

Galdini, Rossana

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STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE TOURIST INDUSTRY

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"Land Use and Water Management in a Sustainable Network Society"

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Author: ROSSANA GALDINI

Institute: Department of Sociology and Social Science
UNIVERSITY OF CALABRIA
ITALY

Address: Ponte Bucci Cubo 0B
87036 Arcavacata di Rende (COSENZA)

E-mail: r.galdini@unical.it

Tel. n.: 349-1091895

Jel code: 234 (abstract number)
457(participant num.)

P:S: If it is possible, I wish my paper to be included on the CD_ROM.

Abstract

STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE TOURIST INDUSTRY

The paper focusses on the role and the significance of tourism, as one particular set of industries that are of great significance in contemporary western societies, namely consumer services and especially tourist- related services. Particular emphasis is given to the impact of tourism on host communities, the changing role of tourism in the European economy, the relationship between tourism and environment, and its place in urban regeneration. Tourism is one of the most significant social forces in the world today. It also has enormous international economic and geopolitical importance. The economic, social environmental and cultural implications of such developments can be seen in a lot of cities. Tourism constructs, rearranges, and inhabits geographic, social and cultural spaces globally. This paper tries to analyze in a systematic way the social and geographical dimensions of tourism. The focus is on spatial relationships, tourism systems and environments. The main theme is that of tourism as a totalizing social construction of places and identities. The strong connections between society, time and space implies that the concept of 'society', the nature of 'locality', the significance of 'economic restructuring', and the concept of the 'rural', are to be examined in relationship to place. The paper then considers how places have been transformed by the development of service occupations and industries. Attention is devoted to the ways in which places are consumed, the visual character of such consumption and its implications for place and people. The

implications for nature and the environment are also explored . Places are constructed for tourism consumption through the promotion of certain images that have implications for the built environment. Tourist consumption is a place- creating and a place-altering act. It cannot be denied that tourism is a terrific force for change. It accounts for prosperity in many countries. The hundreds of visitors who come do not only bring money but they also transform the lives of the locals for better or worse. The paper tries to provide a critical approach of how places of cultural significance are transformed into places of consumption by investigating the relationship between culture as a resource for identity and social meaning and culture as an important economic resource for post-industrial cities.

Key-words: tourism, changes, environment, culture, identity.

Introduction

Tourism can be defined as the act of travel for the purpose of recreation, and the provision of services for this act. A tourist is someone who travels at least fifty miles from home, as defined by the World Tourist Organisation.

Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. Tourism is different from travel. In order for tourism to happen, there must be a displacement: an individual has to travel, using any type of means of transportation (he might even travel on foot: nowadays, it is often the case for poorer societies, and happens even in more developed ones, and concerns pilgrims, hikers). But all travel is not tourism. Three criteria are used simultaneously in order to characterize a trip as belonging to tourism. The displacement must be such that:

it involves a displacement outside the usual environment: this term is of utmost importance; type of purpose: the travel must occur for any purpose different from being remunerated from within the place visited: the previous limits, where tourism was restricted to recreation and visiting family and friends are now expanded to include a vast array of purposes; duration: only a maximal duration is mentioned, not a minimal. A more comprehensive definition would be that tourism is a service industry, comprising a number of tangible and intangible elements. The tangible components include transport systems, hospitality services; and related services such as banking, insurance and safety and security. The intangible elements include:

culture, new and different experiences, relaxation and rest. Tourism is widely regarded as one of the fastest growing industries today, both in Europe and around the world. The magnitude of the tourism industry inevitably produces economic, political, social, cultural and ecological consequences, each of which must be understood if they are to be dealt with and managed in a sustainable manner. Many countries depend heavily upon travels expenditures by foreigners as a source of taxation and income for enterprises that sell services to these travellers. As result the development of tourism is often a strategy employed either by a Non governmental organisation (NGO) or a governmental agency to promote a region for the purpose of increasing commerce through exporting goods and services to non- locals.¹We can talk about several sectors in the field of tourism as nature-based tourism, sometimes called eco-tourism, that is responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people while providing a quality experience that connects the visitor to nature. Or cultural heritage tourism, that aims traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. The key to sustainable heritage tourism is to build a bridge between preservation and travelers. An area that develops its potential for heritage tourism creates new opportunities for visitors to gain an understanding of an unfamiliar place, people or time. Well-interpreted sites teach visitors their importance and, by extension, the importance of preserving other such sites elsewhere.

Sometimes the term tourism is used in a negative sense, implying a shallow interest in the societies and natural wonders that the tourists visits. But how is it possible to define tourism? Tourism is a complex system of economic structures, social functions and cultural models, which are all subject to historical changes. Tourists, on the other hand, have a variety of individual motifs, perceptions and experiences. Tourism history should look at both sides of the medal, it should combine the study of economic structures and of individual motifs. In this paper I propose some ideas about the ‘tourist gaze’, about the role of seeing, of visual perception. Following the English sociologist John Urry, the gaze is the most important tourist activity; “the other services are in a sense peripheral to the fundamental process of consumption, which is the capturing of the gaze .

