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RURAL TOURISM AS CULTURAL TOURISM
Concepts, analysis, planning

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RURAL TOURISM AS CULTURAL TOURISM

INTRODUCTION

In the last thirty years tourism has turned from an elitist experience into a widespread mass phenomenon, involving more and more varied and wide segments of the population. Thus, it has become a sort of “*citizenship heritage*”. Together with quality improvement, there has been a noteworthy increase in the variety of the people's choices, with significant evolutionary processes. The differentiation of “tourism needs” has grown together with improved economic conditions and with the processes of cultural growth, both in the traditional western countries and in the ones more recently developed. Hence, the progressive qualitative-quantitative increase of the demand for cultural tourism as an alternative to recreational or holiday tourism. This evolution depends on the progressive establishment of value systems where free time (or time for oneself) is considered as a way to escape from reality - complex and basically hostile – as well as a proactive moment of personal realization. Holidays become an active journey and stay, a moment of personal and social growth and satisfaction for people who live in a society based on the need for self-realization.

Because of these needs, new tourism products have been created in order to replace or coexist with the old ones. The rural world has been involved in this evolution. In particular, the European rural areas, highly inhabited by man and rich in history, offer a wide range of attractions which often define specific yet interconnected segments of the market such as: farm holidays, rural tourism, ecotourism, ...

This evolution of tourism has made more and more evident that the new behaviours are not only supported by specific individual attractions, but they are generated by the search for total contentment in the use of one's time, following the “total leisure experience” approach.

These features of the demand, innovative and dynamic at the same time, find an appropriate correspondence in the tourism offer of rural areas, thanks to which the local resources – material and immaterial –

can be enhanced. In these areas competitiveness is closely linked to territoriality and strategy is based on the resources of the territory, that is, on the existing “countryside capital” and on the capital which can be built consistently with the overall context.

In this view, the present work is focused on *cultural tourism* in its specific trait of *cultural rural tourism*. Therefore, in the first section special attention is dedicated to a close examination of this issue from the conceptual and analytical perspective, with the aim of answering the question: is rural tourism a form of cultural tourism? It is clear that the notion of cultural tourism – its explicative value, its connotations, the operative implications, etc. - is the core of this reflection and conceptual elaboration. This is the starting point of the analysis developed in the first section of the thesis. On the basis of social-anthropological conceptualizations, most of rural tourism is considered as cultural tourism.

The second section presents and analyses particular and innovative types of rural tourism with strong cultural connotations, such as community-based rural tourism and *creative rural tourism*. Both are described through an explicative and planning model which can be adopted for the implementation of specific versions of these types of tourism.

Therefore, the aim is multifaceted: offer a conceptual elaboration about and for cultural rural tourism, as well as suggest operative instruments in term of planning/development models of such types of tourism offer which have to be carried out by the moving forces of the rural world.

PART ONE

PRECONDITIONS AND PARADIGMS OF CULTURAL RURAL TOURISM

1. TOURISM(S) IN RURAL AREA

1.1 THE PHENOMENON OF TOURISM AND ITS EVOLUTION

1.1.1 *Origins and development*

The United Nations World Tourism Organization¹ defines tourism as travelling to and staying in places outside the people's usual environment for at least one night and not more than one consecutive year. People move for a number of different reasons: to improve their knowledge or for health reasons, to enjoy themselves or simply to get away from their routine life.

From the economic point of view, tourism can be seen as the acquisition of a number of services linked to such movement and the achievement of its related aims. It involves the transfer of people, goods and money, which has an impact on the visited places. As a consequence, the economic effects are redistributed between the areas of wealth production and the areas of consumption. Therefore, effects of great geographical, economical, social and cultural importance are generated, involving both the individual and the community. This also influences the national and international trade balance.

Although the term "tourism" is relatively "modern" (it appears in our language only in the XIX Century), tourism in the sense of movement of people driven by the wish to become acquainted with distant countries or for "business" reasons (commercial or diplomatic), for sport (the Olympic Games), or amusement (Strabo's descriptions are very important) has always existed and it dates back to ancient times².

Even in old works we can find reference to the "experience of travelling".

1 The WTO, whose headquarters are in Madrid, is the United Nations agency responsible for tourism policies. It promotes the development of responsible and sustainable tourism. Italy became a member in 1978. It counts 161 state members. The acronym UNWTO stands for United Nations World Tourism Organization.

2 To explore the topic: Battilani P. (2001); Boyer M. (1999); Boyer M. (2005); Brilli A. (2006); De Seta C. (1982).

The visits to the Sanctuary of Delphi and Epidaurus, the Olympic Games of the VII Century BC held in Peloponnesus, clearly give evidence of the habit, even in the age of ancient Greece, of travels due to cultural, religious or sports reasons.

The first forms of tourism linked to the idea of leisure date back to the Romans. Emperors and people of high rank travelled on business, for military and religious reasons, for sports events or for health and wellness sojourns. These movements were facilitated by the linguistic unity of the Roman Empire, by the development of the road system and the safety of navigation. The Mediterranean or *Mare Nostrum* was a safe sea for navigators. Moreover, the first taverns and inns are built to receive occasional travellers.

In the II Century BC, when the Romans conquer Greece, considered the harbour of Culture, a visit to its most important cultural centres becomes customary for the education of young aristocrats and future Roman leaders.

The wish to take care of one's body and health (which leads the Romans to move away from polluted air, from the dust and pestiferous vapours of the town) and also to avoid boredom gives rise to therapeutic journeys and to their passion for health spas and public baths, as well as to the multiplication of specialized integrated structures, meeting places, gardens, sport grounds, museums, libraries.

The fall of the Roman Empire, the barbaric invasions and the never ending bloodstained wars make travelling very dangerous and rare, almost exceptional. The country homes, once holiday residences, are transformed into defence fortresses.

In the Middle Ages travelling becomes a fundamental aspect of man's life again. Pilgrimages towards holy places become very popular (Tour, Canterbury, Padua, Rome, Santiago de Compostela, Jerusalem, Mecca, Medina, etc.), also thanks to the creation of important roads of communication (such as the *via Francigena*) and to the hospitality provided by various religious orders along the way.

The great season of pilgrimages ends during the XIV Century when travelling becomes a cultural and amusement affair rather than a penitential one. However, the cultural revival of travel takes place during the Renaissance. More and more people of different age and social condition become

interested and begin to take long travels while also keeping a diary of their experiences. This is the beginning of the *Grand Tour*, a fundamental consequence of the Humanistic culture of the Renaissance which gives evidence of the new role that culture and science have in the life of the European aristocracy. The expression *Grand Tour* becomes a synonym of the education tour which young members of the aristocracy - first of all English but eventually from all over western Europe - make to complete their human and cultural education. The tour, which lasted about three or four years (the necessary time for a young man to become a "citizen of the world"), was a circular one: from Great Britain to France, to Italy and then back again to England through Germany and Holland, after visiting Paris, Amsterdam, Wien, Prague, Rome, Milan, Florence, Venice, Naples. Young men, accompanied by their tutors, either stay in colleges reserved to the upper classes or in study centres, also thanks to the initiative of Universities which open seats abroad. In 1666, for instance, the Academy of France is founded in Rome with the aim of studying Italian culture.

Between the beginning of the XVIII Century and the first decades of the XIX, the *Grand Tour* begins to be made also by the wealthy members of the middle classes who wish to imitate the lifestyle of the aristocracy. It is no longer young men, but mainly men aged between 30 and 40 who address their attention to the natural beauties of a country's landscape, Italy's in particular. The tour lasted only about three or four months, also thanks to the progress of means of transport and the gradual development of the railway system. However, it is always a form of elite tourism for young aristocrats or middle class men who wish to visit European countries and start diplomatic relations with other noble or middle class families.

With the decline of aristocracy, this form of tourism - also involving the presence of many attending servants - gradually starts its decline.

By the nineteenth century, the middle class travellers reveal a more enterprising and independent spirit, travel alone, make use of a system of hotels and inns which open above all in towns of art and in spa centres (Corvo, 2003). New itineraries, new destinations, new *loisirs*. *New landscapes are appreciated*. All this is possible thanks to increasingly faster coaches, improved roads and the railway, which is the real novelty of the century and the fastest means of transport in the modern age. A further change

was brought about by the manner of travelling of the middle classes of the XIX century: it is a mode of *wandering*, allowing oneself the time to satisfy interests not necessarily planned beforehand. There is no longer the need to carry so much luggage on the new railway system, for which timetables and instructions are soon made available.

The railway (which corresponds to present-day planes) gives rise to important railway junction centres which are interesting from the tourist point of view (the place where a train stops) as they provide picturesque background landscapes which can be admired from a distance from the train windows.

The network of less important centres which we can imagine on the top of mountains or in deep valleys, the group of houses, the dialects, the taste of the local food, that is, all those aspects with which the former traveller came across, for the first time simply become a number of places with which it is possible to have only a visual contact, because the real "immersion" will take place only after reaching one's destination.

There is a change in the perception of the environment, the territory and, above all, the space: it is possible to move from one place to another independently from the roughness of the land and without any contamination with the social-cultural features of the territory, without coming into direct contact with the peculiarity of local contexts which was instead typical of the experience of the former traveller. Moreover, the fact that trains can transport a larger number of people reduces the cost of travelling and gives more people the opportunity to travel and reach places, which had been unconceivable up to then. Therefore, the railway gives a fundamental contribution to the creation of the modern "tourist" (Giuntini, 2001).

The Italian Touring Club (TCI)³ was founded in 1900, while ENIT (today called National Agency for Tourism) was founded in 1919 with the aim of promoting tourism in Italy abroad. The institution of the Aziende Autonome di Cura e Soggiorno for the promotion of the local tourist offer followed in 1926.

Until about 1930-1940, however, tourism remains a phenomenon for elites even if, during the fascist regime, specific projects were set up to

3 The Italian Touring Club is the evolution of the Italian Cycling Touring Club, which was established in Milan in 1894 following the model of the British Cycling Touring Club.

organize holidays for employees and workers. The regime uses tourism to gain political consent. It organizes holiday centres for children, collective holidays, the first forms of social tourism which will be developed by the welfare policy of the second half of the XX century. The type of tourism which developed during the fascist regime remains a means to keep social classes under control.

It is only after the second world war that tourism constantly develops together with the economic growth. The awareness that tourism represents an important economical factor having many social economical and environmental consequences becomes more and more widespread.

Seaside holidays are the first forms of tourism to become fashionable: the first bathing establishment was opened in Rimini in 1843, followed by the one in Venice in 1857 and the one in Viareggio in 1928. The first luxury hotels are the Grand Hotel in Rimini (1906) and the Excelsior in Venice (1909), followed by the creation of more modest ones destined to lower classes.

At the same time holiday resorts in the mountains start to develop mainly for two different types of tourists: summer holiday makers and the ones preferring winter sports, which are still essentially for the elites. Places in Switzerland such as Grindelwald, Lucern and St. Moritz become important winter holiday centres which are very famous in the post war period.

The post-war atmosphere - shared by many western European countries including Italy - during the first economic boom, then followed by a second one, gives people the awareness of having new rights, among which the right to holidays. As a consequence, the claim to education, amusement and tourism becomes a cogwheel of *an industry without chimneys* (Löfgren, 2001) which gradually becomes an economically relevant mass phenomenon for many different regions in the world. The growing industrialization and the consequent transfer of the population from the countryside to towns create the need for travelling and organized holidays which goes together with the great expansion of the middle classes (entrepreneurs, employees, intellectuals etc.). Holidays become standard and inexpensive, distant places can be reached with low-cost flights, new information technology spreads, experiences can be shared, people start wanting to visit hidden, far away, unusual destinations. The request for seaside resorts and amusement parks explodes. There is

a considerable production of tourist guides promoting places in many different new ways.

Between the 70's and 80's, people's search for distant and exclusive destinations leads tourist operators to invest in new countries creating a real "globalisation of tourism". Emerging countries in Asia, Africa or Australia invade the tourist market against the *leadership* which once belonged to Europe. In the course of a few decades mass tourism changes from "tourism to single countries" into "international tourism" mostly concentrated in the Mediterranean area and eventually into a "globalized tourism" involving the whole wide world.

Tourism in Italy, in spite of all the difficulties, still plays an important international role due to its universally recognized unique, rich, natural landscape as well as its cultural and artistic heritage.

The current traveller, driven by personal interests, is open to a variety of new experiences, wants to be part of the context and looks for environmentally sustainable accommodation facilities, without any energy waste, in compliance with the values of environmental sustainability and compatibility. Such values have so much space in the mass media and in internet blogs which today can have a fundamental advertising effect on the tourist offer and on the creation of requests. Holidays have become a cultural laboratory in which people can experiment with new aspects of their personality, in new social relations or interacting with nature where also imagination can have a social role.

