspects IRT acts to re-value whether the artistic and cultural heritage or the environment and territory that must be safeguarded and protected from every kind of indiscriminate and pervert exploitation of all of its resources, striving against the pollution but also against the building speculation and all its risks. From this last aspect, IRT has to recover and repossess of the existing building assets, but it must also involve in its actions and projects the peoples living in the territory, whether in terms of occupation or in the development of local entrepreneurships, reducing the dependence from foreigners enterprises and, above all, from the financial speculation. At the same time IRT must aiming to the production of high quality local craft and typical agricultural products.

Radically opposed to the principles and actions of the global market, this alternative approach to the market could contribute to the achievement of the target of social and territorial cohesion.

### **IRT AND MEDITERRANEAN RICHNESS**

The development of IRT in the Mediterranean area is a very recent phenomenon which is involving a growing number of tourists which are interested in a tourism of "quality" that is very close to the concept of "journey" and to the spirit of "voyageurs" of the 18th and 19th century. People who choose IRT have discovered an approach of differences, a longing of knowledge which found its satisfaction in the extra-ordinary experience in contexts that are different than the anonymous cities. To this target market of tourists, folklore and traditions count more than artificial and standardized non-places. To them, the specificity of the historical and cultural heritage, as the characteristic feature of the nature, is a treasure that they have longed to discover, a gratifying experience that they cannot relive in another place. In this respect, the Mediterranean area, which could boast a multimillennial history and hundreds of civilizations, from the "dawn of man" to the end of the 16th century, represents an extraordinary rich "gold mine." Who could forget the Sumerians, the glories of Babylonian and ancient Egypt? Who could forget the Hittites, Phoenicians, Cretans, Jews and the various Indo-European peoples? How could one not consider the epic clash between the powerful Persian Empire and cities-states of Greeks? And what of the glories of Rome which controlled it in all

of its sides? And then, leaving aside the barbarians invasions and other minor civilizations, how can we ignore Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, Suevians, Ottomans and Spanish?

Before Atlantic capitalism decreed the economic and political decadence of the Mediterranean area, condemning it to a progressive economic marginality and poverty, the whole region has been a powerful and rich “world-economy” which, Fernand Braudel showed us, was able to impose its cultures and styles of life, production and architecture to both the North of Europe and new lands of American continent for a long time (Braudel 2002).

This historic complexity of the Mediterranean, which has expressed itself heterogeneously, has developed a plurality of Mediterranean souls, or rather infinity of identities that in their holding together has shaped that we are used to call “Mediterranean culture” or, using the meaningful Braudel’s definition of “material civilization” of the Mediterranean region (Braudel 1977 and Braudel, 1981). For the development of IRT initiatives and projects the “material civilization” has to be considered as a key-concept that in its shaping, which similarly to the slow evolution of natural phenomena takes millenniums, slowly runs parallel to “material life” (Braudel, 1988). Against the faster bearing of capitalistic dynamics, the “material civilization” is a process of cultural sedimentation picking up the whole knowledge that has been learned in the daily experiences, in other words the sum of infinite quotidian characters. The material civilization combines the great history with daily life, because it is in the everyday practice that people living in their territory put in act the good wisdom and knowledge that are lost in a time beyond their lives. This happens very often in an unconscious way, and is repeated every time people made manual work (craft) or make use of crops and natural assets for the local production of traditional products. The same thing happens with traditions and local folklore.

From this point of view, we could agree that the material civilization is regarded as an idea which has been gained and cherished collectively by a local community. That can let us understand how it has been able to resist for a very long time, resisting the many factors that could put it at risk. That also can explain to us why the economic marginality and poverty conditions, which were imposed on the Mediterranean countries by the dynamics of capitalism and Western imperialism, did not imply the end of the Mediterranean material civilization.

Though it has been penalized, considered in terms of “archaic” and “primitive” expressions of knowledge diametrically opposed to the paradigms of a modernity that were the expression of a presumptive Anglo-Saxon superiority, a large part of its knowledge and practices still survive.

For a very long time Mediterranean material civilizations has been able to resist to each try of homologation. During the 30’s of 20th century in Algeria, for example, as Sherry McKay have underlined, the imperial power tried to reduce the Algerian resistances to its authority and sovereignty imposing the concept of Mediterranean architecture (McKay 2000) which,



combined with the education of the youngest based on emphatic school programs (where, for example, the acts of their “improbable” Gallic forefathers were extolled), should have realized the subjugation to the French *grandeur*. All the Muslim cities and towns were knocked down, leaving room for new urban spaces inspired to a classicality which modelled them to the European ones. But in spite of the new urban shape imposed by the colonial power, the *maison indigène* has not been definitively erased because, aside from its continuity in the inland, it was a strongly implanted “idea”, part of the Algerian “material civilization.”

That is an example that can help us to understand the importance of the “material civilization” and its capability of resistance even to radical changes, attributes which let the Mediterranean material civilization to disown the academic plan of homologation (a northern representation of otherness) that came out in the 50’s from the British “anthropology of culture”, which has been critically defined by Michael Herzfeld, on the basis of extraordinary contribute of Edward Said’s *orientalism*, as “Mediterraneism” (Herzfeld 1987; Said 1991; see also Caudullo, 2010).

## CONCLUSIONS

The economic and financial crisis that the whole world is currently experiencing, which has followed to the crisis of American home-loans and the failure of Lehman Brother’s Bank at the end of 2006, is undoubtedly the worst consequence of the process of globalization, a crisis that is increasingly involving countries and subjects in so far as these are involved in the speculative and hazards of globalization. It must have the awareness that the dramatic and dangerous escalation of financial and economic shock do not regard only the weakest countries but, just like dominoes, in its pervert transnational and immaterial game of dependences and interests, a game which do not take care of the territories and of citizenship, it affects the richest one too. The case of Greece has showed us how other subjects, from Germany to the Italian regions of Lombardia and Puglia that have tied their fortunes to overcome their debt by the investment in shares in the Greek financial market, are involved in same troubled situation.