¹ (Source: The National Trust; “Getting Started: How to Succeed in Heritage Tourism”; 1999)

“Gazing in fact constitutes tourism. Historically, the development of tourism followed the rise of the eye as the most privileged sense during enlightenment. ‘Sites’ became ‘sights’, when they were no longer used, but looked at. Wild or fertile nature became picturesque or dull landscape. Tourists visited a church, but did not pray anymore. Whereas fishermen’s houses turned their back to the raw seaside, hotel rooms faced the shore Tourists are looking for symbols: The gaze is constructed through signs, and tourism involves the collection of signs. To collect these signs, tourists need a certain infrastructure which can be supplied only if the gazes are regular and predictable. It is fundamental for tourism industry not only to know, but also to influence, to construct the tourist gaze.”²

But is tourism an industry? Hans Magnus Enzensberger in his 1958 theoretical essay, understands tourism as a romantic escape from the industrial world, following the romantic images of untouched nature and untouched history. This escape is bound to fail, however, because tourism has established itself as an industry, the journey out of the sphere of commodities has itself become a commodity. Like all industrial production, it is standardized, assembled and produced in series Is tourism an industry? According to Christoph Hennig, sociologist, tourism is not only a consumer good, but also a cultural activity. Tourism as a social phenomenon cannot be restricted to tourism industry, just as literature is much more than just the publishing companies. In fact, holidays are no cars, no material goods, but services, experiences, feelings. Tourism is a complex product of a highly symbolic nature. Production of tourism means not only organising transportation, hotel beds and tour guides, but most of all: delivering meaning. Because meaning is so much more important in selling holidays than in selling cars or refrigerators, advertising is fundamental. Advertising delivers meaning, advertising constructs the gaze. Advertising has little ability to influence tourist gazes, which are instead shaped by art traditions, cultural models and deep-rooted anthropological imaginations. Thus, from the 1970s onwards, the construction of the tourist gaze became more systematic and aggressive. This intensified marketing was successful: Although many different factors are playing together in creating perception patterns, the influence of tourist industry on gaze-construction had grown. The strengthening of marketing methods augmented the power of this standardized tourist gaze, which increasingly governed

² Urry, J. (1990) *The Tourist Gaze*. London: Sage

not only tourists, but also inhabitants: Historical cities were 'musealized', modern cities were 'festivalized', culture was 'folklorized'. These much-debated processes are even stronger for rural areas or developing countries, subject to what Urry calls the "colonizing tourist gaze". We can observe in cities and towns substantial changes in lifestyle, structures, culture, habits and environment.

1.1 The impacts of tourism industry on host communities

The tourism industry is one of the largest industries in the world and has seen significant growth throughout the 1990s and into the millennium. International tourist arrivals in 2004 alone totalled 700 million. Europe accounts for 58% of international tourism but, the fastest developing region continues to be East Asia and the Pacific. At the beginning of the new millennium, Travel and Tourism employment accounted for over 207 million jobs, or 8.2% of total employment. Not only does tourism generate jobs within its own sector but also in financial services, retailing and telecommunications. For decades tourism industry growth has been a major contributor to increased economic activity throughout many countries. It has increased jobs in large and small communities and is a major industry in many places. Along with this growth of 'mass' tourism, specialist travel services in the long-haul market have emerged. Whereas holidays were traditionally taken in touristic resorts, tourism is now a global industry. New tourist destinations are being 'discovered' as governments recognise the potential significance of tourism in their national economies. Yet the impact of tourism to a community are not widely understood, even where tourism is growing dramatically and should be of the greatest interest or concern. The tourism industry adapts and changes to trends in the world economy and consumers' tastes and fashions. Not only has the volume of international tourism grown, but a wider range of socio-economic groups are participating. Along with this growth of 'mass' tourism, specialist travel services in the long-haul market have emerged. Whereas holidays were traditionally taken in seaside resorts, tourism is now a global industry. New tourist destinations are being 'discovered' as governments recognise the potential significance of tourism in their national economies. During the past 20 years, tourism - both in negative and in positive terms - has developed into an important factor within the context of sustainability. For this reason, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) has placed tourism at the centre of its 1999 conference. Tourism, which accounts for 9% of all jobs and 9% of all consumer expenditure

within the European Union, is one of Europe's largest economic sectors today and features among the largest key industries of the 21st century. The World Tourism Organisation estimates that the number of arrivals in Europe will double to 720 million tourists per year by 2020 . Serious negative impacts on the environment and the quality of life. This development involves serious risks for the European environment and the welfare of people, but also for the tourist industry itself. Tourism accounts for about 50% of passenger traffic in Europe, which has serious impacts both on the tourist destinations as such, and the areas along tourist travel routes. The local infrastructure and natural resources are often confronted with an dramatic increase population during the tourist season. In the most popular tourist destinations along sea coasts and in the Alps, the impacts on nature and the population already clearly exceed the critical limits. Three-quarters of the sand dunes on the Mediterranean coastline between Spain and Sicily have already disappeared, mainly as the result of urbanisation linked to tourism development. Similar developments are observed in the Alps. The combined effects of major investments in infrastructure and the associated influx of visitors mean that tourism can have significant impacts, both positive and negative, on an economy, on its culture, and on the environment (Brown, 1998).³ In practice, the dominant motive for the development of tourism is economic (improvements in employment, incomes and exports), but the very process of developing tourism will impose costs elsewhere. If governmental and non-governmental organisations are to make sensible and rational decisions with respect to the current and future development of tourism, they must have reliable information on its costs and benefits (Fletcher, 1989).⁴ Without such information, there is the risk that significant investment opportunities may be missed, that key infrastructure developments may be starved of funds, or that developments may take the wrong form or take place in the wrong location. While recognising the variety of different impacts that tourism may have, this paper will focus particular attention on the economic impact of tourism. Economic benefits are probably the main reason why so many countries are interested in the development of tourism and the contribution of tourism to the world economy is considerable. Most people think of tourism in terms

³ Brown, F (1998) *Tourism Reassessed: Blight or Blessing*, Butterworth Heineman, Oxford.