Four main trends in the current evolution of tourism can be distinguished:

1. the tourist who wants to discover distant places which he fantasizes and dreams about for about a year until his next holidays. This corresponds to the tourist who looks for exotic destinations, who would choose places like Thailand, the Seychelles, or the Caribbean islands.
2. the weekend tourist looking for a seaside or mountain resort and for whom one place or another does not make much difference as long as there is a stretch of beach, the sea, beach umbrellas, rocks or otherwise the mountains, grazing cows, a chalet. This is a sort of daily life touristic routine, just for the sake of spending a day on the beach, going for a walk or simply admiring the sunset, going on an excursion in the nearby areas or tasting the local food specialities.

3. the tourist in search of a holiday where to live a concentration of fantasies which are even physically separate from the chosen touristic context. This tourist chooses holiday villages, thematic parks, American-like shopping malls, Disney world, non-places (Augé, 2009)
4. the tourist in search of a really different world from his/her own, who is interested in living an authentic experience, who wants to learn about the places and to have a direct, sustainable contact with the environment, the tourist in search of an intact spot in the world, untouched by the modern world.

In conclusion, present day tourism presents two fundamental trends under the anthropological and geographical points of views:

- an *explosion* of tourist space including always new and wider territories.
- an *implosion* of tourist space with a concentration within a number of closed or semi-closed pure tourist landscapes, a type of *tourism of the spirit*, experiential, which moves the market of this new form of tourism.

According to Magris (2005), travelling is a metaphor of life, a journey on Earth in search of a goal. In the *Preface*, he describes travelling as “*a never ending preamble, a prelude to something which is always still to come and which is always within reach around the corner. To leave, to stop somewhere. To come back, to pack and unpack, to make a description in one's diary of the landscape which, as we are going through it, disappears, falls out of sight and then comes together again like the scenes of a film dissolving and forming again, or like the features of a face transforming with the passing of time*”.

A new rewarding system of values has established itself among large parts of the population regarding free time not only as a means of escape from the world's complexity, but also of personal realization. Holidays are more and more considered as an active stay in some place, a period of personal and social fulfilment and growth which should satisfy one's need of a greater personal involvement (Dall'Aglio, 2004; Scotti E. (2003) in the definition itself of the experience of holiday/travel which should meet one's social, cultural, environmental, historical interests (Scotti, 2003). This

new type of tourist wants to live an active and gratifying experience and expresses an “experience demand” with a high symbolic value (Dall’Aglia, 2004). For this reason, the quality and quantity of the tourist demand have changed along with the changes which have taken place in the conditions of life, budget, but above all lifestyles and aims of the people, and of the new opportunities offered by tourist operators.

1.1.2 Social and economic aspects

If we consider that tourism involves hundreds of millions of people moving in different ways and with different aims every year, we can easily understand how complex (and always imprecise) it is to classify the phenomenon. It is becoming more and more difficult to give a complete definition of the term as the social classes and the features of this activity are manifold, in continuous evolution and have no defined boundaries.

As a matter of fact, tourism has become a real economic activity which, involving millions of people, necessarily requires a wider approach in order to take into account its different components and implications.

In the last twenty years, as widely explained in the preceding paragraph, we have assisted to its quantitative and qualitative evolution. Tourism demand has doubled and its economical impact has grown.

The data collected by OMT⁴ give evidence of a constant growth trend which has characterized tourism starting, in particular, from the 1990's with an average 5% annual rise in international arrivals and also the involvement of new areas.

Immediately after the Second World War, it involves the movement of about 25 million people, which become 70 million already by 1960. In 1995 the international movement of tourists amounts to over 500 million arrivals with a turnover of over 300 billion dollars. Always according to OMT data, between the end of the XX and the beginning of the XXI centuries, 12% of the European community's GDP is given by tourism and by tourist activities and OMT itself at that time foresaw that in the following twenty years the number of tourists in Europe would double.

Tourism is only temporarily interrupted after the crisis caused by the tragic events of September 11th 2001, but gradually recovers during 2002, until it presents at the end of the same year, always according to OMT data, a new 3.3% tourist increase, which means over 700 million arrivals.

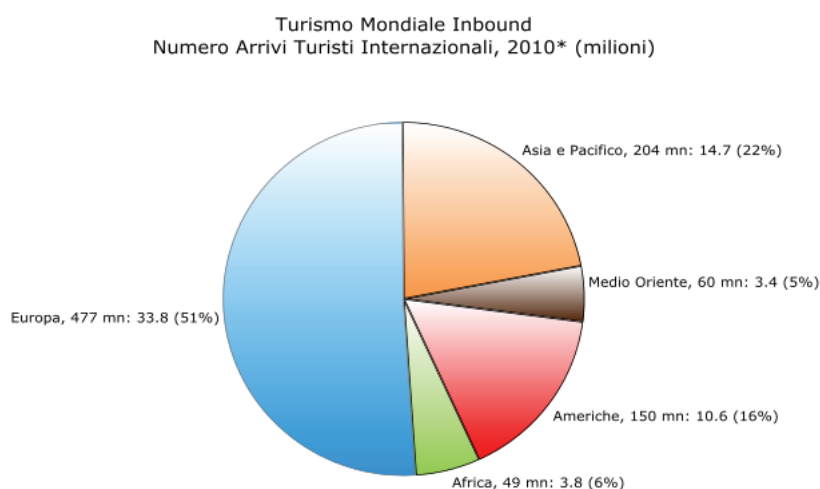
A real explosion occurs in 2004 with an over 10% international increase of arrivals. Also for Italy, 2004 represents a year of recovery concerning both *incoming* and *outgoing* tourism. In terms of international arrivals we have a

⁴ All the following data are taken from the annual research made by ISNART (National Tourism Research Institute) – Unioncamere, by the ONT (National Tourism Observatory), by the Italian National Agency for Tourism (ENIT) and by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The data were published in the respective websites.

3.8% increase, which corresponds to 2.1% of GDP income. The incidence of direct or indirect tourist occupation on the total national number amounts to 9.4%. Moreover, Italy confirms itself as one of the major spending countries on travelling abroad.

Before the economic crisis, OMT estimated that by 2020 the arrivals of tourists from abroad would exceed one billion and a half, with a flow redistribution in favour of the Pacific-East Asia area (from the present 14.4% to 25.4%) to the detriment of Europe, whose market quota was predicted to decrease from 59.8% to 45.9% (see Fig. 1 , 2, 3).

Fig. 1 Number of international arrivals in 2010. Source: UNWTO, 2010 Report on Tourism



Fonte: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Fig. 2 Preliminary data for 2012. Source: NTO elaboration from UNWTO data, World Tourism Barometer Volume 11 - April 2013

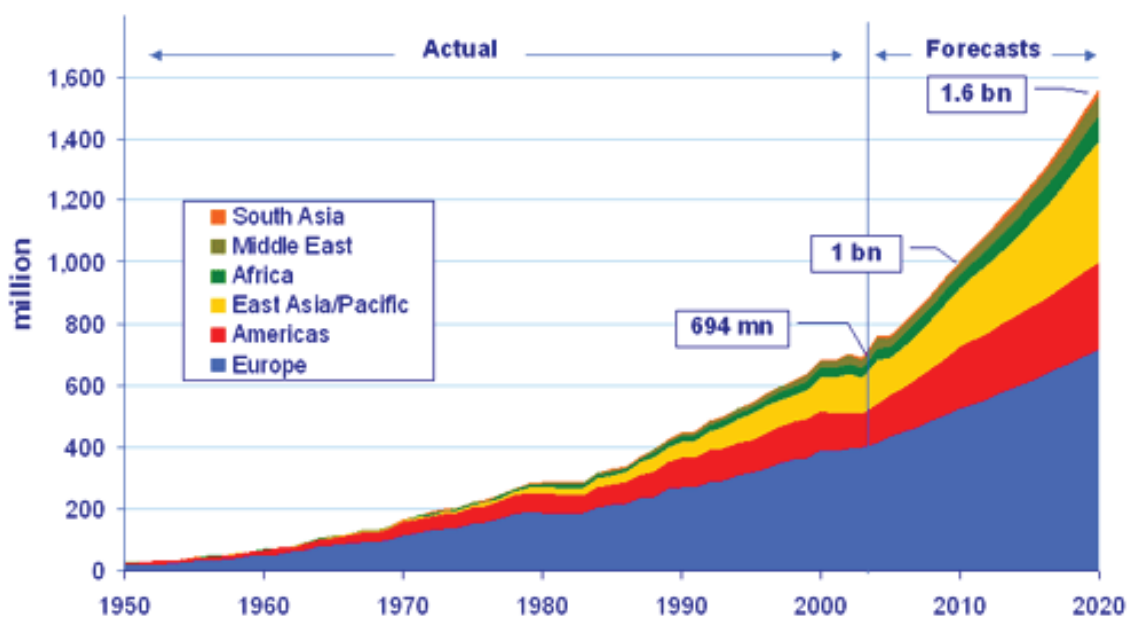


Fig. 3 Long-term predictions of the international tourism flows. Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2006

Obviously, this prediction was affected negatively by the oncoming global economic crisis, while the 7% annual world growth achieved between 2004 and 2007, considered “historically strong”, has not yet been reached.

In spite of this, according to ONT, 2012 represents a record year for international tourism on a global level. For the first time in history the international tourist arrivals are over 1 billion and the incomes, which were already over a billion dollars in 2011, continued to increase.

China has become the country which spends most on international tourism. During 2012, Chinese travellers spent 40.5% more than they did in 2011.

Europe continues to be the area which attracts the highest number of tourists (534 400 000), followed by Asia (233 600 000), America (163 million), Africa (52.6 million) and the Middle East (52.0 million).

Italy's competitive positioning in 2012 did not change compared with 2011: Italy occupies the fifth world position both in terms of arrivals and assets. It emerges that the economic crisis has affected the propensity of the Italians to travel more than it has in other countries of the European Union. Also, between 2009 and 2012 there was a heavy drop in Italians' tourism demand both in terms of effected journeys and hotel bookings.

France is the European country with the highest number of travellers in 2011, while the second position, formerly occupied by Italy, belongs to Spain. Italy's accommodation capacity is supported by foreigners. The Istat data related to 2012 underline that the number of arrivals remains more or less unchanged. However, this is accompanied by a drop in the presence of tourists; this means that tourists' average period of stay in our accommodation facilities is shorter. Moreover, the amount of money spent by foreign visitors in Italy in 2012 is lower than in the preceding year.

Tourist assets play a fundamental role in the economy of our country: in 2012 foreigners who visited Italy generated an expenditure amounting to 2.0% of GDP and to 39.2% of services exportation.

1.1.3 Manifold types of tourism

In recent years we have assisted to a considerable increase of tourism, both in terms of the demand and the offer: there are more tourists, they move around more, they reach far away places and, above all, there are more destinations and many multi-thematic destinations.

Although last century's tourist goals - the seaside, the mountains, art towns, sightseeing tours, important cultural events - are still chosen and preferred, they no longer completely satisfy the request of more and more informed, careful people who want to experiment and who are attracted by the many new forms of tourism. At present, we need to speak about a variety of tourisms to underline the many opportunities offered.

It clearly appears that it is not just about a single market, but a number of segments of market in the field of tourism. Therefore, this must be kept into consideration whatever development strategy concerning an area or a company one wishes to adopt. Moreover, the same type of people/tourists/travellers do not always benefit from these segments: it is the occasion of the fruition, the tourist's choice, which determines the value, and this is evident in the fact that one same person, in different moments, chooses different types of tourist offers. The word *tourism* is not fully described any more by the stereotype picture of a hotel, room, bungalow or camper. The tourist's world has expanded and can include a car, an itinerary, a gravel path, bicycle, rucksack, mountain boots, sky, cliffs, museums created by man or nature, mountains, wind towers, futuristic landscapes, signs of the past, ruins. The universe of the many different images of tourism is infinite and extends to places of *beauty*, which are always considered as *unique* and wonderful, they excite *wonder* in the tourist and stimulate *knowledge*.

In this evolving situation it is more and more evident that these new behaviours are not the result of the wishes of single individuals, but of the attempt to gratify people's need to employ their time following the approach of "total leisure experience" in order to respond both to the request of a basic appeal (of culture, nature, adventure, event, gourmet, health etc.) and to satisfy the way one makes use of leisure (accommodation, catering, typical local products etc.) (Endrighi, 2004)

the most varied sectors: from company management to environmental protection, from territorial organization to the promotion of some areas. All these skills are based on a systemic approach of complex relations involving different interests and requiring public and private investments.

RURAL TOURISM AS CULTURAL TOURISM

a. Sustainable tourism

The fulfilment of the residents' needs, together with the preservation and protection of natural and cultural resources are the basis of the definition of sustainable tourism (Aloj Totàro E., 2001; Gatti F., Suggelli F. R. [Eds] 2006), expressed in the 1995 *Charter for sustainable tourism in Lanzarote*. This was the first programmatic document for the sustainability of tourism⁶. Tourism is sustainable when *"it meets the current needs of the tourists and the hosting regions, at the same time preserving and improving future perspectives. The management of all the resources must be integrated so as to meet the economic, social and aesthetic needs. Meanwhile, the cultural integrity, the essential ecologic processes, biological diversity and the living systems must be preserved as well. Such tourism products act in harmony with the environment, the community and the local cultures"* (World Tourism Organization - WTO).