Furthermore, countries that were considered excellent models of growth, such as Iceland, Ireland and Spain, are dramatically facing the consequences of their sudden fall. All this should let us rethink the plans and strategies of development and, above all, to reconsider the role of “territory”. So there is a great deal of reason in trying to improve Integrated Relational Tourism, establishing strategic alliances and partnerships with all the stakeholders in support of a new concept of tourism that could really take to the target of that kind of whole cohesion (Social, Economic and Territorial) which has been shown that globalization does not ensure.

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# Analyzing the budget tourism phenomenon: a socio-economic approach

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## ABSTRACT

Today, the globe is suffering from an economic crisis that will no doubt alter the way tourism is managed for years to come. The negative outcomes of globalization and the free market economy are apparent in many nations of the world, especially in Third World societies. Government authorities and industry leaders must cope with this dramatic environment by adopting new approaches to confront the declining level of travel demand worldwide. Dealing with price conscious consumers is becoming inevitable. Nowadays, the term 'budget' is associated with numerous service products and is quickly becoming a strategic marketing initiative and a way to engage a new breed of tourists into the travel business in a time where the luxury segment is continuously diminishing due to economic and political instability. This paper investigates numerous variables associated with the budget travel phenomenon and explores how governments perceive budget tourism in Egypt from a socioeconomic perspective.

**Keywords:** Budget tourism, low-cost, government, integrated relational tourism, socioeconomic aspects, local community.

## INTRODUCTION

Traveling is always associated with self development by broadening an individual's perception of the world, other people and also oneself. Authentic encounters with people, values or images are also seen as a form of cultural understanding of the genuineness of different societies. The travelers' interest in authenticity is related to his desire to penetrate the host culture by establishing social interactions. These interactions facilitated the traveler's ability to adapt with local norms. Historically, budget tourists are continuously searching for personal development and cultural understanding of the local community. They are always eager to blend into the authentic host culture (Obenour, 2004). In addition to the social benefits associated with budget tourism, this form of tourism also became of high economic concern of various tourism destinations. Budget tourism is chosen in this research to typify the concept of integrated relational tourism in today's dramatic environment. As far as this research is concerned, the budget tourist is either an international backpacker (inbound budget tourism) or a domestic tourist (the local residents) in Third World country.

## THE LOW-COST PHENOMENON

Today, the budget concept has become associated with numerous travel-related services; perhaps the airline industry played a leading role in the field with the advent of budget airlines. The widespread use of this concept was not limited to air carriers only, but it extended to cover the rest of the tourism supply chain such as:-budget hotels (i.e. Travel Inn-Travel Lodge) – no frills tour operators’ products (‘the just...’ concept introduced by Thomson / Touristik Union International). The budget consumer is ready to accept a lower level of service in return for budget prices which became a well established element of the tourism market nowadays (Horner, 2004). In Australia, New South Wales is considered a hot spot for backpackers originating from Europe were they spend double the amount of expenditure of other segments of tourists (Tourism New South Wales, 2009). Budget hotel rooms in China have grown to reach 100.000. Budget tourism in China primarily serves domestic tourism. In China, budget accommodation is mostly owned and managed by locals with an aim to achieve greater profit and maintain social stability. Accor (Europe’s largest hotelier) aims to own 120 budget hotels in China by the year 2010. Still, small to medium size local firms are dominating the tourism business in China especially the budget travel sector (Shen, 2008). Howard (2007) states that there are numerous backpacker enclaves around the globe such as: Jalan Jaksa in Jakarta and King’s Cross in Australia and they provide 700 rooms in core areas.

The low-cost concept became a global phenomenon not only in Europe, the US and the Far East but also in the Middle East. Recently, Middle Eastern countries began making serious steps towards adopting a low-cost strategy. Malo (2009) stated that tourism experts are claiming that the sector is no longer capable of properly accommodating middle-class visitors in Lebanon. Lebanon, as a major Mediterranean tourist destination, does not own an adequate low-cost tourism infrastructure which hampers the nation’s ability to serve middle-class visitors that are currently price conscious. Today’s debate in Lebanon is how to market itself in the future? Will it be the Monaco or the Switzerland of the Middle East or more like Turkey or Cyprus where there are all kinds of tourism ranging from the low-cost to the luxury? Many think that the latter models are best.

In Morocco, cities like Tangier and Casablanca, which are rich in culture, became an enclave for backpackers, where there are several inexpensive accommodation and numerous authentic spots. Turkey is also no exception as it equally serves backpackers in areas like Cappadocia (Lost luggage tales, 2009). Dubai is also seeking to diversify its product from only being an exclusive playground for the rich to be affordable for a wider range of tourists. Dubai construction sites are witnessing an increase in building budget hotels. Although Dubai is planning to remain an iconic luxury destination, still it seeks to attract budget tourists by expanding its infrastructure (Ferguson, 2009)

## **BUDGET TOURIST PROFILE**

Salazar (2004) states that contemporary forms of tourism refer to: “those forms of tourism that are consistent with natural, social and community values and which allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experiences”. ‘Budget tourism’ is considered as one of the contemporary forms of tourism. The term ‘budget’ refers to any tourism-related products (accommodation, tour packages, airlines, restaurants, etc.) which are low in price and attract price conscious travelers (Krishan, 2005). The word budget is used interchangeably with the term low-cost to define numerous business models and a growing travel segment during the past few years.