⁴ Fletcher, Fletcher John E. (1989) Input-output analysis and tourism impact studies, *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol 16(3) pp 514-529

of economic impacts, jobs, and taxes. However, the range of impacts from tourism is broad and often influences areas beyond those commonly associated with tourism. Leaders as well as residents who understand the potential impacts of tourism can integrate this industry into their community in the most positive way. The impacts of tourism can be sorted into seven general categories:

1. Economic
2. Environmental
3. Social and cultural
4. Crowding and congestion
5. Services
6. Taxes
7. Community attitude

Each category includes positive and negative impacts. Not all impacts are applicable to every community because conditions or resources differ. Community and tourism leaders must balance an array of impacts that may either improve or negatively affect communities and their residents. Leaders must be sensitive and visionary, and must avoid the temptation of glossing over certain difficulties tourism development creates. Tourism leaders must also balance the opportunities and concerns of all community sectors by working against conditions where positive impacts benefit one part of the community (geographic or social) and negative impacts hurt another. Local leaders should not expect tourism to solve all community problems. Tourism is just one element of a community. While creative strategic development of tourism amenities and services can enhance the community or correct local deficiencies, tourism, like all business development, must assure that its products (attractions and services) attract customers. Specific plans and actions can increase tourism's benefits or decrease the gravity of a negative impact. It is important for communities to understand the wide scope of impacts and endeavor to agree on what positive impacts to emphasize. It is wise to acknowledge and identify possible negative impacts so actions can be taken to minimize or prevent them. A clear statement of the community's vision of tourism should be an integral part of a community's comprehensive plan. Active planning directs tourism toward the goals of the community, clarifying tourism's role and uniting multiple interests. Tourism researchers have identified a large number of impacts. Grouping the impacts into categories shows the types of impacts that could result from developing tourism in a community. A community will not experience

every impact. Some are dependent on particular natural resource features (mountains, coral reefs) or development and spatial patterns (special "tourist zones"). Others relate to the social condition of the community, particularly the ability to culturally or socially connect with tourists. Still others relate to types and intensity of tourism developments, i.e., approval or hostility toward tourist activities. Tourism development may result in many and complex impacts and this consideration suggests that local elected officials, the tourism industry, and community residents need to work cooperatively and carefully to plan for its growth and development. Planning can help create an industry that enhances a community with minimal costs and disruptions in other aspects of community life.

First we consider the **economic** impacts of tourism. Before discussing the various economic benefits of tourism in detail, it is perhaps appropriate to clarify the current position of tourism in the world economy. Arguably, tourism is the second largest industry in the world; estimates from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) suggest that it generates around 200 million jobs world-wide and accounts for 10% of global GDP (WTTC, 2003). Although there may be debates about the precise scale of tourism's impact on the world economy, few would argue with the view that it does make a major contribution. The scale of that contribution will vary considerably across countries partly because the extent of domestic tourism will vary and partly because the numbers and spending of international visitors will also vary. Relatively speaking, the impact of international visitors is probably greater than the impact of domestic tourists, although the importance of the latter should not be underestimated and for many large countries, tourism is often of far greater economic significance than international tourism. Tourism increases employment opportunities. Additional jobs, ranging from low-wage entry-level to high-paying professional positions in management and technical fields, generate income and raise standards of living. Particularly in rural areas, the diversification created by tourism helps communities that are possibly dependent on only one industry. As tourism grows, additional opportunities are created for investment, development, and infrastructure spending. Tourism often induces improvements. Opportunities, improves investment, development, and infrastructure spending, increases tax revenues. Improves public utilities and transport infrastructure; creates new business opportunities in public utilities such as water, sewer, sidewalks, lighting, parking, and landscaping. Such improvements benefit tourists and residents at the same time. New jobs generate

more income tax revenues. When considering the economic impacts of tourism, it is essential to understand that tourism businesses often include a significant number of low-paying jobs. These jobs are often seasonal, causing under-employment or unemployment during off-seasons. Labor may be imported, rather than hired locally, especially if particular skills or expertise is required, or if local labor is unavailable. Greater demand for goods, services, land, and housing may increase prices that in turn will increase the cost of living. Additionally, non-local owners and corporations may export profits out of the community. The community may have to generate funds (possibly through increased taxes) to maintain roads and transportation systems that have become more heavily used. Another important aspect are the **environmental** impacts. Areas with high-value natural resources, and great scenic beauty attract tourists and new residents who seek emotional and spiritual connections with nature. Because these people value nature, selected natural environments are preserved, protected, and kept from further ecological decline. Lands that could be developed can generate income by accommodating the recreational activities of visitors. Tourist income often makes it possible to preserve and restore historic buildings and monuments. Improvements in the area's benefit visitors and residents alike attractions, instead of factories. The negative aspects of the tourism refers to the possibility to degrade an environment, generating waste and pollution . Uncontrolled visitation or overuse by visitors can degrade landscapes, historic sites, and monuments.

Social and Cultural

The social and cultural effects of tourism warrant careful consideration, as impacts can either become assets or detriments to communities. Influxes of tourists bring diverse values to the community and influence behaviors and family life. Individuals and the collective community might adopt tourist behaviors. Interactions between residents and tourists can impact creative expression by providing new opportunities (positive) or by stifling individuality with new restrictions (negative). Increased tourism can push a community to adopt a different moral conduct. Tourism can improve the quality of life in an area by increasing the number of attractions, recreational opportunities, and services. Tourism offers residents opportunities to meet interesting people, make friendships, learn about the world, and expose themselves to new perspectives. Experiencing different cultural practices enriches experiences, broadens horizons, and increases insight and appreciation for different approaches to

living. The interest by tourists in local culture and history provides opportunities to support preservation of historical artifacts and architecture. By learning more about others, their differences become less threatening and more interesting. At the same time, tourism often promotes higher levels of psychological satisfaction from opportunities created by tourism development and through interactions with travelers.