Sustainable tourism development guidelines are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments.

The indications aim at:

- Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
- Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their past and present cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
- Ensure long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Sustainable tourism development requires informed participation, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building.

⁶ This Charter was preceded by the 1992 Declaration on Environment and Development in Rio and, before that, by the 1987 Brundtland (WCED). Moreover, the "well-being of communities" is part of the 12 points identified by the UNWTO and UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) Agenda in 2005 and is one of the three goals of the *Agenda for a European sustainable and competitive tourism* written by the EU in 2007.

Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing necessary measures whenever needed.

Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them.

According to the definition adopted by AITR (Italian Association for Responsible Tourism):

*«Responsible tourism is tourism carried out according to principles of social and economic justice and in full respect for the environment and cultures. Responsible tourism recognizes the centrality of the local host community and its right to be a leader in sustainable tourism development and socially responsible for its own territory. It works favouring constructive interaction among the tourist industry, local communities and travellers».*⁷

The preconditions of this definition support and integrate the Lanzarote Charter:

- The key role of the local host community, which has the right to benefit from the economic, social and employment effects of this phenomenon.
- Social justice, equity in the distribution of the economic benefits, environmental and local culture respect.
- Mutual recognition and respect between hosts and guests.
- Contact between the journey planners, host communities and visitors.

Therefore, different dimensions are brought together: the environment, the territory considered as community and populations, equity in the distribution and access to resources.

⁷ Definition approved in 2005 by ATR on the occasion of its annual meeting.

b. Environmental tourism and eco-tourism

Environmental tourism is based on the direct and continuative contact with the land and its landscape - characterised by its typical images, odours and sounds – which harmoniously describes a strong cultural identity. Environmental tourism includes eco-tourism⁸, which is difficult to define especially in our territory, where even the most typical landscape, thanks to its flora and fauna, is the result of man's intervention in the course of centuries. Therefore, the best word for it is environmental tourism.

The favourite destinations for this kind of tourism are geographical contexts having a remarkable environment and established cultural traditions. These geographical contexts are distinguishable, limited and homogeneous. The tourists choose to travel within a restricted territory, in order to become part of it.

The horizontal, extensive dimension is replaced by a vertical dimension of territorial rooting. This may include ways of travelling and sightseeing involving physical effort due to the roughness of the land, in the search for a more intimate relationship with the land and its products.

The itinerary of environmental tourism is characterised by intangible needs which justify and prevail over its apparent entailed discomfort. From an urban perspective, this discomfort may appear as exhausting, while in the frame of this kind of tourism it is the necessary and essential condition to come into a deeply rooted contact with the land.

Therefore, environmental tourism promotes a pan-sensorial integration into a specific landscape, historical and cultural context. Tokens of the past become part of the natural context, thus leading to a rediscovery of the monumental historical heritage as well as of the handmade products of the wide popular culture, which are the expression of precise values and intentions and help to better define the features of that specific territorial area.

The growing demand for this kind of tourism is undoubtedly proof of the existential restlessness rooted in our contemporary city-life.

Environmental tourism is growing as much as urban settlements. The search for limited geographical places, deeply characterised by their

⁸ TIES (The international Ecotourism Society), 1990 gave this definition of Eco-tourism, which can still be found on the Association's website, www.ecotourism.org: "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people".

historical and cultural identity, counterbalance the anonymous features of most suburban settlements. Man reacts against the idea of finding himself in a context characterized by indifference. Man demands the comfort of a uncommon place, of a space to be perceived as "his own", rather than as economic property, a place characterised by the *mutual belonging of a man to his place and viceversa*, which reinforces their respective individualities (Bartolomei, 2006). Environmental tourism mitigates the hardships of our suburbs, where there is no space for the *genius loci*.

The First report on "*Sustainable Tourism and Eco-tourism*" was presented in 2011 by the Univerde Foundation within the Bit⁹. Since then, the research is carried out every year in order to analyse tourists' preferences and to examine sustainable tourism and eco-tourism carefully. It also investigates the criteria and channels of choice of sustainable hotels, as well as the preferences among the eco-tourist activities¹⁰.

The 2013 data (Third Report) are not very different from the ones of 2011: 56% of tourists are willing to pay more money for sustainable hotels and 59% choose a destination first of all for its "untouched nature". Instead, there has been a high increase in the number of those who use the Internet as an informative channel: 35% in 2011 against 89% in 2013 (9 Italians out of 10 use the web). Another positive datum of the year 2013 is that over half the people interviewed are more and more oriented towards touristic holidays which respect the environment. 64% of them are young people up to 34 years old. Moreover, 88% of the people interviewed consider sustainability as a need (38%) and a great opportunity for growth (50%).

9 BIT- International Tourism Exchange, held every year at Milan Fair in February.

10 It is a sample of one thousand citizens partitioned by sex, age and place of residence.

*c. Tourism in towns and cities.
Historical-artistic-monumental-archaeological tourism*

Towns and cities have not been created for tourism. Yet, the development of tourist activities is part of the well-established socio-economic, cultural and organizational world. It interacts with the other urban functions and overlaps the network of pre-existing relations and demand flows. Moreover, towns and cities are places in constant change, they are the junction of a dynamic network of physical and virtual mobility (tourists, residents, companies, capitals, investments, culture, knowledge) which constantly reshape the urban space, influencing the general and tourist image of the town itself, hence the people's wish to visit it for the first time or once again.

Therefore, the competitiveness of a town from a touristic perspective depends on the constant interaction between tourism and the other urban functions: on the one hand, the mobility of people, investments, knowledge, etc. also define the town image (Manente M., Cerato M., 2000; Ritchie J. R. B., Crouch G.I., 2003; Anholt S., 2007). This has a direct impact on the people's decision to visit it, to buy its products and services or to do business. On the other hand, the growth of tourist interest towards a town and the enhancement of its tourism brand end up by increasing its attractiveness as a place where to live, work, invest, study, etc.

In Italy the cultural heritage of towns and cities is the main resource of our tourism offer on foreign markets and it is one of the world's most sought-after destinations in their absolute value. Even if the dimension of seaside tourism is higher, towns and cities are the added value of our country, since no other European and Mediterranean country offers so many attractive places at international level at the same time.

For many reasons (strictly cultural, participation to events and exhibitions, business and meetings, festivals and shopping, white nights and concerts, etc.) the visit to cities has always been one of the main tourism activities in Italy and Europe. Urban tourism generally presents a quicker growth rate than tourism in general.

According to the Istat data, in 2011 foreign tourists were 59% of the incoming tourists and 61% of the presences in the accommodation facilities of the cities classified as historical/artistic: Rome, Venice, Florence, Milan,

Ravenna, Naples, Turin. Our Country thus confirms its role as one of the most sought-after destinations in its absolute value. And culture is certainly one of the reasons why travellers from all over the world come to Italy.

According to the World Tourism Organization, Italy is the 5th world destination in terms of international incoming tourists. The latest data from the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture regarding the first semester of 2011 show a 9.6% increase of visitors to public cultural places compared to 2010, reaching over 20 million arrivals.

According to the surveys by the National Tourism Observatory, in the first semester of 2011 38.6% out of 15.6 million Italian tourists chose historical-artistic destinations, both in Italy and abroad. They represented the first tourism product, with almost a one percentage point increase compared to the same period in 2010.

Thanks to its huge historical/artistic heritage, Italy is an exclusive destination for tourism in art cities. It hosts wonderful historical-artistic works, it has the highest number of sites included in the World Heritage list (47 sites), on a total of 962 sites in 157 nations in the world¹¹. Italy is also very rich in archaeological areas documenting the history of the Peninsula from prehistory to the Roman times (V century AD), to the Palaeolithic, the Neolithic, the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, the Etruscan age, the age of Greek colonization in Southern Italy and Sicily (Magna Graecia), not to mention other local civilizations such as the Nuragic, the Latin and the Samnite. Sites such as Pompeii, Herculaneum, Rome, Agrigento – as well as the necropolis, the nuragh or the “giants’ graves” in Sardinia – represent a unique, invaluable heritage.

If on the one hand tourism is growing, on the other, the choices and ways of going on holiday are changing. Actually, in the last 20 years, the demand for cultural tourism has undergone deep changes: in 2009, almost 39% of the total incoming tourists to Italy chose art cities as their holiday destination. Compared to five years ago, the cultural demand has noticeably increased in terms of arrivals but it has decreased in terms of visitors. In this case, the lucky two-year period 2005-2006 – when our art cities could count on over 93 million visitors – was followed by a critical 2007 (with a loss of 7 million visitors) and by an upturn period in 2008-2009.

11 Data taken from the National Tourism Observatory up to 19-02-2013.

Instead, in terms of arrivals, after the 2005-2006 peak, when art cities welcomed 3 million more arrivals, the situation has remained unchanged.

In the last ten years new and varied emotional activities connected to art cities have also developed. For example, the considerable development of festivals¹² and white nights, together with the well-established traditional events such as the opera and theatre seasons. These events are responsible for the success of the destination and are necessary for local companies to obtain competitive advantages. Towns and cities will be among the main propellers of the economic, social and cultural development of Made-in-Italy.

12 Beside the traditional Cinema Festival in Venice (at its 70th edition in 2013) or the San Remo festival (at its 63th in 2013) in Italy, among the over 1200 events, at least seventy are important festivals, mainly dealing with cinema and literature.

RURAL TOURISM AS CULTURAL TOURISM

d. Religious tourism

Religious tourism - not to be confused with pilgrimage, even if it recalls its religious dimension - is a complex and fragmented phenomenon. It is inspired by the need for spirituality and identity, belonging and consolation, consideration of one's roots and socialization. Religious faith, history and culture are often intertwined. The religious element contributes to the touristic development of the area that hosts it.

According to the data from the WTO, there are about 300-330 million "religious tourists" a year. It represents a real "demand for pilgrimage", with a yearly turnover of 18 billion dollars, of which 4.5 are generated by Italy alone. In Italy, the 2010-2011 results show higher increase rates than the ones for the 2000 Jubilee. The new Millennium has certainly helped this segment of cultural tourism, further charged with need for inner security and spiritual comfort. The cultural heritage belonging to the Church is a very significant part of the Italian historical-artistic heritage, counting 85,000 churches (out of 95,000) considered as ecclesiastic cultural heritage, 20,000 musical organs, 3,100 libraries with 2,572 illuminated manuscripts, 14,826 incunabula¹³, 197,987 books published in the sixteenth century and 112,142 manuscripts. If we consider as reliable the estimate according to which every Italian church contains on average 100 cultural goods, then the "church" cultural heritage alone would amount to about 2 million 600 thousand. Also, we must add the convents, monasteries, confraternity churches, sanctuaries, seminaries, hermitages, residences for spiritual retreat, colleges, buildings where church activities keep being carried out.

In the same way as it is not possible to think of a community without making reference to a building, a natural context, a town, a small village, that is, it is not possible to separate it from the cultural heritage of our Country, the Italian cultural heritage must be connected to the catholic Church.

In 1987 the Council of Europe recognised the importance of religious routes as primary cultural and spiritual heritage. Since then, the most important religious destinations alternate on the podium of tourist flows. In 2011 Medjugorje was the most requested pilgrimage destination abroad – thus replacing Lourdes -, while in Italy Rome ranks first as always with

13 The incunabula are printed books dating back to the second half of the XV century.

Saint Peter's Basilica, followed by San Giovanni Rotondo and Padre Pio's places, by Assisi and Saint Francis, by the sanctuary of Madonna di Loreto and Saint Anthony of Padua.

According to the 2011 data from ISNART (National institute for tourism research), religious tourism generates 1.5% of the total of tourism flows: 2% on the international demand and 1.1% on the Italian tourists, for an amount of 5.6 million tourists (3.3 million of foreign tourists and 2.3 million of Italian ones). Therefore, religious tourism is more linked to foreign visitors, who represent about 60% of it: 45.3% from Europe and 14.9% from non-European countries.

e. Seaside tourism

By seaside tourism we intend a holiday in a seaside resort in which the main activities are swimming and sunbathing. Italy is universally known for its coastline of 8,000 km enclosed in the Mediterranean Sea which is a closed, calm warm sea.

Rimini, famous for its seaside tourism, is the Italian town where the first Bathing Establishment was opened in 1843. Fifteen Italian regions are touched by the sea and are all seaside tourism attractions each with its distinctive territorial, environmental, cultural, artistic and historical features. Therefore, their tourist offer is extremely rich: in fact Italy is one of the favourite seaside resorts in the world.

However, according to the data of the *XVIII Report on Italian Tourism* by Mercury¹⁴, this type of tourism suffered over an 8% tourist decrease in Italy in 2012 and about a 15% asset loss. Mercury predicts that this crisis due to a “too mature seaside market in Italy” will continue non only because of the economic crisis, but because of the greater competitiveness of other international destinations, in particular those in the Mediterranean and of the Arabian Gulf.

14 The XVIII Report was presented in Genoa on 2nd May 2013 on the occasion of the *Travelling the world* festival. It was carried out by Mercury and by the quarterly magazine *Turistica* in collaboration with IRAT – Research institute for tertiary activities by CNR. *Mercury-Turistica* (Florence) is one of the leading research societies for the promotion of tourism and cultural heritage. Since 1991 it has been publishing the scientific magazine *Turistica, trimestrale di economia, marketing e management*.