The term ‘backpacker’ is perceived variously between destinations. In the US, they consider them as bushwalkers, while in many other nations it is a synonym of budget tourists. Today, backpackers are regarded as budget travelers. The budget tourist is referred in many literatures as a backpacker who tends to stay longer than other travelers and relatively pay more money on the long run. Budget tourists prefer budget or inexpensive accommodation (i.e. hostels-three star hotels) without neglecting the value for money aspect. Budget tourists are also eager to mix with the local community. They don’t mind to stay in remote destinations or indigenous areas as long as there is public transport. Although backpackers are more price conscious tourists, still in many countries they spend more money during their longer length of stay (Tourism New South Wales, 2009). Obenour (2004) confirmed that the most significant motive for budget travelers is social interaction with the local community. This social interaction encompasses several forms: -learning about the country’s history and culture – participating in daily environment of host culture –engaging in culture related activities with the local community. These culture-based activities include participating in conversations with residents, understanding human values formed in personal relationships in addition to any meaningful bonding or social encounters between budget travelers and host cultures. Today, a budget traveler must not be regarded as a low-quality type of consumer. Consumers are beginning to rationalize their needs and wants in many supply sectors related to tourism. Nowadays, consumers are very price sensitive and only a small proportion of travelers are still seeking to consume luxury tourism services. The shrinking of the business and first classes on air carriers in addition to the widespread of low-cost airlines is a living proof of this fact (Samy, 2008)

## ECONOMIC AND NON-ECONOMIC CRITERION

Budget tourism generates both social and economic benefits to the community (Table 1 below). These benefits can only be achieved through efficient destination management.

**Table 1: Benefits of Budget Tourism**

<b>Economic development criteria</b>	<b>Non-economic development criteria</b>
Spend more money comparing to other tourists because of the longer length of stay (BP)	Local control over small-scale enterprises (BP-DOM)
Help revive unexploited and indigenous territories (BP)	Help gain pride of the national heritage and different culture by the local community. (BP-DOM)
Spend more on locally produced goods (BP-DOM)	The interest of budget tourists to learn from the local community creates better positive interaction comparing to the relationship between luxury tourists and the local residents in underdeveloped countries. (BP)
Support small-scale enterprises and demands less human resource qualifications (BP-DOM)	Impedes the foreign domination of tourism enterprises, thus decreases the level of standardization in favor of cultural diversity in tourism services (BP-DOM)
Low overhead costs as they only require basic infrastructure (BP-DOM)	Government support for domestic tourism indicates rejection of the colonial mentality whereby the interests of foreigners are prioritized (DOM)
Significant multiplier effects from using local skills and resources (BP-DOM)	Use fewer resources and thus are more environmental friendly (BP-DOM)
Less sensitive to political and economic threats (DOM)	Support destination marketing efforts by the locals (BP-DOM)
Less subject to seasonality (DOM)	Community empowerment by further engaging in the tourism industry (BP-DOM)

Note: BP = backpackers, DOM = domestic tourists

Source: Modified from Schyvens (2002)

## THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a number of experienced executives in the tourism industry in Egypt. The semi-structured interview was chosen as a tool that gives interviewees the chance to freely discuss the problem with no constraints and also gather uniform data about the examined issues at the same time. The judgemental or purposive sampling technique (non-probability sampling) was used to choose a sample that correspond the purposes of the study to obtain typical population elements in the sample (Ritche, 1994). 15 experienced executives were chosen from a number of governmental agencies namely: the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, the Egyptian Tourism Federation and Egypt Air. To minimize response biases, responses were told that their names and posts will remain discrete. A combination of open-ended and fixed questions was self-administered to the interviewees. The questions aimed to elicit opinions about the subject of budget tourism in Egypt and also to explore the perception of such a phenomenon by executives working in tourism-related authorities.

## FINDINGS

Respondents were asked about numerous issues attributed to budget tourism. The subject of budget tourism was a very controversial given in consideration that it creates many debates about its advantages and disadvantages. The concept was interpreted profoundly through the semi-structured interviews conducted with the panel of executives. Their responses to likert-scale questions and personal opinions elicited from open-ended questions are summarized in the following.

### BUDGET TOURISM: A CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE

The majority of the panel members recommend that the current perception of budget tourism should be changed in the future; especially that many think that the current economic crisis is having a significant impact upon the industry in Egypt (table 2). Attracting the price conscious traveler is currently inevitable. The problematic issue is how to cope with the current situation and maximize its benefits for the sake of destination both economically and socially.

**Table 2: The Perception of the Level of Negative Outcomes Caused by the World Economic Crisis on Tourism in Egypt**

	<i>To a very great extent</i>		<i>To a very small extent</i>			
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>Frequency</b>	5	3	4	2	1	<b>Mode: 1 Stand.Dev.:1.29</b>



There was also a consensus among respondents that low-cost services are an important key player in the future of the tourism industry (table 3). Respondents added that the concept of low-cost services should not be attributed with a low-quality level of service, but with value for money products that satisfy its consumers.

**Table 3: The Effectiveness of Low-cost Services in promoting tourism**

	<i>Very Effective</i> <b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<i>Very Ineffective</i> <b>5</b>	
<b>Frequency</b>	7	5	0	0	3	<b>Mode: 1 Stand.Dev.:1.55</b>

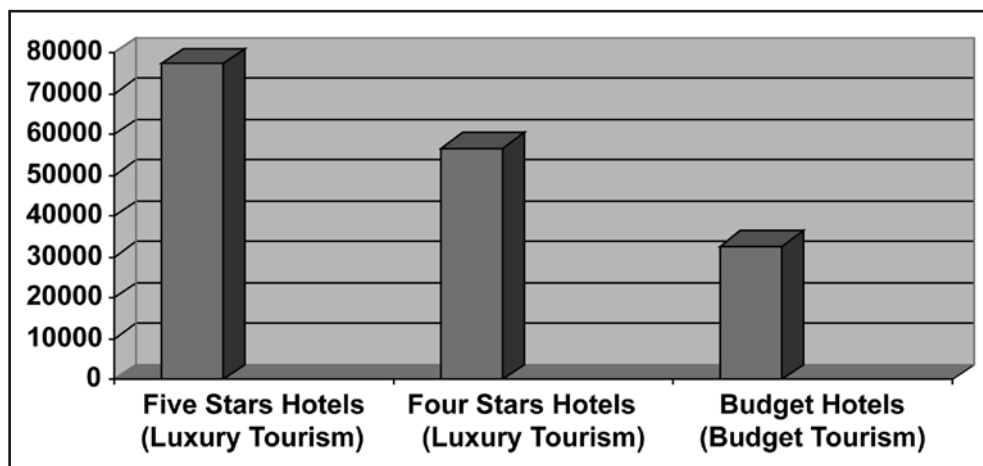
Tourism investment in Egypt is lead by the private sector which favors the establishing of luxury / large-scale ventures over small-scale / low-cost projects. Many of the small-scale projects (owned by locals) related to tourism, which best serve the budget tourist, do not provide high quality services (table 4). Low-cost airlines are still not playing a significant role in promoting domestic tourism in Egypt.