Overcrowding

Tourism often develops around specific locations and concentrates there, providing growth yet avoiding sprawl. Historic buildings and grounds, which might otherwise slowly deteriorate, have great appeal for tourism development and can often be renovated to suit the industry. As people congregate, congestion and crowding produces stress, annoyance, anger, and other negative attitudes. Hordes of visitors may impede local businesses, residents' normal activities, and compete for space. Tourism construction, may be inappropriate in scale and style with respect to other structures and the landscape.

Services

Tourism creates opportunities to develop new amenities and recreation facilities that would not otherwise be viable in a community. Traditional services may be forced out or relocated due to competition with tourist interests.

Taxes

Increased retail activity from restaurants and tourist shopping will add state and local sales tax revenue.

Community attitude

It is possible that in a community tension between residents and tourists can occur. People will often feel stressed over the new, increasingly hectic community and personal pace of life worse. Where culture is part of the tourist attractions, over-amplification of cultural traits and creation of "new" cultural traits to satisfy tourist tastes may generate in the residents may a sense of exclusion and alienation over planning and development concerns. They may feel a loss of control over the community's future as "outsiders" take over establishments and new development.

The influx of outside businesses creates a sensation that the community is being manipulated and exploited by outsiders for the sole benefit of those developers or business people. Knowing the nature of tourism impacts won't automatically lead to solutions. It is equally important to identify the sources of these impacts and how they influence interactions between tourists and residents, the host community, and the

environment. Directing tourism growth toward local needs, interests, and limits can greatly enhance tourism's value to the community and help create a sustainable industry. Many small communities have the skills and resources for successful tourism development. Creating a local tourism industry is not a daunting task, but making tourism really "fit" the community requires work. Creating a successful and sustainable tourism industry is like creating any successful and sustainable economic activity, it requires a right vision, planning and work.

1.2 The role of tourism

As well as being a major source of revenue for countries worldwide, tourism is also an industry where long-term growth prospects are good; indeed, over the past decade, the growth in tourism receipts has exceeded the growth rates observed in most other service sectors. Looking to the future, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) forecasts an annual growth rate of 4.1% in international tourist arrivals up to 2020 (WTO, 2003). Of course, tourism is subject to short-term shocks and fluctuations in demand as recent experience in the aftermath of terrorist attacks, and war in Iraq has shown. For example, as a consequence of the terrorists attacks of September 11th, international tourist arrivals in the United States were down by almost 11% for 2001 compared with 2000. However, over the longer term, as incomes continue to rise, there will be a growing demand for leisure. As travel becomes easier and quicker, our natural curiosity and desire for new experiences will increasingly be realised through the expansion of both domestic and international tourism. The challenge for the tourism sector is not so much about achieving growth as about managing that growth in such a way as to reap maximum benefits without significantly negative impacts on the natural, cultural and social environments. Having considered the general economic significance of tourism, let us move on analyze in more detail, its economic benefits and in particular the ways in which individual countries may gain from tourism. Economic costs and benefits may arise from both initial investments to develop tourism and from regular expenditure by tourists visiting a particular location. There are other more general economic benefits commonly associated with tourism. Many commentators point to the important role tourism can play in stimulating economic growth and tourism may be of particular significance to countries that do not have major supplies of natural resources. Of particular significance is the fact that tourism is a major source of foreign exchange, and thus provides the basis for export lead economic growth. It is also worth noting that the

development of tourism may reduce a country's dependence on primary commodities as a source of export earnings. Over-dependence on a single source of income is always likely to create risks, but these are probably particularly apparent in relation to primary commodities where prices can display high levels of volatility year-on-year and where agricultural support policies operated in many developed economies have artificially depressed world market prices (Brown, 1998).⁵ As well as having a positive impact on economic growth and development overall, tourism can also play a relevant role on regional development, and may help to even out some of the inequalities between different parts of a given country. Regions which do not have access to other major resources or do not have major urban centres may be able to use tourism to improve regional incomes and reduce out-migration. Skiing, various forms of rural tourism, some forms of eco-tourism and of course, sun, sand and sea tourism have all been used to promote the development of peripheral regions in both developed and developing countries (eg Pearce, 1995, Weaver and Fennell, 1997). In developed economies, tourism also has the potential to stimulate economic regeneration, as the experience of cities such as Manchester in the UK and Bilbao in Spain shows (Plaza, 2000). Finally it has been suggested that tourism may also encourage entrepreneurship and the development of new small businesses, particularly among groups who might not have easy access to formal labour markets. Alongside these economic benefits, we must also recognise that there are potentially some significant costs associated with tourism development. At the most basic level, if resources are being used for the development of tourism they cannot be used in other sectors of the economy; if labour is employed in tourism, it is not available for use by other sectors of the economy and if capital is invested in tourism, it cannot be invested in other projects. Even if tourism development does not crowd-out the development of other sectors, it does still impose some significant and direct financial costs on governments. These costs include the costs of advertising and marketing the country as a destination and the establishment and operation of national tourism organisations as well as the costs associated with developing and maintaining relevant infrastructure. Additional costs may be incurred in instances where governments need to provide subsidies and other incentives to attract private sector investment (Wood,

⁵ Brown, F (1998) *Tourism Reassessed: Blight or Blessing*, Butterworth Heineman, Oxford.