RURAL TOURISM AS CULTURAL TOURISM

f. Food-and-wine tourism

Food-and-wine tourism represents for all the Italian regions an excellent economic opportunity and an even greater chance to reconsider the territory with different eyes. It means it is possible to taste and purchase directly “on the farm”, within the tastes and odours of the land, the variety of the crops and the climate. Food-and-wine tourism is also emotional, history, literature tourism since food, in different places and ages, has always accompanied feasts, emotions, joy and sadness. In general, tourism enhances not only the physical consumption of the touristic product and its space but also the symbolic one, this is even more true for food-and-wine tourism. The dimension of the tourists' experience, which is becoming the pivotal element for consumption in general and for tourism in particular, reaches its peak in this kind of tourism. It is perhaps the only sector where it is possible to “extend” one's experience after the visit without losing its authenticity, since the “food-and-wine tour” can go on once back home, through the purchase of the products experimented in the territory, their preparation, the specialised restaurants. This reason attracts tourists and makes trade flourish thanks to word-of-mouth not made of words but of tastes, fragrances, pleasure and emotions. Food and wine are the fundamental element of the local population, so they also act as attractive factors of a destination as if they were a famous monument or a natural oasis. Moreover, the quality of food and wine influences one's judgment on the whole holiday. The capillarity of food-and-wine connoisseurship in Italy is reflected in the about 20,000 agritourism companies scattered around the Country, as well as in the about 165 gourmet food-and-wine routes which cover over 1,300 municipalities. Italy counts about 10,000 celebrations, festivals and local gourmet events as well as a series by now famous food-and-wine promotional events (from Vinitaly to Cantine Aperte, from Cibus to Cheese, from BITEG to Eurochocolate)¹⁵. In this perspective Emilia Romagna can boast its excellence. According to the

15 Region Emilia Romagna, Centre for Tourism Studies CST, *L'enogastronomia come fattore di sviluppo turistico in Emilia Romagna* (Food and wine as a factor for tourism development in Emilia Romagna), Regional Tourism Observatory, 2011, attività realizzata nell'ambito del programma annuale 2011 ERVET s.p.a. Progetto C.1 *Attrattività del territorio e sviluppo dei sistemi turistici* (Activity carried out within the 2011 ERVET s.p.a. annual Programme Project C.1 *Territorial attraction and development of tourism systems*).

data given by the National Tourism Observatory in 2011, the amount of tourists visiting Emilia Romagna out of gourmet reasons places it in the middle sector (between 3.1% and 6.9%), preceded by Piedmont, Lombardy, Umbria, Latium and Molise.

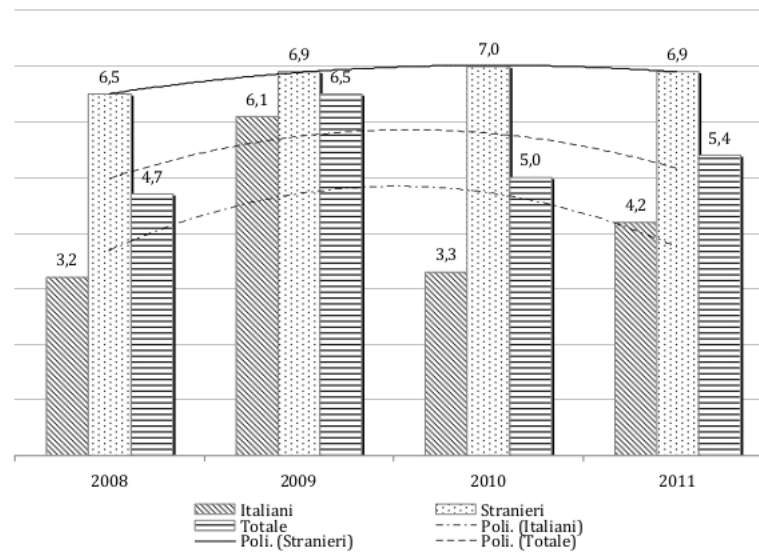


Fig. 5 Food-and-wine tourism incidence on the total number of tourists. Source: National Tourism Observatory, 2011

g. Historical and memory tourism

Memory is a moral aptitude. It involves recalling those aspects which have become part of our conscience. Therefore, the visit to historical sites is a pedagogical experience, a form of awareness of the historical events by the tourists who experience it through their journey. Memory tourism is an ethical tourism, not a niche product: defensive works, battlefields, memorials, memorial stones and tablets, monuments, military historical museums are everywhere. They represent our past history which is still visible. While for national tourists the visit to memory places is a way to reinforce our national cultural unity and shape our identity, for foreign tourists the visit offers the idea of a nation and of its deep cultural identity.

These years are characterised by fundamental anniversaries concerning our recent history. In particular, the year 2014 is the centenary of World War I, while 2013-2015 is the seventieth anniversary of Resistance. The memory places of World War II alone represent a wide historical landscape which can be found all over the national territory, where different signs were left by the historical events and affairs connected to fascism, the German occupation, the presence and action of the Resistance. They offer the chance to learn something more about our history, and bear witness of past events representing the memory (or oblivion) of a community. They are useful sources to understand the past and the present, they are a stimulus to understand these circumstances better. These places represent a historical-memory heritage which has become particularly important for historical studies as well as in the field of education. Moreover, this heritage has contributed to increase awareness and interest in memory tourism in people of all ages.. Memory places represent real centres of democratic culture, fully supporting the concept of educating people to become good citizens. They are indeed destinations of awareness tourism¹⁶.

In 2009 the *Alcide Cervi Institute* in Gattatico gave life to a *Network of memory landscape* scattered around the national territory. It is a sensitive map of Italian memory whose places are concrete points of reference connected to historical events which took place in them. These events are

¹⁶ The *Alcide Cervi Institute* in Gattatico (R.E.) is a constant destination of historical and social memory tourism. The Cervi family is a national symbol of resistance, memory of social awareness, example of peasant work and culture.

“readable” in the manner visitors are greeted, in the didactic and cultural services provided as well as for the visitors' possibility to interact and “communicate” with the place itself by turning it into a living memory¹⁷.

Another interesting example was celebration of the 150th anniversary of Italian unification¹⁸, which provided the occasion to carry out several censuses of the places connected to the Risorgimento, but also to other historical events which actually contributed to build up a sense of belonging to Italy. This event has raised interest in memory places and in those touristic routes which are more closely linked to World War II and the Resistance.

The territory and its landscape have thus become an essential space for national and collective identity, recognisable as common, shared heritage. The territory did not act as a passive spectator but it gave its contribution to shape our national identity, it has become the essential space in which we can inscribe our unity and national identity. Places and territory have become mutually indivisibly bound.

Memory places have become more and more a shared heritage, a living memory belonging to the territory and to all its current inhabitants.

17 About fifty Italian places are part of the network in this project, besides Anne Frank House – The Netherlands, city of Oswiecim (Auschwitz) - Poland, Maison d'Izieu –France

18 See all the censuses carried out in the various regions on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Italian unification. See the Interior website, the sitography on Italy during the two world wars by Antonio Prampolini (http://www.italia-resistenza.it/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Sitografia_L'Italia_fra_le_due_guerre_mondiali_20120430.pdf), see the website of the 150th anniversary <http://www.italiaunita150.it/i-luoghi-della-memoria.aspx> as well as the interesting thesis dissertation by Martina Abbritti (2011) *The places of memory in Calabria: first historical-cartographic investigation* in collaboration with Professor Marcello Bernardo, professor of “Geography” at the University of Calabria.

h. School tourism

School trips and educational journeys have always been an unavoidable opportunity for our secondary school students. The 291/1992 government Circular, still effective today, reads as follows: *“trips and educational journeys, including those connected to sports activities, imply – considering their cultural, educational and professional motivations - specific and proper educational and cultural planning by schools at the beginning of the school year. These trips are students' learning and growth experiences, thus they are part of the school's syllabus... school trips should represent a learning opportunity of cultural, human and educational growth”*. Therefore, school tourism has a specific “educational” function. Its destinations and contents must be functional to the cognitive, cultural and educational objectives characterising each type of school. The fruition models acquired by the students must become an important point of reference for their future touristic lives as for responsibility, environmental respect, territory and residents' community. The school trip/educational journey also favours the socialization of students from the same class or school. It is part of the educational-cultural planning of the school's syllabus and it is approved by the Class Committee. Choosing the destination, planning the journey, collecting the necessary documents, reporting on the journey are all very motivating educational activities, generally carried out through cooperative learning in groups, thus involving the less-motivated students as well.

Besides the “well organized” educational trip, if well planned, can involve the students in a dynamic interaction of “reason and passion” at the basis of the educational function of the journey.

Analysing the topic of the journey from a pedagogical perspective means analysing its explicit educational values, both symbolic and concrete, since travelling means *to become an expert of the world*, in the words of Dante's Ulysses, whose life had become a journey. Travelling means changing places and habits, coming in contact with different worlds, people and countries.

The category of the journey has its own heuristic power, apart from the various pedagogical perspectives, since there is a direct and immediate

link with the image of the course of life, the journey of life, or earthly pilgrimage. This link is even more powerful if we consider the journey might represent a unique opportunity in life (you may not go back to that place again...).

When young students (as well as adults) report on their journey, first of all they communicate something about themselves, they conceive it as a story to tell while they are, in fact, its authors. In fact, the idea we have of great journeys, real or imaginary, depends on if they are stories that are important for someone: for those who tell them, but also for those who read about them.

According to the monitoring by the Touring Observatory on school tourism in the school year 2012/2013, the potential demand for educational trips – that is, trips with at least one night stay) – was estimated on about 4.5 million students grouped in 209 thousand classes of state and private first and second-level secondary schools. The classes that actually went on a trip were not over a half: 42%, with a decrease compared to the school year 2011/2012.

For second-level secondary schools, the percentage of classes on a trip was 46.5%, the same as the preceding year. There is quite a big gap if we compare it with the percentage of the school year 2009/2010: 60%. The trend is falling for first-level secondary schools, where the rate of class participation goes from 52% in the school year 2011/2012 to 35.1% in 2012/2013.

Overall, the school population of first and second-level secondary schools on a trip in 2012/2013 is of 1.4 million (-13% compared to the previous data, with 1.6 million students).

The overall business suffers from this drop, too: for the school year 2012/2013 it is about 35 million Euros, -13.6% compared to the previous ratings.

According to the data by the Touring Observatory, second-level secondary schools tend to choose foreign destinations (55.4%) rather than Italian ones (44.6%). The most chosen destinations are France with Paris, Germany with Berlin and the Czech Republic with Prague. Rome, Florence and Venice remain the unchanged favourite destinations in Italy.

Considering the average duration, in the school year 2012/2013 the journeys covered almost 4 nights: 2.8 in Italy, 4.8 abroad. The values

confirm those of the previous years with an average expense of 283 Euros per package, with a 1.7% fall compared to the previous school year.

First-level secondary schools show different data: a very high percentage (96%) of trips are organized on the national territory, with a wide variety of destinations: there are many so-called “minor destinations” at a short distance from home with a two-night stay and an average expense of about 186 Euros per package, with an 8.7% fall.

Finally, analysing the type of journeys organized, the topic “art and history” prevails in second-level secondary schools (85.1%), followed by the knowledge of foreign cultures (30.6%). The results show that the first-level secondary schools prefer different topics from the ones of the second-level secondary schools. Besides “art and history”, others are “nature/protected areas” (36%), science (20%) and sport (16%).