**Table 4: The Quality of Small-scale Tourism Projects in Egypt**

	<i>Excellent</i> <b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<i>Very Poor</i> <b>5</b>	
<b>Frequency</b>	0	1	9	2	3	<b>Mode: 3 Stand. Dev. :0.91</b>

The hotel room capacity of luxury tourism hotels in Egypt outnumbers the budget accommodation (Figure 1). It is important to note that official statistical publications ignore many forms of accommodation, such as guest houses, non serviced accommodations and motels, which reflect the lack of interest by authorities in low-cost services.

**Figure 1: Tourist Accommodations in Egypt**



Source: Modified from Egyptian Hotel Association (2009)

Notes: 1- Budget hotels = Three Stars hotels 2-One and Two Stars hotels were excluded from this graph due to their below tourism service standard 3-Latest available data

### **LUXURY HOTEL VS. BUDGET HOTEL ROOMS' CAPACITY IN EGYPT**

Hostels in Egypt are under the supervision of the Ministry of Youth. Neither the Ministry of Tourism nor the Egyptian Tourism Federation is concerned with this category of accommodation and hence they are not a part of any strategic plans of tourism-related authorities. They are not even listed in any official publication issued by tourism authorities as a mode of accommodation.

**Table 5 -An Official Listing of Hostels in Egypt**

Serial	Governorate	Hostel
1	Cairo	Cairo Hostel
2	Alexandria	Alexandria Hostel
3	Port Said	Port Said Hostel
4	Suez	Suez Hostel
5	El-gharbeya	Tanta Hostel
6	El-beheyra	Damanhur Hostel
7	El-Ismailia	El-isamailia Hostel
8	Fayoum	Fayoum Hostel
9	Assiut	Assiut Hostel
10	Sohag	Sohag Hostel
11	Aswan	Aswan Hostel
12	Red Sea	Hurghada Hostel
13	Matruh	Marsa matruh Hostel
14	South Sinai	Sharm-el-sheikh Hostel
15	Luxor	Luxor Hostel

Source: National Council of Youth (2011)

The majority of the panel thinks that government officials in Egypt perceive the international backpacker negatively as they consider him as a low-quality cheap tourist that does not generate a high income for the industry (table 6). It is important to note that tourism suppliers seek to attract responsible travelers with a high socioeconomic standard. There is a negative mental image associated with budget tourists as being irresponsible travelers. This notion is attributed to domestic tourism and international backpackers. The panel thinks that tourism-related authorities seek to label Egypt as destination that attracts a high spending segment of tourists. Industry leaders think that Egypt suffered from being rated for a long time at low price levels which eventually attracted low spending tourists. These tourists however use luxury services (i.e. Five Stars hotels) at very low rates

**Table 6- The Perception of Government Officials Regarding International Backpackers**

	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Indifferent</i>
<b>Frequency</b>	3	12	0

## LOCAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Respondents were asked several questions that interpret the social aspects of budget tourism, namely low budget domestic travel in Egypt and the level of social interaction between the local community and tourists. There was consensus among respondents that there are no accurate statistics about domestic tourism in Egypt (table 7). This fact leads to split responses regarding the level of local participation in tourism and their socioeconomic class. The panel assured that in Egypt, there are no comprehensive official data interpreting domestic tourism.

**Table 7- The Availability of Accurate Statistics About Domestic Tourism**

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not sure</i>
<b>Frequency</b>	2	9	4

The following statistical report (Table 8) is extracted from the only official and comprehensive data available on domestic traffic in Egypt; issued by the Ministry of Tourism with the cooperation of the Ministry of Interior. It is important to note that this data was compiled disregard of the purpose of visit of travelers which includes workers and tourists alike.

**Table 8: Total Arrivals via Main Points of Entry within Egypt by Segment (2007- 2009)**

<b>Segment \ Year</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Egyptians	4592532	4655354	4632861
Egyptians and foreign tourists	15202560	16950925	16546405

Source: Ministry of Tourism (2010)

Note: Latest available data

There is a strong tendency by respondents towards accepting the fact the Egyptian domestic tourist receive discriminatory treatment from tourism establishment in terms of prices (Table 9). This is due to the lack of interest in Egyptian travelers by suppliers believing that foreigners generate greater benefits. Hotels, for instance offer better rates to inbound tourists because they book a bulk of rooms through tour packages unlike the individual domestic traveler. Egyptians also tend to travel only during the peak season where hotel rates and airline fares are very high. The season of domestic tourism in Egypt is very rigid and limited. Many hotels also seek to deliberately minimize the volume of the Egyptian segment in favor of inbound tourists with an aim to maximize the occupancy rates of foreigners. Not to forget

that pricing of service products in Egypt follows the concept of free-market economy which means that the private sector is leading the industry in many ways especially in terms of supply and demand.

**Table 9: Egyptian Domestic Tourists Pay Higher Rates Comparing to Inbound Foreign Tourists**

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not sure</i>
<i>Frequency</i>	14	1	0

A series of open-ended questions were also asked to respondents about the community's participation in tourism. Respondents assured that the high level of prices and the lack of disposable income are the overriding factors hampering domestic tourism. The inadequacy of low-cost services is also a very important factor that forces many Egyptian tourists to book in five and four stars hotels to guarantee an adequate level of service quality. There is a lack of tourism services for the budget and middle class sector in Egypt. Another obstacle is that public administrations are not significantly interested in promoting domestic tourism except in times of crisis. Public administrations prioritize inbound tourism over domestic tourism. Another important aspect correlated to budget tourism is how executives perceive the social interaction between Egyptians and inbound tourists. This issue is highly important given in consideration that budget tourists (the international backpacker) tend to mix with the local community.