1996).⁶ If tourism development is heavily reliant on imported goods and services, there is a risk that existing local production may be displaced or its development inhibited. This effect can be particularly significant if ‘demonstration effects’ result in the local population copying tourists and increasing their consumption of imported goods and services rather than domestically produced ones. High levels of tourist arrivals may also cause problems. Large numbers of tourists may overload local infrastructure placing pressure on water, electricity, sewage provision, and on transport links. Such infrastructure problems may be particularly acute in developing countries and may add to tourism development costs because of the need for additional investment. There is little doubt that many communities have suffered because of the influx of large numbers of tourists, but equally there are many examples of communities where local residents have benefited from access to improved infrastructure which was initially put in place to support tourism.

The previous description has highlighted a variety of different ways in which tourism can benefit an economy and has also pointed to a number of the costs that it may impose. Because of the complexity associated with assessing the economic effects of tourism, there continues to be considerable debate and conflicting evidence. Strong advocates of tourism argue persuasively for significant benefits to economies particularly in developing countries. At the other extreme, tourism’s critics adopt a more negative perspective and highlight the dependency that can be created by tourism and its neo-colonialist features. An intermediate position would point to the presence of significant economic benefits but also highlight potential costs, which if not monitored, could significantly erode the gains made to employment, income and other economic aggregates. The economic significance of tourism has been subject to considerable debate. Resolving this debate requires reliable and rigorous information on the precise nature of tourism spending and its impact on different sectors of the economy.

1.3 Tourism and environment

“Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the

⁶ Wood R C (1996) The Last feather-Beded Industry? Government, politics and the Hospitality Industry during and after the 1992, General Election, Tourism Management, vol 12 pp 64-95.

environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability”.

New definition of sustainable tourism” (World Tourism Organization, 2004)

The global market for tourism is expected to continue to grow over the next several decades. In Europe, tourism is concentrated in the Mediterranean area (45% of arrivals) and in western Europe (35%), and less so in northern and eastern Europe (collectively 11%). International arrivals in Europe will double from 360 million in 1997 to about 720 million, with increasing growth rates in central and eastern Europe (+ 4.8% per year) and in eastern Mediterranean Europe (+4.6% per year). In 2020, nine out of ten tourists will still be European. In the overall paradigm of sustainable development, tourism can be defined through a wide array of subjects, issues, and interests:

- Actors: tourists (degree of satisfaction, behaviour, etc...); local populations (work, identity, well-being).
- Subjects: tourism industry and economy (employment, added value, local multipliers); culture (heritage conservation, variety); nature and the environment (energy consumption and materials, biodiversity, environmental quality). The needs of future generations, along with environmental, social, and cultural carrying capacities are setting the quality and limits of growth. All activities related to tourism must be sustainable, and respect the environment, the local and global economies, the social aspects of individual communities, and cultural identity. This means that tourism must be ecologically sustainable in the long-term, economically feasible, and acceptable from both an ethical and social point of view. Sustainable tourism must be integrated into the natural, cultural, and human environment. Tourism activities should have an acceptable impact on natural resources, biodiversity, and the capacity of the natural environment to absorb all impacts and waste. Tourism activities, have a significant impact on the environment and on biological diversity, and must therefore undergo specific environmental impact assessments. Tourism must assess its own impacts on the cultural heritage and on the traditional activities of the communities it affects. Acknowledgement and respect of local communities, and support for their identity, culture, and interests must play a key role in the development of tourism policies, opportunities, and strategic projects. The adequate development of the various tourism-related activities can strengthen local economies, and thus regional

and national ones as well, by employing local human and material resources. Tourism activities must respect the environmental characteristics of the area in which they take place. Any policy or project that aims to develop sustainable tourism must effectively improve the quality of life of host populations, and must have a positive effect on cultural identities. According to World Tourism Organisation data, the Mediterranean area is the world's leading tourist attraction. It is one of the areas with the highest anthropic pressure caused by tourism (about 180 million visitors per year). High demand for land, and rapid changes in land use, often have negative consequences on the environment, on local traditions, and on cultural identities. It is therefore very important to carefully plan and efficiently manage tourism-related activities, and to exchange best practices in order to be able to conduct feasibility studies before embarking on community related strategies. The rediscovery of the value of the protection of local landscapes, cultures, traditions, and historical identities goes hand-in-hand with the European-wide need for opportunities, infrastructure, and places in which environmental quality is seen as a way to enjoy better vacations and protect the environment by acting responsibly. Tourism-related activities require careful analysis on the part of public administrations, which must be involved in both the supply side – such as sustainable tourism production models – and in terms of regulating resource use and the relationships between all stakeholders. Regional-level institutions are particularly important, since they are the public institutions best adapted to achieving the necessary operational convergence between the national/global level and local communities, and between the various public and private stakeholders involved in defining and creating the supply of sustainable tourism activities. This is the reason why an increasing number of international organisations and national governments recognise the importance of adequate management in order to reduce the negative impacts of tourism. The implementation of projects to develop sustainable tourism requires feedback and self-monitoring, in order to guarantee a more sustainable quality of life. A network can have such a function, and it can facilitate the exchange of ideas, know-how, and results. It is therefore clear that traditional approaches to tourism economics, planning, management, and sustainability must be widened, and that tourism must be understood within a wider framework that includes general economic policies, socio-economic development, and cultural changes. Regional-level institutions are particularly important, since they are the public institutions best adapted to achieving the necessary operational convergence between the

national/global level and local communities, and between the various public and private stakeholders involved in defining and creating the supply of sustainable tourism activities. An intact nature, cultural diversity, personal contacts and mutual understanding are the foundations of an eventful, interesting and viable tourism. Sustainable tourism can help to balance the economies of richer and poorer regions, to maintain public infrastructure and consequently to improve the quality of life. Moreover, tourism can be a vehicle for tolerance and better understanding among people and regions at local, national and global level.