Fig. 6 Students on a journey – historical series (First and second-level secondary schools)

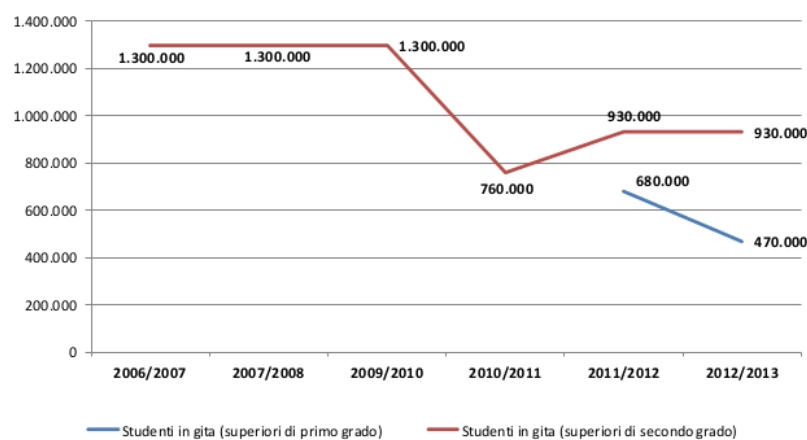


Fig. 7 Turnover – historical series (first and second-level secondary schools)

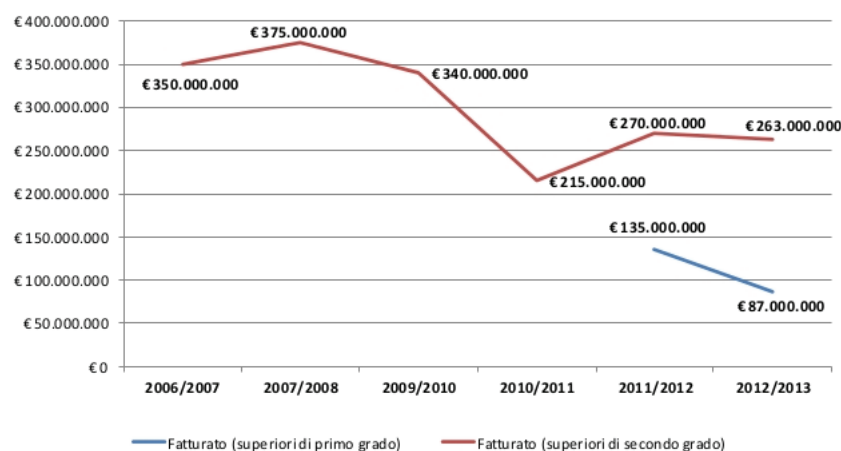
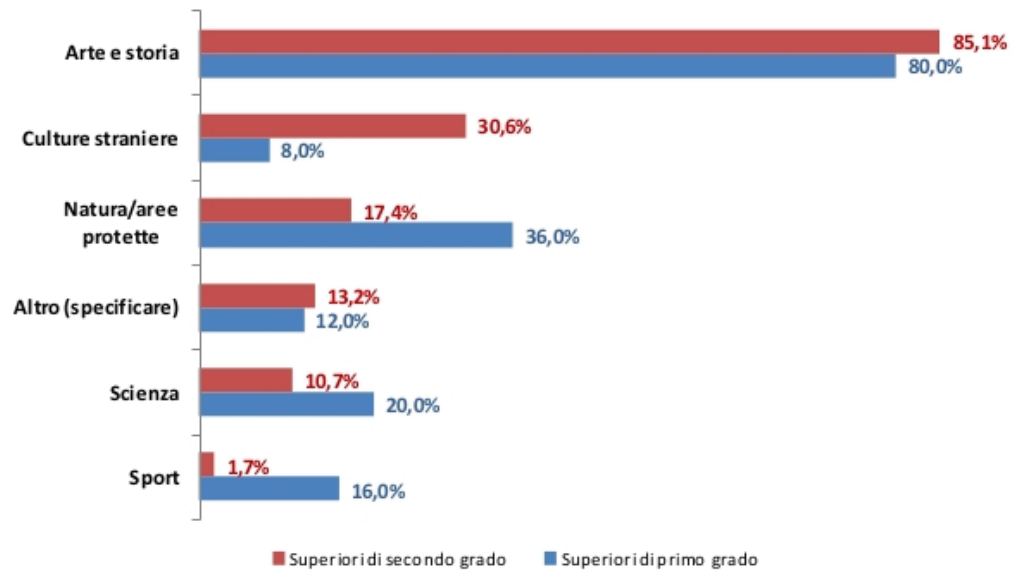


Fig. 8 Kinds of trips



i. Tourism in rural areas

As it will be widely explained, tourism in rural areas started to develop in the 1950s in many countries of central and northern Europe, while from the 1970s, it also developed in southern Europe. This phenomenon was due to on the one hand the evolution of lifestyles and values of the European population, and on the other to entrepreneurial development with attention to the new demand. It was immediately perceived as an important phenomenon, since it could contribute to reduce the exodus of the population, it created occupation and, finally, it promoted socioeconomic development of rural areas, often penalised under the economic and social perspective.

Rural tourism includes the various forms of tourism connected to rural resources and in close contact to them, that is, the forms of tourism where rural culture represents an important component.

Instead, tourism towards rural areas does not necessarily have this rural connotation.

Rural tourism answers the need for natural spaces which allow people to practise a wide range of ludic, sports, recreational and cultural activities. It also satisfies the growing interest in the natural heritage and in the rural culture on part of the urban public, who have been “deprived” of the knowledge and enjoyment of these values. Therefore, this phenomenon includes models of tourism which are generally considered separately but which actually share those features and values, as we will explain in the following chapter¹⁹: agritourism, educational farms, eco-tourism, green tourism, equestrian tourism.

19 Reference to chapter 1.2 *Tourism in rural areas*.

RURAL TOURISM AS CULTURAL TOURISM

1. 2 TOURISM IN RURAL AREAS

1.2.1 Origin

Rural tourism appears in Northern Europe already in the 50's. However, it is only in the late 70's that it becomes fully established thanks to the travelling tourist's growing interest in traditional values, first of all the rural landscape²⁰.

This determines new business opportunities for various enterprises belonging to the rural world: first of all agricultural, but also crafts companies and tour operators of small and medium size which, choosing to keep away from mass tourism, seem to represent the appropriate custodians of tradition, the environment and local culture.

The current phenomenon of tourism in rural areas is complex and internally organized.

According to a widespread idea, whereas "tourism in rural areas" includes every form of tourism and has a purely geographic connotation independently from host motivations or methods, "rural tourism" is experience oriented and includes all the various forms of tourism connected to rural resources and are, therefore, in direct contact with them. The definition itself of "rural resource" is not a neutral one, but depends on different points of view. So, it can be interpreted in many different ways: for some people rural resources are those belonging to the agricultural world and its processed goods. For others, the word has a wider meaning and includes not only green and protected areas but also the cultural and artistic resources which can be found in small towns and cities nearby rural areas.

Even *rural culture* itself, taken as a specific feature of the rural world, is a complex, manifold and dynamic concept. Moreover, its meaning may depend on the tourist's cultural viewpoint. It is often associated to local traditions, to precise local wine and food culture, to traditional agricultural systems and to the processing of products. However, we cannot exclude a "nobler" interpretation referring to the cultural and artistic resources of small centres scattered in the countryside and, not least important of all,

²⁰ Since ancient times, several people have considered rural life as the best kind of life: it is healthy, stimulating and it is a source of well-being. Cato's *De agricultura* (about 234–149 B.C.) , Varro Reatinus's *Rerum rusticarum libri tres* (116 - 27 B.C.), Columella's twelve books of *De re rustica* (I A.D.) all praise rural life. The same can be said of Virgil's poetry and of Cato's, whose *Cato maior de senectute* is a praise of rural life as worthy of a free man, at a time when slavery was practised.

the landscape.

All these expressions are to be considered as fundamental resources of appeal for rural tourism. However, since they are included in the definition of touristic rural service together with other resources - some of which do not have much to do with the rural world (sports, leisure and service activities) - it can be difficult to give a definition of its central feature.

However, the shared interpretation of rural tourism consists in a specific articulation of the touristic offer which includes a variety of activities such as for instance accommodation, restaurants, guided visits, explorations, participation in activities of high cultural value having the aim of introducing the tourist into the natural, environmental and cultural world of rural areas. Moreover, rural tourism activities must be carried out in existing buildings outside the urban territory and must possess typical local architectural features.

1.2.2 Tourism as an opportunity and a challenge

During recent decades, touristic demand has changed in terms of many aspects and at many levels; the objective of touristic activity has evolved, and the demand is more sophisticated (Manente, 2000; Uriely, 2005). Tourist groups have different purposes, so different segments exist within the touristic market.

In particular, there is an increased interest in active participation; an increasing number of tourists are interested in more activity-based forms of tourism, which, in turn, transforms the dynamics of the holiday; the concept of tourism as an experience has been growing. This segment *“tends to be above average in education, environmentally aware, experience oriented, and ready to accept local customs/culture”* (Hassan, 2000, p. 240). This type of traveller desires to participate in the organisation of his holiday, and he is interested in many aspects of his holiday destinations: culture, heritage, nature and local products.

The holiday is not simply passive leisure: discovering different cultures; learning about local practises; encountering languages, dialect and music; and tasting local food are delights also sought by these tourists. At the same time, modern people define and choose holidays in relation to their interests, passions and “vocations” to pursue their own individual and social identity.

Tourism increasingly connotes experience, so the tourism enterprise must become a manager of experiences.

These modifications and segmentations of touristic demand are also linked with the recent tendency to divide annual leave into shorter, more frequent segments (Cavaco, 1995); therefore, people can enjoy their holidays in various parts and spend them in different manners and places and during different seasons.

Within this dynamic framework of tourist behaviour, the focus on the countryside has increased, and urban inhabitants devote more and more attention to the countryside and appreciate it for the specific natural, cultural, material and immaterial elements that determine its identity.

The reasons behind the increasing demand of city dwellers to come in contact with the rural world can be divided into four fundamental trends

which are essential features of this kind of “activity based tourism” :

1. “recovery of memory”, which is expressed in the recuperation of one’s roots, traditions, gastronomy and more, in the revaluation of farming and its role in the defence and preservation of the territory, in the revaluation of creative handicrafts, in the interest towards rural landscape;
2. health and wellness, which assign a central role to the quality of the environment, air, healthy food, the landscape, relaxation, sports and all those disciplines in harmony with nature such as for instance anti-stress activities and taking care of one’s body ;
3. the desire to learn more about local historical and naturalistic issues and to have direct contact with the places where traditional products are manufactured. The demand for accommodation in the local community, contact with nature in various forms of naturalistic exploration;
4. the search for an authentic experience-oriented tourism embedded in the local community’s life. What really matters is that the tourist must have the perception of being a member of that community and of being able to understand its cultural features.

Therefore, on the one hand, the countryside’s ensemble of resources, also named “countryside capital” (Garrod et al., 2006), evokes values and ideals that have become more important in recent years; on the other hand, tourists are interested in spending activity-based vacations in the countryside; therefore, the basic potential of resources is not sufficient to fulfil tourists’ expectations.

This opportunity is connected to the evolution of agricultural activities or rather the manner of “doing business” in the rural world.

The modern approach of pursuing the development of rural peripheral areas entails the adoption of a more integrated and territorial vision in which a) according to the “multi-functionality” concept, agriculture has a role to play beyond that of food production; b) as a whole, the development is endogenous and, consequently, integrated; and c) the most suitable strategy is differentiation based on local and specific material and immaterial resources (European Commission, 2008; OECD, 2006; Ray, 2000; Bryden et al., 2006). This approach is conveyed through

the LEADER Programme, in which the focus is on "*partnership capacity, implementation of local strategies, cooperation, networking and acquisition of skills*" (CEC, 2005).

Within this conceptual and operating framework, one of the most important strategies for pursuing these objects is diversification of the activities conducted in rural peripheral areas. "*As agriculture has retreated from its hegemonic position in the contemporary countryside, raising attention is focused on the complementary sectors of agricultural activity such as light manufacturing, handicrafts, food processing and tourism*" (Panyik et al., 2011, p. 1353); During the strategic diversification process, tourism has been proposed as one of the most effective activities in the multifunctional countryside (Sharpley, 2000; Garrod et al., 2006; Saxena & Ilbery, 2008).

Agriculture and rural tourism can interact to diversify local production activities: in the same way that agricultural vocation can enhance the landscape from the points of view of its beauty, identity, culture and from that of its typical products which represent an attraction for tourists, the development of tourism can guarantee the creation of a new market for local producers and the creation of new forms of enterprise (accommodation, restaurants, events, museums, visits to manufacture centres, tastings and purchase of agricultural goods). The touristic enhancement of cultural heritage can follow from this cultural-territorial combination.

The local community can play a fundamental role in the development of tourism in rural areas, since the local community and its cultural identity are essential factors in the creation of tourism business.

Another important role is played by the heritage of rural buildings (modern and historic, country homes, estates, garrets, towers) and by the characterizing elements of rural landscape (farmyards, peculiar lanes, walls, hedges, monumental trees, boundary elements, mills). Besides being material resources themselves, they also represent important intangible ones.

Vernacular architecture is an expression of local heritage deeply linked to the territory and its traditions. Preserving the different typologies of buildings is a contribution to the biodiversity of sites and has a positive effect on the growth of economic value. In fact, it introduces new building evaluation parameters such as the authenticity of buildings, their correspondence to

the specific local typology and tradition and, at the same time, thanks to modernizing interventions, it contributes to the transformation of products no longer responding to the needs of agricultural products into tourist attractions.

Similarly, also the preservation of traditional agricultural food productions, popular recipes, the involvement of tourists in agricultural activities and in the life of the companies, such as for instance the selling of the products etc., are all activities that allow the tourist to recover the memory of the past of a particular territory. This obviously also entails the farmers and the local inhabitants' willingness to dedicate time to convey to the tourist their knowledge of the landscape and of its food products, traditions, forms of amusement.

Many rural resources are also public resources: they can be freely used and organized by many different actors in the tourism production process. However, the profits generated by the touristic activity do not always reach the people who actually contributed to maintain the rural capital. This is therefore prejudicial to the reproduction and the sustainability itself of the touristic implementation process. For instance, we can take the case of public resources generated by tourism-enhanced agricultural activities such as cultural landscapes, the preservation of agricultural biodiversity, the local material culture, without the participation of the agricultural companies in the division of the profits.