**Table 10 - Support of a Higher Level of Social Interaction between Tourists and the Community**

	<i>Extremely Important</i>					<i>Unimportant</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	
<b>Frequency</b>	5	7	1	0	2	<b>Mode: 2 Stand.Dev.:1.30</b>

It is clear that the panel thinks that the social interaction between locals and tourists is of a great importance (Table 10); still most of them added significant comments regarding this issue. Many think that the level of interaction should be relatively limited given in consideration that the culture of the host community must first attain a certain level of maturity before

seeking to strengthen these relationships. Cultural differences may cause numerous problems in the destination. A lot of work is still needed through media campaigns and real-life experiences with tourists in order to allow for more interaction, for instance, support the idea of hosting tourists in local residents.

## BUDGET TOURISM STRATEGIES

There was a significant consensus among respondents regarding the effectiveness of a number of strategies that can help maximize the benefits of budget tourism in Egypt from a socio-economic perspective. The suggested policies are outlined in table 11 and they are ranked according to their effectiveness in table 12. The results reflected the importance of adopting a diversification strategy that serves different segments from low-budget to the luxury tourist. Still, promoting low-budget domestic tourism gains a higher degree of importance comparing to the international backpacker.

**Table 11: Responses to Likert Scale Questions Regarding Personal Views about the Effectiveness of Strategies Related to Budget Tourism**

	Strongly Agree				Strongly Disagree	
	1	2	3	4	5	
-Subsidizing small-scale / low-budget tourism projects in Egypt	7	3	0	1	4	<b>Mode: 1 Stand. Dev.: 1.76</b>
-Applying a service and price diversification strategy that equally serves different classes of tourists	12	3	0	0	0	<b>Mode: 1 Stand. Dev.:0.41</b>
-Promoting budget tourism for the domestic traveler	11	1	1	2	0	<b>Mode: 1 Stand. Dev.:1.12</b>
-Promoting budget tourism for the international backpacker	4	3	0	2	6	<b>Mode: 5 Stand. Dev.:1.78</b>
-Expanding the low-cost service infrastructure	11	3	0	1	0	<b>Mode: 1 Stand. Dev.:0.82</b>
-Prioritizing domestic tourism in the upcoming national policies	13	1	1	0	0	<b>Mode: 1 Stand. Dev.: 0.56</b>

**Table 12: The Effectiveness of Budget Tourism Strategies in Rank Order**

R.	STRATEGY	MEAN SCORE
1	-Applying a service and price diversification strategy that equally serves different classes of tourists -Prioritizing domestic tourism in the upcoming national policies	1.2
2	-Expanding the low-cost service infrastructure	1.4
3	-Promoting budget tourism for the domestic traveler	1.6
4	-Subsidizing small-scale / low-budget tourism projects in Egypt	2.4
5	-Promoting budget tourism for the international backpacker	3.2

## IMPLICATIONS

No doubt that the ongoing economic crisis is impeding the growth of luxury tourism in the world for the favor of budget tourism. Any destination planning to stick to an old strategy will definitely lose its market share. NGOs should no longer be concerned about how they will label Egypt (luxury or budget destination), but instead must seek to broaden this narrow concept by establishing an infrastructure that attracts all classes of tourists with diverse degrees of importance. Each class of tourists has its socioeconomic benefits which mean that a multi-segment marketing approach is fundamental. Adopting a low-cost strategy can also help exploit the resources of any tourism destination to the maximum and generate higher socioeconomic benefits. It can also foster participation of locals from Third World countries in tourism in every way possible, ranging from traveling and mixing with tourists to establishing local ventures.

Promoting budget tourism will be very beneficial for domestic tourism in Egypt especially during today's political and economical instability. Positive social interaction with tourists will never occur without supporting community involvement in tourism. To apply these theories, the current status of tourism in Egypt must be re-examined with an aim to reform many misplaced settings. For instance, the luxury hotels in Egypt are offering rates far below their standard and thus serve budget tourists with over the top facilities, while three star hotels and hostels are not exploited properly. Luxury suppliers should prioritize quality of guests over quantity, while budget suppliers should seek to market their own class of guests which include backpackers and domestic tourists alike. Budget tourists belong in authentic enclaves that match their class, preferences and cultural perception. Pricing and development strategies must aim to treat every segment adequately to retain its maximum benefits. The air transport regulatory regime in Egypt must embrace top notch low-cost airlines. This theory applies the concept of integrated relational tourism and also deals with the growing middle-class sector seeking to travel during today's global economic crisis. The current financial crisis may be regarded as an opportunity to re-examine many 'clichés' that were associated with the globalization era in every field of the business, all from a socioeconomic perspective.

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# Relational international tourism in Australia

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## ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the scope for relational tourism in the eight regions of Australia. Australia is the traditional home of aboriginal people whose ancient culture, art and craft are of interest to international tourists. Since the early British settlers of 200 years ago Australia has become a multi-cultural society with a mix of diverse cultures from both the east and the west. Australia's agricultural excellence, its farms and wineries, its fauna and flora and the un-populated, quiet and beautiful country side and outback are catalysts for international tourism in its regions. This paper proposes that international regional tourism in Australia is mainly relational and is based on local history, culture, intangible heritage in art and craft, agriculture and life style. Since no research has been done on forecasting relational international tourism in Australia, this study forecasts regional tourism in the States and Territories of Australia which is primarily relational.

**Keywords:** Relational, Tourism, Regional, International, Forecasting, Mediterranean.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper takes a leaf off the Mediterranean experience to highlight the potential for relational tourism in the six states and two territories of Australia. These eight regions, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory, have not only places of interest to visit and icons to see but unique life styles that could be experienced by visitors to Australia. National icons that attract tourists such as the Sydney Opera House are not many and the promotion of such icons is not the main strategy that is pursued by the tourist industry of the country's states and territories; instead, regional lifestyles and cultural attractions such as the aboriginal way of life and their norms which are unique and quite different to those of the western world are well promoted. This paper describes the relational experience a tourist can enjoy in Australia's local history, ancient culture, intangible heritage in art and craft, agriculture and life style.