1.4 A Strategy for Sustainable Tourism in Europe

Sustainable tourism operates in harmony with local environment, community and cultures, so that these become the permanent beneficiaries. Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.⁷ There is a need to secure the future quality of the tourism industry. Europe needs a pro-active quality offensive for sustainable tourism to maintain the most crucial assets of the tourism industry: intact nature, a rich and diverse culture, the satisfaction of visitors and the positive attitude of the resident population. Tourism is the natural ally of sustainable development, because any and all measures in this area implying more attractive offers for the tourists, higher quality of life for the residents, a positive long-term development for the tourism industry and, last but not least, for the environment of the regions whose preservation constitutes the necessary prerequisite to such a positive development. In Europe, tourism policy is wrongly classified as a purely local concern. The main aspect of tourism is connected with transport of people to tourist destinations. The analysis of the spatial impact of tourism reveals that uncontrolled growth in individual tourism regions is generating beyond its local impact, more and more negative supra-regional effects on the environment and the population in Europe. National tourism policy in Europe has increasingly been coming up against limitations, because supply and demand patterns involve a number of different states and third countries are noticeably affected by the negative impacts of tourism traffic. One of the main

⁷ (Source: Sustainable Tourism Network web site; www.stn.info.com)

driving forces of this development is the cut-throat competition between tourist destinations, which in the long term threatens to destroy the environment, the specific culture and the quality of life in the tourism regions - unless European framework conditions define limits for this type of competition. There is a strong need for a European strategy and a European Action Programme for a more sustainable tourism in order to protect the environment and safeguard the quality of life in tourism destinations and regions affected by tourism transport. At the same time these are essential prerequisites for the success of the future European tourism industry. Important issues regarding the development of tourism in Europe consequently include traffic generated by tourism. Tourist transport is one of the most crucial elements of tourism, which always implies movement from home to destination and back. Tourism is very often linked with other policy areas such as transport, regional development or spatial planning. To ensure a coherent sustainable tourism policy, these various policy sectors have to be involved when defining concrete measures and actions. In addition tourism increasingly affects the whole territory of the European Union; hence, measures are required at all political levels - that of the European Union, that of the Member States and that of local destinations. The European Strategy for Sustainable Tourism should lead to an Action Programme for Sustainable Tourism in Europe which addresses the several relevant policy sectors and the different policy levels in Europe. With a view to the increasing of tourist movements in the next 20 years every, many scientists suggest that effort must be made to shift tourism transport increasingly to environmentally friendly, less health-damaging and more socially acceptable forms of transport. At the European, national and local level priority has to be given to the policy measures that can reduce environmental and health damage and improve new transport system, particularly regarding intermodality, accessibility, frequency and comfort. In this action regional and spatial planning has a key role in achieving a reduction of transport at local level. The aim of spatial development policies is to work towards a balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the European Union. The tourism sector could contribute substantially to the three goals of regional policy in Europe, recently confirmed by the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) :

Economic and social cohesion - as tourism provides income in often remote rural regions. Actions:

- Conservation and management of natural resources and the cultural heritage - which are the main assets of every tourism destination.
- More balanced competitiveness within the European territory - as the tourism industry functions very often as a pioneer for the development of other local businesses.. Particular high pressures can also be generated by mega-tourism facilities and events and tourist activities which involve an intensive use of nature.

1.5 A new dimension of tourism

“By the year 2000 this will be the largest industry in the world, in terms of employment and trade, and it is already having profound environmental consequences. These stem, first, from the fact that much tourism is concerned with, in a sense, visually consuming that very environment; second, from the enormous flow of people carried on many forms of transport which enable tourists to gaze upon often geographically distant environments; and third, from the various transformations of the environment which follow from the widespread construction of tourist attractions and from the incredible concentrations of people into particular places.” (Urry,2000)⁸

Tourism plays an important role as international economic and geopolitical force. Tourism constructs, rearranges, and inhabits geographic, social and cultural spaces globally. Now I will try to analyze tourism as a totalizing social construction of places and identities. We are all tourists. Even at home in our houses, we are tourists. Excursions away from home are highlighted in our memories; anticipated with excitement (and trepidation), talked about frequently, and act as sources of social hierarchy. Tourism organizes much of our lives. It cannot be denied that tourism is a terrific force for change. It accounts for prosperity in many countries. The hundreds of visitors who come do not only bring money but they also transform the lives of the locals for better or worse. We consume, devour and digest places so finally there is nothing left it seems. Beauty spots are nothing more than a commodity. And indeed the commodification of landscape is the phenomenon that has brought the most significant changes to our lifestyles. So what about the future of our planet if all places of natural beauty, all those lovely beaches and tropical forests are to be 'consumed' or spoilt by crowds of tourists? Is it inevitable that while they escape from

⁸ Urry J. (2000) *Sociology Beyond Societies*. London: Routledge.