In order to be considered as an "economic resource", the destination of the historical, cultural, natural, anthropological resources of a rural territory and also its traditions, its ancient crafts, must be organized as a *tourist product* which can be enjoyed by tourists. It is necessary to implement the territory's attraction potential and appeal, identify tourists' possible motivations, their expectations and to investigate whether these resources can meet tourists' requests more efficiently and effectively than other competitive territories.

Agriculture can avail itself of a rich ethnologic heritage: tools and agricultural machinery, crafts workshops, forges, carpentries, quarries, dams etc. which are elements which can be exploited for aims of tourism. Diversified architecture, rich folklore, a varied popular food tradition as well as the human factor and make a territory "appealing" from the point of view of tourism.

Therefore, the agricultural segment with its connected landscapes, rural

and cultural resources is no longer the simple *beneficiary* of the added value generated by tourism, but becomes the *actor* of the tourism economy who can give life to a specific tourist demand. The rural context must be organized in a complex structure which must take into account all its features in order to create a *final product* which can meet the tourist demand (responsible, intelligent, composite and respectful of the context). It is a product resulting from a combination of productive activities and of the preservation and implementation of a material, intangible, cultural, environmental heritage.

Rural tourism is therefore a potential tool for the enhancement of rural areas. Even though it is considered as an integration, complementary activity which does not substitute agricultural activities but which can have an effect on the assets of an agricultural company, it represents an important opportunity. Rural areas have a strong potential which must be managed and implemented so as to become a real opportunity for long term and sustainable implementation not only of the territory, but also of the social and economic sphere.

The aim of diversification is to improve the autonomy and assets of agricultural companies starting from the resources they have; it must become part of the strategy of a company which answers people's demand of resources and services in the primary sector (Henke R. & Salvioni C., 2008) . Such strategy requires a reconsideration of the strict meaning of agricultural production in favour of cultural, didactic, environmental, social activities which can generate extra assets.

"The idea that tourism is/could be the key to the future of these regions has been gaining more and more adherents" (Ribeiro & Marques, 2002, p. 212). Unfortunately, much rhetoric has been produced regarding this subject, its sustainability and its compatibility (Ribeiro & Marques, 2002; McAreavey & McDonagh, 2011), but the reality regarding these areas is more and more complex. Because tourism is an entrepreneurial activity, its implementation requires adequate conditions, tools and skills.

Tourism certainly presents opportunities for rural regions; many of the regions' natural and cultural resources are conducive to the implementation of a particular type of rural tourism that could be attractive to post-modern tourists.

The biggest challenge for entrepreneurs in rural areas is constructing and offering competitive products using conducive resources and implementing an adequately effective organisation. To produce this selection of products and organisation, we must first of all join two concepts: competitive advantage and a resources-based view. However, this strategic step must be constructed while taking into account complexity, which is the characteristic that distinguishes most of the involved items, actors and situations.

1.2.3 Main concepts

a. Competitiveness

The complexity on the supply side is evident: the touristic supply chain is compounded by several interconnected stages, and at every one, actors with dissimilar objectives are present. Many different resources are involved, and they are not ordinarily networked. All of these elements lead to the adoption of an integrated approach during both the analysis phase and the construction and implementation project. In relation to this matter, the concept of IRT (Integrated Rural Tourism) has recently been introduced. This concept was *“proposed as a means of thinking critically and comprehensively about the actors, resources and relationships involved in this notoriously fragmented industry”*, and it was *“defined as tourism that is explicitly linked to the economic, social, cultural, natural and human resources of the localities in which it takes place”* (Saxena et al., 2007, p. 351). *“The notion of integration provides a means of thinking about ways of bringing diverse actors, networks and resources together more successfully into networks of cooperation and collaboration”* (ibidem).

Regarding the strategy of achieving competitive advantage, it is useful to follow Porter's approach, but there are two important differences between Porter's frame of reference and what is necessary in this context. Whereas Porter focuses on the individual firm, here, one must consider both a particular type of firm in the touristic industry – the touristic networking entrepreneur – and the role of local institutions, development agencies and communities that effect organisations, decisions and results.

It is very important to underline that, in any case, the implementation of touristic activities, the realisation of products and their sale and, of course, competitiveness are referred to in terms of firms and not specific areas, regions or nations. Only firms are economic actors, who adopt strategies to reach their goals; however, it is absolutely true that territorial agencies and communities can have more power and possibilities, as in this case, or less power and fewer possibilities to support and collaborate with local firms.

In rural areas, generally, each actor controls only one specific resource; therefore, it is necessary to assemble various suppliers and compose touristic products using various and specific resources, as

shall be explained in the next paragraph.

To plan and implement a differentiation strategy, it is necessary to match the peculiarity of local resources and the manners in which they are utilised to construct products, which should be increasingly different and, if possible, unique. The less distinctive the resources are, the more particular the manners in which they are exploited must be.

"In rural territories, the tourism product is usually a commodification of the local history, culture or the natural environment" (Panyik et al., 2011, p 1354), but this process is insufficient to achieve competitive advantages and, in any case, the product would not be the outcome of an adequate decision process. Moreover, today, despite the natural and unsophisticated image of the countryside, every type of firm must be "market oriented"; every firm must also seek to understand and capture the wishes and expectations of potential tourists. At the same time, it is clear that in this particular field, *"countryside capital may also have an indirect role to play in providing a backdrop to the rural tourism experience and in generating an image that attracts tourists to a particular destination area. This role should be considered no less important than the direct role"* (Garrod et al., 2006, p. 121).

"Destination choice is greatly influenced by a perceived sense of empathy with the area and this itself is a function of the destination identity that is being projected" (Garrod et al., 2006, p.124).

It is clear that in these cases, in addition to the actions of firms, the role of local institutions, public agencies and communities determines the business' success and the connected positive socio-economic benefits for communities as a whole. It is worth underlining that in constructing these products, the concept of "integration" must be adopted, as explained previously.

b. Resource

Within this framework, "resources" constitute one of the most central points.

The concepts and matters related to resources and adopted in the study presented in this paper are specified below.

b1) The "resource-based view" is adopted as general theory for both analysing and defining strategies. Originally, it refers to individual firms, but it is possible to utilise this theory when the subject is a network organisation. *"Firm resources include all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, firm attributes, information, knowledge, etc. controlled by a firm that enable the firm to conceive of and implement strategies"* (Barney, 1991, p. 101). *"The resources and capabilities of a firm are the central considerations in formulating its strategy: they are the primary constants upon which a firm can establish its identity and frame its strategy, and they are the primary sources of the firm's profitability"* (Grant, 1991, p. 133).

"Strategy is concerned with matching a firm's resources and capabilities to the opportunities that arise in the external environment" (Grant, 2005, p. 132). Three principal types of resources can be identified: tangible, intangible and human resources; however, *"individual resources do not confer competitive advantage; they must work together to create organizational capability"* (Ibidem, p. 139). To establish competitive advantage, resources must be scarce and relevant; to sustain it, resources must be durable and non-transferable or replicable.

b2) Indigenous resources constitute essential stock for various activities in the countryside. Therefore, different pictures result according to the type of relationship existing among the users: i) conflict, which occurs when different rural industries (including tourism) employ the same assets to produce their goods or services. In this case, competition exists among stakeholders; ii) complementarity, which occurs when the same resource, chiefly material, is used both to obtain goods and build touristic products; iii) coincidence, which occurs when the output of the process, during which one or more resources are used, is both a marketed product and a compound of a tourism product.

On the one hand, it is impossible to be aware of a prior situation in each case; on the other hand, enterprises and communities face questions that differ according to the context. The market mechanism is clearly insufficient to be the lead choice; the guidelines of long-term sustainability must be retained. *"Tourism should be complementary to existing structures, if it is to compensate for economic decline, avoid social conflict, and support*

existing policies for resource conservation" (Cawley & Gillmor, 2008, p. 319).

Complementarity and coincidence are very common in the countryside; it can be said that these conditions are in the nature and at the origin of rural tourism because the specific rural resources, processes and products connected to these conditions exist at the base of people's attention and interest for the countryside.

b3) Local resources may be tangible or perceptual. During recent decades, the latter have become more and more important to producing goods and services. Human resources and human capital are increasingly considered central assets of each productive activity.

In terms of origin-based classification, which distinguishes between endogenous and exogenous origins, there are two fields: the first, above all, contains inputs such as heritage, local culture, and tacit knowledge; the second contains the complementary resources beneficial to realising the adopted strategy. Exogenous resources and disembedded networks can facilitate local projects (using critical assets and technologies, integrating product portfolio, accessing particular market segments, etc.), but they must be compatible with the local identity and must be integrated. Above all, it is necessary to devote attention to organisational and strategic competences because they are often in short supply in local human resources; however, the consultant's approach may be not adapted and, consequently, will be destructive to the specific project.

b4) Sustainability in rural tourism must be adopted as a guiding principle. In addition, a specific issue exists regarding this activity: the distinctive identity of each area and the particular characterisation of its touristic offer imply that all local resources must be reconstituted. *"If countryside capital is an essential input to the rural tourism production process, then a decline in its quality is likely to be reflected in a similar reduction in the quality of the final product"* (Garrod et al., 2006, p. 122). In terms of this field, a particular point must be made regarding a specific, very important and rather fragile resource: tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is encountered in various places, processes, and events; therefore, it is present in the majority of touristic products offered by a rural area and a determinant of

their specificity and attractiveness: tacit knowledge is unavoidable in local traditional agro-food production (which are one of the most attractive countryside elements), in the management of heritage, in the use and explanation of dialect, in the interpretation of natural events, facts, wild animal behaviour and landscape, and so on.

Despite this basic role, maintaining tacit knowledge is rather difficult. Transferring tacit knowledge is very complex: to absorb it, it is necessary to live locally and work with the elderly, who can transfer their knowledge (learning by doing) indirectly. Therefore, it is necessary to implement all actions that facilitate this transfer from aged to young people. It is worth underlining that the most efficient way to achieve this objective is to encourage young people to stay in the community through local development, which thereby ensures tacit knowledge transfer.

C. Endogeneity and integration in rural tourism

The previous analysis leads us to a conceptual framework in which endogeneity and integration characterise and define the approach to developing rural areas. During recent decades, the concept of endogenous rural development has gained increasing attention, above all, among academic authors and policy makers (Ploeg van der et al., 2000; Sortino & Chang Tin Fa, 2009). Indeed, the consecutive CAP reforms have adopted this approach, which is on the basis of the LEADER programme. Academic debate exists regarding whether endogeneity is strong or faint, but there is no doubt about the value of this concept and its utility in analysing, planning and improving local development. This importance does not imply an absence of exogenous elements because this concept is not absolute; rather, there is *"a process of continuous (re)interpretation and (re)negotiation of both external and internal elements by local people that allows for a continuous evolution of new forms of survival"* (Saxena & Ilbery, 2008, p. 238). People's role is constitutive: only the exogenous elements, tangible or intangible, which are compatible with the local socio-cultural-environmental system and are well perceived by the locals, can be integrated. These elements must be managed by the local operators and inhabitants, and the endogenous developments must

always be structured to assure maximum benefits to the local community.

At the same time, the concept of integration is implied in that of endogeneity: it is a corollary. In fact, it is necessary to consider all of the compounds of the territory and their relationships to pursue its sustainable development and thus, as The Cork Declaration affirms in point 2, Integrated Approach, "*rural development policy must be multi-disciplinary in concept and multi-sectoral in application, with a clear territorial dimension*" (LEADER magazine, 1997, p. 1). Therefore, integrated rural development is simultaneously a goal and a methodological approach. This dual identity implies the adoption of the bottom-up approach to involve local actors in defining their future.

The notion of "*integrated rural tourism*" (IRT) has been introduced; it "*is not merely a tool to facilitate greater coordination among actors but also involves roles and responsibilities associated with both the implementation and the monitoring of tourism development strategies and resource management at the local and regional level*" (Saxena et al., 2007, p. 349). Consequently, the concept of network is fundamental, and two notions must be pursued: "*horizontal networking is central to the creation of businesses and products, while vertical is necessary to source external support and attract tourists*" (Cawley & Gillmor, 2008, p. 320). Of course, these networks are primarily "*social networks that explicitly link local actors for the purpose of jointly promoting and maintaining the economic, social, cultural, natural and human resources of the localities in which they occur*" (Saxena & Ilbery, 2008, 234); therefore, these networks can empower and facilitate local actors to improve their own entrepreneurship, increase added value and retain most of the benefits for the community.

1.2. 4 Types and data

As for rural tourism, the Ecomuseum, holiday farms and educational farms²¹ are worth mentioning.

a. The Ecomuseum

The ecomuseum or “new museology” was created in France in the 1960s by the museum expert Georges Henri Rivière and Hugues De Varine²², at the time director of ICOM. Their aim was the development of shared processes for the protection and enhancement of local heritage: naturalistic and historical-architectural heritage, geographical and ecologic heritage, material cultures and local traditions, etc.