In promoting relational tourism it is important that the infrastructure required is available to welcome international tourists to make their experience pleasant and comfortable. Since relational experiences in Australia would be related to lifestyles in the various regions of the

country, the tourism development organizations and the operators in the states and territories would need to know the expected level of tourist arrivals in each region. At present, tourist arrival forecasts are made for the country as a whole and not for each region. This paper forecasts the international arrivals for each region in order to assist regional operators to be ready for relational regional visitors. Using quarterly international arrivals data at the major ports of entry to Australia over the research period from March 2002 to March 2009, forecasts based on the Basic Structural Model are made of international arrivals to each region for the period from June 2009 to December 2011.

## **THE INTEGRATED RELATIONAL TOURISM APPROACH**

The Institute of Tourism Studies of Malta (ITS, 2009) and PRISMA, the project that researches Integrated Relational Tourism and aims to boost cross-border Mediterranean tourism potential in the area between Malta and Sicily, describes Integrated Relational Tourism (IRT) as a departure from traditional tourism that sells buildings in a location to one that encourages interpersonal and environmental relations, stimulating the historical-cultural sensitivity. A way of life is offered to the tourist who is invited to immerse and taste the local culture and traditions in the particular setting. Through the integration of micro and medium-sized sectors and the use of advanced technology IRT aims to be a sustainable form of tourism.

ARCES University College initiated the MOTRIS project which mapped out the opportunities for relational tourism in Sicily (MOTRIS, 2005). The MOTRIS project defined relational tourism as “focusing of development policy on local subjects, considered in their entirety as a) an irreplaceable patrimony, in the shape of the local community, exploiting social relations and developing genuine resources and b) a gift to be shared and a resource to be exploited, with a resolute, continual exchange in order to integrate culture and economy, whilst giving priority to human relations.”

### *Application to Australia*

In this study the principles of integrated relational tourism (IRT) are being applied to promote relational tourism in the eight regions of Australia. It is recognized as important to revive cultural values that have been lost due to urbanization. Some values that may not warrant revival in the current economic and social context can yet be re-visited to be appreciated and recognized for the philosophical role they may have played in the history of a culture. In today's society ownership of land is legalized as people are deemed to be the owners of plots of land. However, in ancient Australia, the Aboriginal people lived with the concept that “the land owned the people”. This is an ancient value specific to a culture that may never be understood except through interaction of cultures.

Modern tourists are keen to experience the life-style of the places they visit and interact with the people of that culture and not simply to have a visual experience of an iconic structure. Electronic technology has facilitated the ease with which one can visit a place of interest on

the internet and examine all its aspects in great detail. So today's tourists do much research well before travel begins, and are keen on experiencing the details by living the life style of that environment. Living with the people of the area following the way they eat, sleep, dress, work and relax is part of modern tourism.

Tourists are not content with just visiting big cities. They are interested in travelling inland even under very difficult circumstances and much discomfort to explore what could not have been read in books or found on the internet. IRT aims to provide the facilities to tourists to achieve their modern goal of experiencing the life styles of other cultures and understanding their values. However, IRT also aims to ensure that such tourism is sustainable and that it will not destroy the purity of un-spoilt spots of nature by man's greed to explore it. It is the integration of sustainability, cultural values, the thirst to explore, economic development, preservation of heritage and understanding the life styles of the people of this world that makes IRT.

## **RELATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN THE REGIONS**

### *The aboriginal culture*

The Aboriginal people of Australia have a rich, living culture stretching back at least 50,000 years. Tourists can immerse in Australia's Aboriginal living experiences, places and journeys steeped in Aboriginal history in the Northern Territory, walk around the base of Uluru, the red rock, browse Aboriginal art in Alice Springs, where the Arrernte people have lived for 20,000 years and learn about myths in the intricate rock art galleries of World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park. This is Australia's biggest national park which has lush rainforests and rock art galleries up to 50,000 years old, millions of migratory birds amongst the wetlands, delicate water lilies and prehistoric crocodiles, thundering waterfalls and sparkling waterholes. It is a wealth of treasures waiting to be explored.

The Aboriginal life style is the world's oldest living culture. It can be experienced through art, dance, myths, music and the land itself. Bushwalking, snorkeling, eating bush-tucker, catching fish in the traditional way can provide an insight into the Aboriginal Australian heritage, this ancient land and its spirituality (Tourism Australia).

### *The landscape*

Uluru the red centre of Australia is one of the modern wonders of the world. It is sacred to the Aboriginal people, and it turns into spectacular colours at sunrise and sunset. This landscape has green vegetation and lush waterholes as well as dusty red roads and huge slabs of rock. Apart from what is visible, is the awesome feeling and the silence.

### *The wineries*

Both the wine and the tourism industries have achieved high levels of growth within Australia

since the 1990s, and are significant contributors to the GDP as invisible exports (Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002). In 1994, about 10 percent of the total international visitors made a visit to an Australian winery, an increase of 20 percent on 1993. It is clear from this research that visitors to Australia relate to the wine orchards and that it is not just the wine of the orchard but also the serenity of the surrounding area and the tastings and the winery meals and often accommodation that attracts the tourists. Some researchers seek to explore wine tourism as a form of consumer behaviour in which wine lovers and those interested in wine regions travel to preferred destinations.

Getz and Brown (2006) examined the level and characteristics of demand for long-distance wine tourism among wine consumers located far from wine regions. They gave attention to the importance attached by wine consumers to various destinations and trip attributes when deciding upon a wine tourism experience. Their results determined that highly motivated, long-distance wine tourists prefer destinations offering a wide range of cultural and outdoor attractions. These preferences support previous studies of critical success factors according to wine and tourism-industry personnel. This indicates that wine tourism is a relational experience and that visitors have indicated their preference for such an experience. South Australia and Western Australia have internationally renowned wineries that lure visitors into a wine culture and to the benefits of tasting good wine.