the monotony and drudgery of their lives in crowded and polluted cities they will change forever the tropical island paradises or quaint villages in remote parts of the world? The images of tourism and travelling around the world are of beautiful beaches, native rainforests, smiling locals, clear skies, sunny days and hundreds more images you can come up with. These are the images the tourism companies and tourism boards of countries show us to attract our money. Many times these images are a reality, but just inside the tourist enclaves these companies and boards have created. Outside the walls the reality is another one, and that is many times kept away from our sight. Our “responsibility” as tourists could be to look above those walls and hence become the travelers we want to be, to explore the reality of the places we have decided to visit. It is difficult for a tourist to be conscious of the negative impacts one can have on the destination visited. The whole tourism experience in hotels and tours is in a way designed to separate us from the natural, social, cultural and economic contexts. On the natural context we do not see where the waste we generate goes to, where does the water of the pools we use come from, how is the electricity for air conditioning generated, what is the amount of pollution our airplane produces. On the social side sometimes we do not even cross steps with the “locals”. Only as a customer – employee relationship, were the locals are employed to clean the rooms, cook the food and serve the drinks. Also tourism companies are becoming aware that not taking care of the environment, supporting the local communities, respecting the host culture and benefiting the local economy is bad business in the long term. “Responsible Tourism” is a recent buzzword that is permeating the tourism sector. Travelers are demanding authentic experiences, direct contact with the local communities, environmentally friendly tours and accommodation. Travellers want to be responsible travelers. In response to this demand companies are understanding, at last, that they must be truly responsible on the above mentioned contexts of the destinations they work in. Some researchers finding a definition for this process use the term of “responsible tourism is a concept closely related to the idea of ecotourism. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as: *“Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.”* According to this definition ecotourism is responsible travel having in mind several aspects of our travel. Fennell (1999) gives a definition of Responsible Tourism:

“Travel that takes into consideration the natural, socio-cultural, economic and political contexts of a destination in the search to increase benefits and minimize negative impacts.” In conclusion to become a true and responsible Traveller a person must constantly and consciously think about To practice responsible tourism we must have the belief that when we respect other peoples’ homes we are respecting our home, our world.

1.6 Changes in tourism industry

Overall the 1990s the effects of globalisation, the new technology have transformed several aspects of social life, communications practices ‘on the move’. Remarkable ‘time- space compression’ as people across the globe have been brought ‘closer’ through various technologically assisted developments. There is increasingly for many social groups a ‘death of distance’ (Cairncross, 1997), while Bauman describes the shift from a solid, fixed modernity to a much more fluid and speeded-up ‘liquid modernity’ (2000).⁹ Part of this sense of compression of space has stemmed from the rapid flows of travellers and tourists physically moving from place to place. Urry distinguishes between virtual travel through the internet, imaginative travel, through phone, radio and TV, and corporeal travel along the infrastructures of the global travel industry (Urry, 2000). The amount of ‘traffic’ along all these has increased over this last decade, there is no evidence that virtual and imaginative travel is replacing corporeal travel, but there are complex intersections between these different modes of travel. Because of these liquidities the relations between almost all societies across the globe are mediated by flows of tourists. There is an increasingt producing and ‘consuming [of] places’ from around the globe (Urry 1995).¹⁰ This process presupposes the growth of ‘tourism reflexivity’, the set of disciplines, procedures that enable each place to monitor, evaluate and develop its ‘tourism potential’ within the emerging patterns of global tourism. This reflexivity is concerned with identifying a particular place’s location within geographic contexty, history and culture of the globe, and in particular identifying that place’s actual and potential material and cultural resources. These evaluative procedures enable each ‘place’ to modify and maximise their location within the turbulent global order. Such procedures ‘invent’, produce, market and circulate, especially through global TV and the internet, new or different places and their corresponding visual images. Of course not all members of

⁹ Bauman Z. (2000) Liquid Modernity. Cambridge: Polity.

¹⁰ Urry, J. (1995) Consuming Places. London: Routledge

the world community are equal participants within global tourism. Global tourists and travellers visit those 'empty meeting places' or 'non-places' of modernity such as the airport lounge, the coach station, the railway terminus, the motorway service stations, docks and so on are countless global exiles (MacCannell, 1992; Augé, 1995).¹¹ Such exiles are fleeing from poverty, war, torture, as economic and social inequalities and consequential displacements of population have magnified in recent years and have forced mobility. While clearly most people across the world are not global tourists but visitors, this does not mean that the places that they live in and the associated images of nature, nation, colonialism, sacrifice, community, heritage and so on, are not powerful constituents of a rapacious global tourism. In certain cases becoming a tourist destination is part of a reflexive process by which societies and places come to 'enter' the global order. Moreover, many types of work are now found within these circuits of global tourism. It is difficult not to be implicated within, or affected by, one or more of these circuits that increasingly overlap with a more general 'economy of signs' spreading across multiple spaces of consumption (Lash and Urry, 1994).¹² A further kind of travel occurs where a 'live' event is to be seen, an event programmed to happen at a specific moment. Examples of "big events", include political, artistic, celebratory and sporting occasions, the last are especially 'live' since the outcome (and even the length) may be unknown. Each of these generates intense moments of co-presence, a Madonna concert, a World Expo or the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Each of these cannot be 'missed' and they produce enormous movements of people at very specific moments in 'global cities' in order to 'catch' that particular mega-event 'live' (2000). Roche¹³ describes the planned mega-events as 'social spatio-temporal "hubs" and "switches" that ... channel, mix and re-route global flows' (2000). Such events are spatiotemporal moments of global condensation, involving the peculiarly intense 'localisation' of such global events within 'unique places due to the fact that they staged unique events'. These places therefore have the 'power to transform themselves from being mundane places... into being these special "host city" sites' that come to occupy a new distinct niche within global tourism (Roche, 2000).

¹¹ Augé M. (1995) *Non-Places*. London: Verso.

¹² Lash and Urry J. (1994) *Economies of Signs and Space*. London: Sage.

¹³ Roche M. (2000) *Mega-Events and Modernity*. London: Routledge.

The previous section has shown that there are enormously powerful interconnections of 'tourism' and 'culture' in a mobile world. Not only do tourists travel but so do objects, cultures and images. Also there appears to be a more general 'mobile culture'. Cultures become so mobile that contemporary citizens are thought to possess the rights to pass over and into other places and other cultures.