Therefore, it is not easy to give a precise definition of ecomuseum. Over the last forty years many definitions have been offered. The first one is by G.H. Rivière and dates back to the 22nd January 1980:

Un écomusée est un instrument qu'un pouvoir et une population conçoivent, fabriquent et exploitent ensemble. Ce pouvoir, avec les experts, les facilités, les ressources qu'il fournit. Cette population, selon ses aspirations, ses savoirs, ses facultés d'approche.

Un miroir où cette population se regarde, pour s'y reconnaître, où elle recherche l'explication du territoire auquel elle est attachée, jointe à celle des populations qui l'ont précédée, dans la discontinuité ou la continuité des générations. Un miroir que cette population tend à ses hôtes, pour s'en faire mieux comprendre, dans le respect de son travail, de ses comportements, de son intimité.

Une expression de l'homme et de la nature. L'homme y est interprété dans son milieu naturel. La nature l'est dans sa sauvagerie, mais telle aussi que la

21 As for the definitions of sustainable tourism, environmental tourism, ecotourism, see paragraph 1.1.3 Manyfold types of tourism in the previous chapter: 1.1. The phenomenon of tourism and its evolution.

22 In the introduction to the volume: Ecomuseums. Local culture as an instrument of development, by S. Vesco, Felici Editore, 2011, Hugues De Varine says: «the term “ecomuseum” expresses a vague and ambiguous concept used for many reasons, often wrong, in the most varied places, according to more or less serious and academic definitions. There were so many differences that it was almost impossible to analyse it. Personally, I had declared more than once that I did not want to talk about ecomuseums, but rather of community museums, nor did I want to talk of ecomuseology, but rather of new museology. I often explained why I considered the growing use of this term as a misunderstanding: originally created in 1971 to promote the protection and image of museums as tools for the environment and ecology, it was then opportunistically used for the “development” museum of Le Creuset-Montceau urban Community (1974), then used by the Scandinavians and Canadians (1980s) to indicate “territorial heritage projects”»

société traditionnelle et la société industrielle l'ont adaptée à leur image.

Une expression du temps, quand l'explication remonte en deçà du temps où l'homme est apparu, s'étage à travers les temps préhistoriques et historiques qu'il a vécus, débouche sur le temps qu'il vit. Avec une ouverture sur les temps de demain, sans que, pour autant, l'écomusée se pose en décideur, mais en l'occurrence, joue un rôle d'information et d'analyse critique.

Une interprétation de l'espace. D'espaces privilégiés, où s'arrêter, où cheminer.

Un laboratoire, dans la mesure où il contribue à l'étude historique et contemporaine de cette population et de son milieu et favorise la formation de spécialistes dans ces domaines, en coopération avec les organisations extérieures de recherche.

Un conservatoire dans la mesure où il aide à la préservation et à la mise en valeur du patrimoine naturel et culturel de cette population.

Une école, dans la mesure où il associe cette population à ses actions d'étude et de protection, où il l'incite à mieux appréhender les problèmes de son propre avenir.

Ce laboratoire, ce conservatoire, cette école s'inspirent de principes communs. La culture dont ils se réclament est à entendre en son sens le plus large, et ils s'attachent à en faire connaître la dignité et l'expression artistique, de quelque couche de la population qu'en émanent les manifestations. La diversité en est sans limite, tant les données diffèrent d'un échantillon à l'autre. Ils ne s'enferment pas en eux-mêmes, ils reçoivent et donnent.

Within Italian ecomuseology, the Ecomuseum is a cultural institution which permanently guarantees on the territory – through the collaboration with territorial operators and the population – the functions of research, preservation, enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage representing its environment and lifestyles. According to Maurizio Maggi's definition: «*The ecomuseum is a museum based on an agreement by which a community takes care of a territory*». By "agreement" he means a transparent commitment without necessarily implying legal obligations. By "community" he means the fundamental role of local institutions, together with the inhabitants' involvement. "Take care" means a long-

term commitment and vision of the territory's future development. Finally, "territory" is not only a physical surface but also a complex stratification of environmental, cultural, social elements defining a specific local heritage (Maggi, 2002).

The museums should not just tell the history of the object they keep, but also allow the enhancement of environmental, historical and cultural resources of a territory and its inhabitants by means of a reasoned exhibition and interpretation of the finds. Hence, the museum is asked the ability to correlate different objects belonging to routine life and link them to places, territories and to the culture which had generated them. This is the way everybody's history is told.

A more recent definition can be found in the 2007 *Catania Charter*²³, which states that an ecomuseum «is a shared way to enhance both material and intangible cultural heritage. It is elaborated and developed by an organized subject and is the expression of a local community, in the perspective of sustainable development».

The Catania Charter stresses the distinction between the ecomuseum and traditional museums. It also points out the importance of the enhancement of all the material and intangible goods which characterise our cultural heritage as expression of a community and territory. Therefore, the ecomuseum must be a shared practice focused on the local community. Anyway, the ecomuseums cannot be considered as institutions, but rather as shared projects where the local community – in collaboration with the Region or with higher institutions – is directly involved in the development processes. The enhancement of a local heritage, made of many aspects and topics, cannot disregard a multidisciplinary and synergic approach. Therefore, no central power is allowed to lead, so as to favour interconnected initiatives based on local participation, which is fundamental for good development (Maggi, 2001)²⁴.

The priority aim of an ecomuseum is to foster sustainable development both from the environmental point of view (the existence of an

23 Document elaborated on the occasion of the National Meeting *Verso un Coordinamento Nazionale degli Ecomusei: un processo da condividere nell'ambito del Convegno Giornate dell'Ecomuseo - verso una nuova offerta culturale per lo sviluppo sostenibile del territorio (Towards a National coordination of ecomuseums: a process to share within the Convention The Ecomuseum - Towards a new cultural offer for the sustainable development of the territory)*, Catania 12th – 13th October 2007.

24 also: www.nuovamuseologia.org

ecomuseum cannot be separated from its territory) and from the point of view of the people, since the local population not only has the possibility to achieve a certain economic, cultural and social development, but also to rediscover and protect its peculiar identity in a period dominated by the standardization of globalization. That very identity - through all its material and intangible expressions, the relationship between man and environment, the ways of thinking, living and producing - is the key to specialization and competitiveness against the global market so as to promote the development of a whole territory.

Landscape ecomuseums are the result of the relationship between the ecomuseum, the territory and the fundamental principles of the European Landscape Convention. They are an important instrument of local action aiming at bringing the inhabitants closer to the places where they live and at educating the people to perceive the landscape.

The whole territory is the heart of the landscape ecomuseum, which is a widespread museum with the aim of stimulating people, above all the local residents, to read and appreciate the identity and diversity of that landscape, its long-established material and intangible culture, the characteristics and values which favour coherent choices of sustainable development.

Ecomuseums, in particular landscape ecomuseums, promote actions in order to put in contact the inhabitants to the places where they live. For instance, this is possible through the censuses of the material, intangible and environmental cultural heritage. Among the Italian ecomuseums, the community map is a widespread instrument of local research. Thanks to it, the inhabitants of a place have the chance to represent the heritage, landscape, knowledge with which they identify and which they wish to hand down to the future generations. The community map is an easy, direct instrument that everybody can use. It can highlight the several relations which tie together two big categories: the heritage and the local community.

The map is a joint process through which a community sees, perceives, gives value to its territory, memories, changes, current reality and possible future.

By means of this instrument, a new concept of territory emerges: it is much more than a mere geographical surface, but it includes memories - often joint - relationships, values, many complex events which define its uniqueness.

The making of a community map implies starting an involving journey

towards shared and aware planning. It requires active and responsible behaviour towards one's territory. The map must be built through shared participation, since it allows the population involved to recognise the value of places and to enhance their self-esteem. Also, it is a method to bring a community to maturity and growth. Therefore, the whole process of information acquisition, their analysis and selection is as important as the final result. Everything should be done together, respecting all the different perceptions.

The community map becomes a permanent archive whose information on a territory's people and places can be updated at any time. It promotes actions aiming at enhancing the heritage, thus avoiding the loss of specific knowledge of the places, which characterises long-established wisdom built up by the contribution of many generations.

This particular instrument was included in the training process of the Territorial Landscape Plan for the region of Puglia (Baratti, 2012). The community maps created within the ecomuseums in Puglia were taken as an instrument for the growth of "local awareness", so that the inhabitants could give evidence of the territorial and landscape values.

The ecomuseums and the community maps demonstrate that the landscape cannot be turned into a museum, but rather be considered a living museum. This is possible thanks to local work which favours the interaction with the inhabitants, through educational activities based on their perception and awareness that the places mirror the people's identity²⁵.

Strength

- The whole community represents a living museum which permanently hosts the public
- The museum has no visitors, it has inhabitants
- Even if it addresses the external public, the Ecomuseum is mainly addressed to the inhabitants of the community
- It is possible for the visitors to restore and interpret collective memory,

²⁵ A local example of this relationship between museum and territory is the *Casa Museo Cervi*. This place has acquired in time a renowned function in the preservation of memory and universal values connected to it. It demonstrates the participation of a community who feels part of this history and values. The farm, whose dimension and functions have been kept unchanged (wheat cultivation in alternation to lucerne and permanent pasture for the production of Parmigiano-Reggiano Cheese. Piantata reggiana with local grapes trained up the stake plant of the Elm), helps build up an ecomuseum where memory and landscape are alive. Thus, the ecomuseum is not an institution but a project, a practice, a way of working on the territory.

yet the inhabitants are its repositories.

- For the first time in the history of museums, the population becomes a partner of the institution.
- The Ecomuseum is legitimated by the participation of the population
- Yet, an Ecomuseum cannot be created without the help of political and economic structures, and experts
- The institutions and the population share mutual participation in the making of the project.

Weaknesses

The main risk is the misunderstanding of the ecomuseum's meaning, thus fossilizing the territory into an old museum. Secondly, it is still hard to identify its mission, its goal. The biggest contrast consists in the opposition between economic and tourist development on one side, and recovery of the historical memory and cultural heritage on the other. In short, there still is a contrast between "economic and cultural aims" (Maggi M., 2001, pp. 10 - 11). However, this contrast may be overcome, since there are many ways to reconcile economic development, environmental protection and cultural enhancement. Actually, this should be the aim of the ecomuseum.

The distribution of Ecomuseums in Italy

Ecomuseums are widespread on the National territory, even if their type, application methods and aims are quite heterogeneous. The first differences are caused by the specific features of their territories: some have been created in former industrial estates, others are linked to a typical landscape, others are connected to a specific ethnic group or population. Then there are ecomuseums for farm land, created so as to protect farm landscape and areas bound to be abandoned, thus risking the loss of their "customs".

The situation is quite varied from a legal perspective, too. As for Italy, according to www.ecomusei.net, the national portal of ecomuseums, our country counts 164 ecomuseums, above all in the North, especially in Piedmont and Lombardy.

Regione	Ecomusei	Legge regionale
Piemonte	47	mar-95/ago-98
Lombardia	33	lug-07
Toscana	13	
Emilia Romagna	10	
Trentino	9	nov-00
Puglia	6	
Sardegna	5	set-06
Umbria	5	dic-07
Valle d'Aosta	5	
Veneto	5	
Friuli - Venezia Giulia	4	giu-06
Lazio	4	
Liguria	4	
Abruzzo	3	
Calabria	3	
Sicilia	3	
Campania	2	
Basilicata	1	
Marche	1	
Molise	1	apr-08
tot	164	

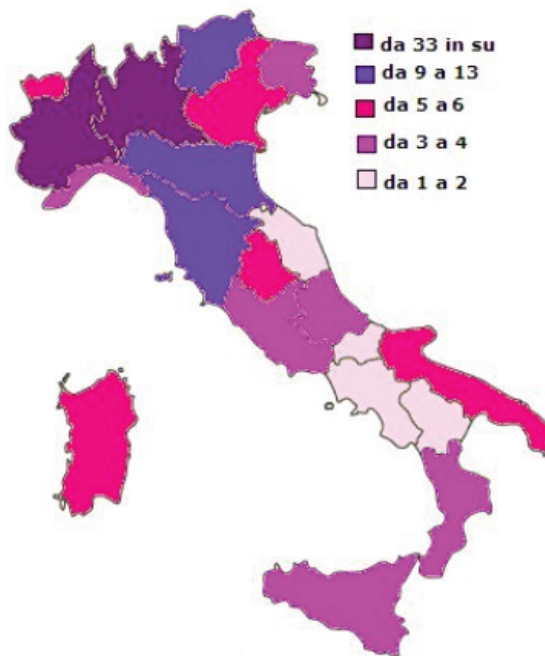


Tabella 1: numero di ecomusei suddivisi per regione, con la relativa data di emissione della legge (se questa è presente)

Figura 9: Numero di ecomusei per le diverse regioni italiane

Table 1: number of ecomuseums per region.

Fig. 9: Map showing the number of ecomuseums per region.

b. The Educational Farm

The educational farm is a farm where educational and social activities go together with farmhouse hospitality and the direct sale of local products. It is mainly addressed to very young people and teenagers who live in typically urban areas and cannot benefit from significant rural experiences of personal growth. These young people do not know the characteristics of rural life, they ignore its habits, instruments, products, the work. They do not have direct contact with cultivated plants and animals.