### *The farms*

Australia has an abundance of farms with many farm animals. Many families with children and couples who seek a break from the urban life of concrete towers enjoy a holiday in a farm. The peace of living within a large land mass together with the active daily routines and the fresh food is a life style that relates to the nature loving health conscious holiday maker. Ingram (2002), researched farms in Western Australia to gain an understanding of what motivates people to operate a farm tourism business, and what motivates people to seek farm tourism holidays. The study employed a combined methodological research model to explicate the experience of hosts and guests. The most significant of these findings for guests was the desire to relax in the tranquility of the rural landscape and so recover from the stresses of their busy city lifestyle. Hosts were highly motivated to meeting new people, especially those with whom they shared a common interest. The motivations for the two groups were found to be highly compatible which augurs well for the future of relational farm tourism in the region.

### *Wildlife*

Tourism based on interactions with wildlife is increasing in popularity across the world as it is in Australia. Australia has wildlife such as kangaroos, wallabies and crocodiles that can be seen as part of the landscape. Animal lovers can live amidst the wildlife of Australia and see them cross the roads or at water holes and relate to the life of the people who live in country towns without just seeing these animals in a zoo. Reynolds and Braithwaite (2001), suggest that the values of conservation, animal welfare, visitor satisfaction, and profitability are often

in conflict in wildlife tourism and trade-offs are necessary. IRT has a major part to play in making sure that a balance is maintained.

The whale shark is the largest fish in the ocean. A tourism industry based on interacting with whale sharks has developed off the coast of Western Australia (Davis et al, 1997). This is the only known, accessible place in the world where whale sharks congregate in significant numbers. Results from surveys of participants in the whale shark experience report that the experience is extremely satisfying for most. Another popular marine tourism activity is whale-watching where visitors travel by boat about four or five kilometers into the sea and observe whales that swim up to the surface of the sea. Orams (2000) studied what factors influence whale-watchers' enjoyment, and results showed the number of whales and their behaviour, numbers of fellow passengers, cruise duration, boat construction and sea-sickness influenced satisfaction.

Sustainability of the ecological balance is a key factor in IRT. Humans may be keen on relating to certain life style experiences but this should not be at the expense of wildlife. Wilson and Tisdell (2001), show that a significant potential exists for developing sea turtle-based tourism. However, threats to sea turtle populations are growing especially as a result of human activities. Another area where habitat destruction needs to be controlled is, for penguins. Penguin Island in Melbourne is a holiday destination with many activities for visitors. Farm living, penguins, sea lions, koalas are all part of a family holiday where visitors can relate to an island lifestyle. However, IRT must limit the numbers to protect the wildlife.

An industry based upon taking tourists to watch, swim and otherwise interact with dolphins and whales in the wild has expanded rapidly over the past decade (Orams, 1997). There are considerable risks, both for the dolphins and for the tourists as a result of these encounters. Risks include harassment, stress, injury and death for dolphins and also injury for humans. It is important that dolphin tourism operators, management agencies and tourists themselves are aware of these risks and manage their activities accordingly.

#### *Visitor feedback*

Visitors to Australia interviewed by "Tourism Australia" about their experiences in the outback, with the Aboriginal people, at the farms and wineries and the wild life often make comments such as "My life-changing experience happened in the outback of South Australia", and "The first time I saw this incredible island, I fell in love with it immediately. On arrival I was amazed by the beauty but I depart knowing I would return". Such comments show that today's tourist looks for a new experience, not merely to say "I too have seen it" but to feel up lifted by the experience.

**FORECASTING REGIONAL TOURISM IN AUSTRALIA**

To develop relational tourism it is necessary to promote in-land tourism not just the capital cities. To this end tourist arrivals to Australian States and Territories were forecast using the Basic Structural Model (Turner and Witt 2001). The model has taken into account the seasonal aspect of tourist arrival, the overall increasing trend in tourist activity and the fluctuating numbers in the recent past as a result of cyclical changes in global economic activity. Time series data were used to forecast arrivals in each region, using quarterly international arrivals data at the major ports of entry to Australia over the research period from March 2002 to March 2009. The period from March 2002 to March 2008 was taken as the within sample period and the period June 2008 to March 2009 was taken as the out of sample period for which the forecast error was calculated. Three forecast error calculations were made for each region, the mean absolute deviation (MAD), the root mean square error (RMSE) and the mean absolute percentage error (MAPE). These out of sample forecasts and errors are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Out of sample forecasts and errors International Visitor Arrivals to Australia by State/Territory**

	Quarter	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Actual	Jun-08	2806	1481	2129	361	671	156	332	161
Actual	Sep-08	2821	1487	2098	362	666	158	339	160
Actual	Dec-08	2768	1479	2051	356	676	152	328	157
Actual	Mar-09	2740	1477	2019	350	674	147	323	157
	Quarter	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Forecast	Jun-08	2784	1482	2154	365	694	158	339	157
Forecast	Sep-08	2721	1487	2129	366	708	154	330	148
Forecast	Dec-08	2697	1503	2111	374	714	159	328	147
Forecast	Mar-09	2692	1519	2094	381	717	158	326	148
		NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Error	MAD	60	17	48	14	37	6	5	9
Error	RMSE	67	24	52	18	38	7	6	9
Error	MAPE(%)	2	1	2	4	5	4	1	5

The forecasting errors are very small, the MAPE showing errors as low as between 1% and 5%. Therefore the model is used with confidence to forecast arrivals for the period June 2009 to December 2011. These forecasts will be useful for tourism operators in the states and territories who wish to promote relational tourism associated with each region to know what tourist numbers to expect. The regional forecasts for June 2009 to December 2011 are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Forecasts for the period June 2009 to December 2011, International Visitor Arrivals to Australia by State/Territory**