1.7 Tourism Place Identity

I will examine now aspects of the relationship between tourism and place identity in Europe. It is argued that the impact of tourism must be understood in terms of the new social relations which emerge as individuals and institutions interact to commodify place identity. These new relations in turn are mediated through resilient existing social relations. Whilst there is evidence of a gradual redefinition of local identities towards a more touristic orientation through, for example, the commodification of cultural practices, heritage and landscape resources, there is also evidence of resistance to this re-orientation. Thus places retain their distinct identities in the face of potentially homogenising global processes. An important feature of European tourism development has been the explosion in cultural or heritage tourism (Duffy, 1994; Mullane, 1994; McManus, 1997). As Richards notes (1996), this is part of a broader European trend towards the conversion of former production spaces into spaces of consumption. Cultural tourism is no longer restricted to the mainly visual consumption of 'high culture' artefacts such as galleries, theatres and architecture, but has expanded to include simply "soaking up the atmosphere" of a place (Richards, 1996), sampling the local food (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 1998; Bessièrè, 1998), and participating in local events. In addition to historical or heritage attractions, the local people and their lifestyles are seen as a key component of the cultural tourism product. Hospitality, humour and the relaxed pace of life are all emphasised as part of the appeal of a holiday. In summary, therefore, tourism over the last decade or so has been characterised by rapid growth, with particular emphasis on the use of cultural or heritage tourism to promote 'bottom-up' development in rural areas. The emergence of this kind of all-encompassing tourism has implications for the people who live in tourist destinations, people who themselves become part of the tourist product. In the attempt to conceptualise the relationship between tourism and place identity we can observe that it is broadly agreed that tourism has an impact on place identities. What is not agreed is the extent and nature of that impact. The expression 'place identities' refers to a wide range of social relations which contribute to the construction of a

'sense of place', a sense which enables people to feel that they 'belong' to a place, or that a place 'belongs' to them. plural 'identities' is used to suggest that different versions of identity may circulate within a place, versions which are shaped by the individual or collective experiences of different people. Tourism constructs or reconstructs place identities. The first theme is that place identities are (re)constructed in order to meet tourist desires for particular characteristics such as authenticity and tradition (Urry, 1990; 1995). The forms which this construction of national self-image has taken have been explored through analyses of the ways in which certain touristic images of place have been constructed on the basis of historically-rooted perceptions of the country and its inhabitants as the romanticised 'other' to entities such as 'England', 'modern society' and 'urban industrialised Europe'. Tourism destroys unique place identities. MacCannell (1992) for example, writes that commodification leads to the 'death' of third-world and ethnic cultures and the destruction of authenticity. The idea that heritage centres contribute to the commercialisation and trivialisation of culture is common. These critiques of the heritage industry can be seen as part of a broader vision of tourism as a symptom of the homogenising of global capitalism, whereby places are seen to lose their distinctive identities in an increasingly bland world of MacDonalds and Coca-Cola consumption. In other words, tourism can be seen as an example of the unique ways in which global-local relations are negotiated within the context of particular places, thus allowing for the maintenance of diversity and difference. Whilst identities may be in a constant process of change, there are also elements of continuity which enable one to talk about a sense of place, to make qualitative, subjective assessments of what places are like. In each place, the relationship between change and continuity is different, with change being more rapid and noticeable in some locations than in others. Although the tourism industry may seek to promote un-complicated, easily communicable and readily consumed images of place identity, these constructions exist alongside other deeply-rooted expressions of place identity and need not necessarily dominate or over-ride all of them.

Conclusion

In the global, dynamically transforming world, we can observe that tourism can have significant impacts, both positive and negative, on an economy, on its culture, and on the environment (Brown, 1998). In practice, the dominant motive for the development of tourism is economic (improvements in employment, incomes and exports), but the

very process of developing tourism will impose costs elsewhere. If governmental and non-governmental organisations are to make sensible and rational decisions with respect to the current and future development of tourism, they must have reliable information on its costs and benefits (Fletcher, 1989)¹⁴. Creating a successful and sustainable tourism industry is like creating any successful and sustainable economic activity. But apart from the economic effects, it is relevant to observe other cultural aspects of tourism. In a simple sense we can talk of the globalising of the tourist gaze, as multiple gazes have become core to global culture sweeping up almost everywhere in their awesome wake. There are countless mobilities, physical, imaginative and virtual, voluntary and coerced. Furthermore there is much less 'tourism' per se that occurs within specific and distinct kinds of time-space; there is the 'end of tourism' within a much general 'economy of signs'. There are increasing similarities between behaviours that are 'home' and 'away'. Tourist sites proliferate as tourism has become mediatised, while everyday sites of activity get re-designed in 'tourist' mode, as with many themed environments. The relationship between tourism and place identities can be conceptualised in terms of social relations. The process of commodification is mediated through new social relations between individuals and groups within the cities and further afield. Furthermore, at a micro-scale, it seemed that certain sets of social relations, including friendships and business relations had crystallised in a way that left other individuals, feeling excluded in an economic and social sense. Many people, even though they themselves may be considered as a part of the tourist product, remain largely unaware of tourism or its implications. Furthermore, other types of visitors, such as immigrants are not generally regarded as tourists at all, and seem to have been incorporated into the seasonally changing identity of the town. The point is that an understanding of the impact of tourism should take into account the specificities of the places in which it operates. Whilst some impacts may be universal, such as the physical pressures created by the presence of large numbers of tourists, other, less visible impacts differ, depending on the unique combinations of people, histories, global and local relations which intersect within the local arena. The relationship between tourism and place identity can be conceived in terms of change and continuity, features which themselves

¹⁴ Fletcher John E. (1989) Input-output analysis and tourism impact studies, *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol 16(3) pp 514-529

ensure that places retain their distinct identities in opposition to the homogenising global processes.

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