Chapter 7

Policies and Skills for Creative Tourism in Emerging Destinations of the Adriatic: Istria, Apulia, and Albania

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ABSTRACT

In a sector area with high transformation capacity, the tourist experience assumes a central position in the choice of a destination and planning of the holiday. To meet the changing expectations of tourists, specific skills have to be acquired in order to make the relationship between tourist demand and offer more transparent. This is the challenge that must accept each destination that intends to be remembered in a positive way. This research analyzes three destinations of the Adriatic sea, in the Mediterranean, Istria in Croatia, Apulia in Italy and Albania; on the basis of experiences in the field, they identify policies, actions, and propose investments that should be made in the field of human resources suggesting the respective training methods to design and make available a more suitable service to the tourist’s expectations, focusing on conveying good practices and on the not always pleasing experience of the so-called “classic” destinations of the international tourism.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this chapter and is to contribute to the analysis of the tourism policies of the three tourist destinations bordering the Adriatic Sea through a method that combines theory and practice, conducting interviews with the responsible tourism persons of Istria, Apulia and Albania, realizing seminars,

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workshops and meetings with local stakeholders in different touristic locations in the three destinations whose valuation is entrusted to a panel of international experts, and finally through a direct administration in main tourist locations of a questionnaire to verify the appreciation / suggestions and expectations of existing tourists compared to the tourism offer and its policies, analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively by the Central Institute of Statistics in different districts. In this way, the activity is perfectly replicable in other contexts/tourist destinations.

The details of constructs such as: tourism, from mass holiday to a remarkable experience, in an ever-changing context; the three emerging tourist destinations in the Adriatic: Istria, Apulia, and Albania and what policies and skills are needed for the development of a creative tourism.

Tourism, from mass holiday to a remarkable experience, in a context which is in constant mutation, has always been seen as an “easy” sector: after all, when it comes to holidays, people are resting and they think about having fun! It is sufficient to have nearby some sort of cultural resource, a not highly contaminated environment, a port, an airport, or at least a highway intersection, because transport infrastructure is a significant and determinant flow generator into a tourism destination (Khadaroo & Seetanah, 2008), and any mayor, even from the smallest cities, will say that tourism is at the basis of the socio-economic growth of his community.

Until the ‘70s or early ‘80s, it did not matter if there was no necessary infrastructure for tourism: the tour operators filled the gap isolating the tourists in a holiday village, making them travel with larger and larger charters at lower prices. The basic choice was the sea, with the slogan “sea, sex and sun” being already an omen of an entertaining vacation, the kind of vacation that a clerk of the Galleries Lafayette or a butcher in Voghera could have surely described on their return, to friends who could not afford an “all inclusive” package to discover a destination located a few thousand kilometers far from home.

This type of post-war tourism made the fortune of the Club Méditerranée, and other operators linked to the trade unions, such as Tourisme et Travail in France or Etli of the Italian CGIL, as well as of several truly mass destinations throughout the whole of the Mediterranean. They were huge holiday-villages, with thousands of sleeping places, no heating (who needs heating in summer?), sometimes overlooking the highway, at an adequate distance, and the ones that had good eyes, could also have the sea view. Some of them really were “on” the sea, like a hotel in Sicily that was literally “on” the sea as to reach the beach you had to take an elevator!

The contact with the local culture was offered only through an exhibition at the fake Greek-Roman amphitheater, built of reinforced concrete, which was an attraction of all the holiday villages, and which used to be the scene of the evening shows of animation and folklore bands that were invited once a week to give a touch of local culture to our tourists. Quaint enough!

Everything changed in the mid ‘80s, when the news of the existence of Arpanet slowly became public, the network that was born in the US in October ‘69 with the aim of connecting the computers of American universities. From that network, thanks to a protocol designed in 1973 in Silicon Valley by Vint Cerf and Robert Kahn, internet became a reality, a network of networks. (Cerf & Kahn, 1974).

The news did not have a great echo: it had mainly been spread among the scientific community without reaching the general public. The credit of changing the purpose of this instrument is attributed to Luciano Lenzini and Antonio Blasco Bonito: the Internet could make the computers communicate with each other regardless of the manufacturer and the network to which they belonged (Blasco, 2011), although it required the invention the World Wide Web by Tim Berners Lee in 1991 to boost internet and get it out of the universities to reach civil society and, therefore, all economic sectors, including tourism.