	Quarter	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
Forecast	Jun-09	2700	1534	2079	385	708	154	321	150
Forecast	Sep-09	2724	1539	2070	386	698	157	315	156
Forecast	Dec-09	2769	1556	2060	384	705	159	312	157
Forecast	Mar-10	2795	1572	2034	383	715	155	304	153
Forecast	Jun-10	2803	1588	2018	380	720	158	301	152
Forecast	Sep-10	2776	1593	2002	375	726	155	293	152
Forecast	Dec-10	2740	1611	1995	378	728	158	289	155
Forecast	Mar-11	2697	1628	1985	387	736	159	286	163
Forecast	Jun-11	2658	1643	1966	395	762	154	283	164
Forecast	Sep-11	2626	1649	1942	398	786	157	277	160
Forecast	Dec-11	2636	1667	1933	399	798	160	277	156

## CONCLUSION

Australia's cultural heritage and the diversity of its life styles that vary from region to region and stem from multi-cultural origins, together with its land of natural wonders begs the promotion of integrated relational tourism. The country has all the ingredients to attract international tourists to experience and immerse in its relational life style resources. Australia's Aboriginal origins, culture, art and craft, beliefs and myths fascinate tourists from every country whether they are from the west or the east. Living amongst the Aboriginal people, spending time in farms amidst farm animals, visiting wineries and experiencing life in rain forests, desert land, around beaches and rivers admiring the rare fauna and flora on land and in the ocean will require long stays and several visits creating immense potential for IRT.

Australian regional tourism has not yet been forecast in the literature. Regional tourism is forecast in this paper as a first step in encouraging the development of integrated relational tourism. The many Australian experiences that attract the relational tourists are spread around the different States and Territories. This paper has forecast tourist arrivals to each State and Territory up to December 2011. New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland are the States that attract the most international tourists. New South Wales will experience a slight reduction in the arrivals from 2769 in December 2009 to 2636 in December 2011 probably due to the effects of the current financial crisis. Queensland too will experience a slight reduction in the arrivals from 2060 in December 2009 to 1933 in December 2011. However, Victoria will experience a slight increase in arrivals from 1556 in December 2009 to 1667 in December 2011. Western Australia which has the next highest number of arrivals will experience a slight increase in arrivals from 705 in December 2009 to 798 in December 2011. South Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory have



a relatively smaller number of arrivals that would remain fairly stable up to December 2011. Similar forecasts made regularly will assist the industry to ensure the availability of transport, accommodation and service facilities required to cater for the expected tourist demand.

It is important to note that these forecasts do not include interstate travel by tourists from one state or territory to another. Data have been recorded at the port of arrival to the country where immigration details are collected. Tourists may then travel using domestic air, rail or road transport to other states and territories experiencing considerable travel within the country before departure. Industry operators must therefore take note of not only the forecast arrivals to its own state but also expect that a proportion of the forecast arrivals to other states will cross borders and travel interstate.

Some relational tourists prefer home stay accommodation while others require hotel rooms with the traditional comforts and facilities international tourists demand. The forecasts made in this paper will be useful to determine whether such accommodation in the regions are sufficient to further encourage and promote relational tourism in Australia.

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The themes are Geoparks (GEOTOUR) and Historical and Cultural Trails (IRSE). In a way, these subjects represent different segments of the same continuum. As we speak of regional geo-morphology, we can talk also about a cultural “landscape” or regional cultural morphology.

Presently, geoparks provide a well established way and strategy to show natural beauties of a given geomorphological or geological unit. Establishing its carrying capacity, determining limits of acceptable change, securing sustainability, stabilizing visitor experience, its management, etc. is a real life challenge for the geopark managing team or consortium. The conference is to give answers to these and similar issues relating to established geoparks and geoparks in development alike.

The historical and cultural trails conference deals with people, their origin and culture and the strategies needed for their effective presentation. It includes artefacts of various types, cultural processes and their time and place setting. Its management usually includes a synergic cooperation of a number of people and institutions. Legal aspects are important when e.g. earlier political decisions result in a need for certain cultural artefacts to adapt to a new cultural environment without them being disowned by the old cultural environment. As cultural trails may lead across various urban or greater districts as well as across borders, service level, comfort and safety that have to be warranted, may need more effort to achieve. All these and related issues provide a wide platform for contributions and discussions coming from around the globe.

Conference details are given at:

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## NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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Full papers should be between 2,500 and 4,000 words. Research notes or case studies should be up to 1,500 words. Commentaries should be up to 1,200 words. Book and conference reviews should be 1,000 words long. Full papers and research notes should have up to six key words to indicate to readers the topic of the paper.

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- All submissions (full papers, research notes, case studies, commentaries, and book or conference reviews) must have a title of no more than 14 words.
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- *First page:* title, subtitle (if required), author’s name and surname, affiliation, full postal address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address. Respective names, affiliations and addresses of co-authors should be clearly indicated. Also, include an abstract of not more than 150 words, acknowledgements (if any), and up to 6 keywords that identify article content.
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- *Subsequent pages:* main body of text (including tables, figures and illustrations); list of references; appendixes; and footnotes (numbered consecutively).

## Reference Style

In the text, references should be cited with parentheses using the “author, date” style - for example (Ford, 2001; Jackson 1998, 2002). Page numbers for specific points or direct quotations must be given. The Reference list, placed at the end of the manuscript, must be typed in alphabetical order of authors. The specific format is:

- *For journals:* Tribe, J. (2002) The philosophic practitioner. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(2), 338-357.
- *For books and monographs:* Teare, R. and Ingram, H. (1993) *Strategic Management: A Resource-Based Approach for the Hospitality and Tourism Industries*. London, Cassell.
- *For chapters in edited books:* Sigala, M. and Christou, E. (2002) Use of Internet for enhancing tourism and hospitality education: lessons from Europe. In K.W. Wober, A.J. Frew and M. Hitz (Eds.) *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism*, Wien: Springer-Verlag.
- *For reports:* Edelstein, L. G. & Benini, C. (1994) Meetings and Conventions. Meetings market report (August), 60-82.