This contact man-agriculture is therefore the aim of those farms where farmers, or some members of their family, dedicate part of their farm and time to guided tours and educational routes, according to the methodology of learning by doing. The context of the Educational Farm can be compared to an educational family when addressed to students, but also to a "re-educational" family for adults in general. The producers convey their knowledge - also through their experience - directly to the users, allowing them to experience rural life.

In a properly organised rural area, children can live unique experiences: the possibility of walking along a countryside road, in a farmyard or in an orchard, represents a great occasion to experiment their autonomy and fulfil their sense of attraction and curiosity. Such educational opportunities can only be experienced on a farm, not in a classroom, at the gym or in a public park. For instance, children involved in the so-called bread laboratory must have a walk in the wheat field, touch its spikes until the seeds come out, grind a lot of seeds, prepare the oven, work the flour and finally taste the bread. On a farm you have to do things, you have to work. Everybody is involved in almost exclusively practical operations. The scientific explanations will be provided by the teacher back at school.

A visit to the farm stimulates strong emotions since direct experience is something strong and will mark the children's memory for a long time. Not to mention that for some of them it could be their one and only experience.

Besides the specifically educational activity, the Educational Farm can offer courses for food preparation (preserve, bread, sausages, cheese, gastronomy), ecological observation and environmental education, farm production.

Generally, educational farms first offer a guided tour to the farm with the presentation of one or more productions or ecological topics. This is followed by a talk with the guests in a room, and by some easy practical training in order to let them take active part in the learning process. Also, some projections integrate the direct experience on the farm. The most popular topics are the production of wheat, its transformation into flour and the preparation of bread; the production of milk and its transformation into cheese; bee farming and the production of honey; orchard cultivation and the preparation of fruit juices and jams; the winery and wine production; the oil mill and the production of olive oil.

The recreational, cultural and educational activities carried out on the farm were first recognised as equivalent to the farmhouse ones by law 23rd December 2000, N.388, Art. 123 (*Promotion and development of agricultural farms and biological zootechnical farms*), which recognised an unprecedented multifunctional role to agriculture. Such position was then corroborated by Legislative Decree N. 228 18th May 2001, "*Orientation and modernization of the farming sector*", where among the farmhouse activities the organization of recreational and educational activities

aiming at a better knowledge of the territory are indicated.

The result of this activity is twofold: on the one hand it allows farmers to integrate their income, finding a new way to promote the farm and sell products and services. On the other hand, it involves the people, who come in contact with farm work and learn to respect nature. This helps filling the gap between urban and rural culture, which started growing at the beginning of the 1960s due to the exodus of farmers from their farm land towards industrial production and the tertiary sector.

The Scandinavian countries have been the precursors in the field of Educational Farms in Europe: at the beginning of the twentieth century Norway, Sweden, Denmark put into practice the ideas of the American movement *Club 4H*, an acronym which stands for four words starting with the letter H (Head, Heart, Health, Hand). These words sum up the aim of the project: the graceful development of the individual's head, heart and health through one's hands.

In Italy the first experiences were presented in 1997 on the occasion of the first Agriscuola Meeting organized by Alimos²⁶ with the participation of the European Federation of City Farms.

In the year 2000 the first national census was carried out by Alimos and financed by the Ministry of the Environment. Only 250 farms existed by then, yet in 2005 there were already more than 600. Today there are almost 2500 farms in Italy²⁷, especially in Emilia Romagna, Campania, Piedmont, Veneto and Lombardy. They are bound to increase, since they meet a widespread need coming from the world of education. They represent a living pedagogical place where the environment is a place for direct exploration and experience, thus building up education based on concrete and experiential knowledge.

26 *Alimos groups* the main organizations of fruit and vegetable producers and Italian farm cooperatives. It has been dealing with food education as well as environmental and territorial protection for over 40 years. It is specialised in food education for children and teenagers. www.alimos.it

27 www.fattoriendidattiche.net; www.fattoriadidattica.it; www.ersa.fvg.it, the website of the Regional Agency for rural development, autonomous region Friuli Venezia Giulia.

Le Fattorie Didattiche in Italia

Censimento delle Fattorie Didattiche accreditate

Regione	Censimento					Fonte
	Anno 2000	Anno 2005	Anno 2009	Anno 2012	Anno 2103	
Liguria	0	9	53	71	84	Agriliguria.net - Regione Liguria
Valle d'Aosta	0	0	2	7	7	Regione Valle d'Aosta
Piemonte	22	25	227	274	296	Regione Piemonte
Lombardia	26	89	160	186	197	Regione Lombardia
Provincia Aut. di Trento	25	32	44	47	47	Ass. Agriturismo Trentino
Provincia Aut. di Bolzano	0	0	1	30	19	Non disponibile
Veneto	28	35	228	233	243	Regione Veneto
Friuli Venezia Giulia	0	33	67	85	89	ERSA Friuli Venezia Giulia
Emilia-Romagna	115	300	330	324	315	Almos Soc. Coop. Regione Emilia-Romagna
Toscana (non c'è una legge regionale)	4	20	20	17	17	Provincia di Siena
				36	24	Provincia di Arezzo
				31	31	"La Fattoria della Cultura" Circondario Empolese-Valdelsa
Umbria	4	5	5	48	48	Regione Umbria
Marche	6	7	120	135	135	Regione Marche
Lazio (non c'è una legge regionale)	8	24	24	17	17	Provincia di Viterbo
				0	16	Provincia di Frosinone
				0	4	Provincia di Rieti
				5	5	Ente Regionale RomaNatura
Abruzzo	6	9	50	162	163	Regione Abruzzo
Molise (non c'è una legge regionale)	0	0	20	14	14	Provincia di Isernia
			0	0	3	Provincia di Campobasso
Campania	2	4	245	308	318	Regione Campania
Basilicata	2	6	16	48	50	Regione Basilicata
Puglia	3	7	36	93	99	Regione Puglia LR 2/2008 "Masserie Didattiche"
Calabria (non c'è un registro regionale)	0	0	0	31	35	Non disponibile
Sardegna	0	0	78	135	155	Sardegna Agricoltura
Sicilia	0	2	13	39	49	Regione Sicilia DR del 14/05/2009
TOTALE	251	607	1.739	2.376	2.480	

Dati aggiornati al 22/10/2013

Table 2: Educational Farms in Italy

c. The Holiday Farm

The term holiday farm started to be used in the first half of the 1950's in the same period in which the Agriturismo Association was established and promoted by the Italian Farmers' Confederation. The first legal act dates back to 1952 (Act N. 991), by which funding was granted to the companies operating in mountain areas, but was actually a means to discourage farmers from abandoning their territory. The first national General Policy Act dates back to 1985²⁸, recently followed by a second one on 20th February 2006, N. 96, which defines the general principles to be applied in holiday farms in Italian Regions which, in turn, would indicate the legal operative terms to be followed²⁹.

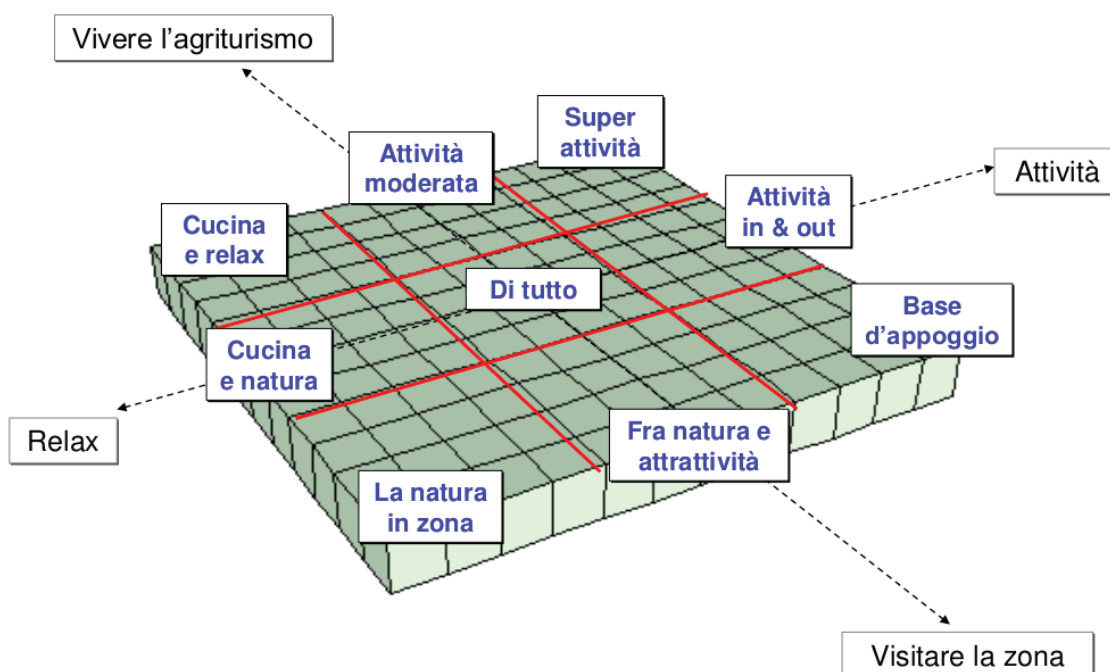


Fig. 10 The farm holiday offer

Living the farm holidays: cuisine and relax; moderate activity; super activity; in & out activities; base; between nature and attractiveness (visit the area); nature nearby; cuisine and nature; everything.

The National Act defines the holiday farm as a *container* in which a visiting guest can find interesting tourist offers: accommodation (in pre-

²⁸ The frame work Act 5th December 1985, N. 730 was issued in order to "support the development and readjustment of the farm land, help the producers stay in rural areas or rather use the rural and construction heritage, promote the preservation and protection of the environment, enhance the typical products, keep traditions and cultural initiatives of the rural world, develop social and youth tourism, help the relationship between city and countryside".

²⁹ As for Emilia Romagna it is RL N. 4 31st March 2009. For all the others see following paragraph with a synthesis of the regional acts in Italy on rural tourism and holiday farm.

existing rural farm buildings no longer in use or in open parking spaces for campers), restaurants (meals and drinks directly prepared on site or nearby), agricultural products on sale, tastings, didactic, social, cultural, sports activities, tours and various amusements managed by farmers on their rural territory. A *multipurpose holiday* during which it is possible to visit new places, enjoy genuine food, live in a relaxing and peaceful atmosphere near places of cultural and artistic importance and landscapes which can be reached easily. Therefore, a holiday farm offers a particular form of rural tourism which stands between a touristic and most of all an agricultural activity (farming, silviculture, breeding).

A farm holiday generates sources of alternative assets for the farmer, contributing to create an integration between agricultural and touristic activities.

Farm holidays can be definitely considered as a touristic activity. Even if they are necessarily associated to and based on a traditional agricultural activity, they intend to preserve "*environmental resources, local customs also aiming at implementing sustainable tourism*". However, farm tourism is not a "self-sufficient" touristic activity as it is in a mutual and complementary relation and depends on a prevailing agricultural activity which must have certain features.

On a holiday farm, the tourist is in search of quiet and contact with nature, the most important aspects of the rural landscape, agriculture and the fruits of the land, peasant traditions, the organization of farming, local food. The relatively low cost is also one of the reasons for this type of choice and so is the warm hospitality.

According to the annual data provided by the National Agritourism Observatory of the Minister for Agricultural and Forestry Policies, this form of tourism is first of all chosen for the food and wine offer and then for its environmental, architectural and historical beauty. All the tourists said they were looking for new experiences, local traditions and territorial identity.

Figures

From the 1980's onwards there has been a steady increase in the offer of farm holidays. It was first concentrated in small farms in hilly and mountain areas. At present it also concerns large farming companies on the plain, thus giving a precious economic contribution to farmers and also preserving the landscape by recovering abandoned rural buildings, consolidating agricultural employment and implementing typical local products. Also the demand for farm holidays has undergone a great change recently: if it first appealed to only a low number of people interested in local traditions and food and wine, it now attracts many people looking for contact with nature, good food, quiet, and reasonably low costs.

In 1985, when the first General Policy Law was promulgated, holiday farms in Italy could count on about 6 thousand companies and could accommodate about 55 thousand people with an economic turnover of over 200 billion lire. Only after a decade they could count on about 8,500 companies and could give accommodation to about 125 thousand people with a turnover of about one thousand billion lire. In 1997 over 2 million people spent the night on a farm holiday and in 2001 the number of farm holiday companies amounted to 10 thousand. The Italian leader regions are Trentino Alto Adige and Tuscany, followed by Veneto. The recent offer expansion has scaled down growth rates and, owing to the economic crisis, the same can be said of the demand (Agriturist 2013).

According to the INEA (report 2013), the farming companies which run farm holidays were over 20,000 in 2011 with a 2.2% increase compared with the preceding year. More than half of them are situated in the hills (51.8%) and one third in the mountains (33.2%), including disadvantaged areas where they contribute to the maintenance and implementation of human settlements and farming activities.

In 2011 there was a significant increase of farm holiday structures in the southern regions of Italy

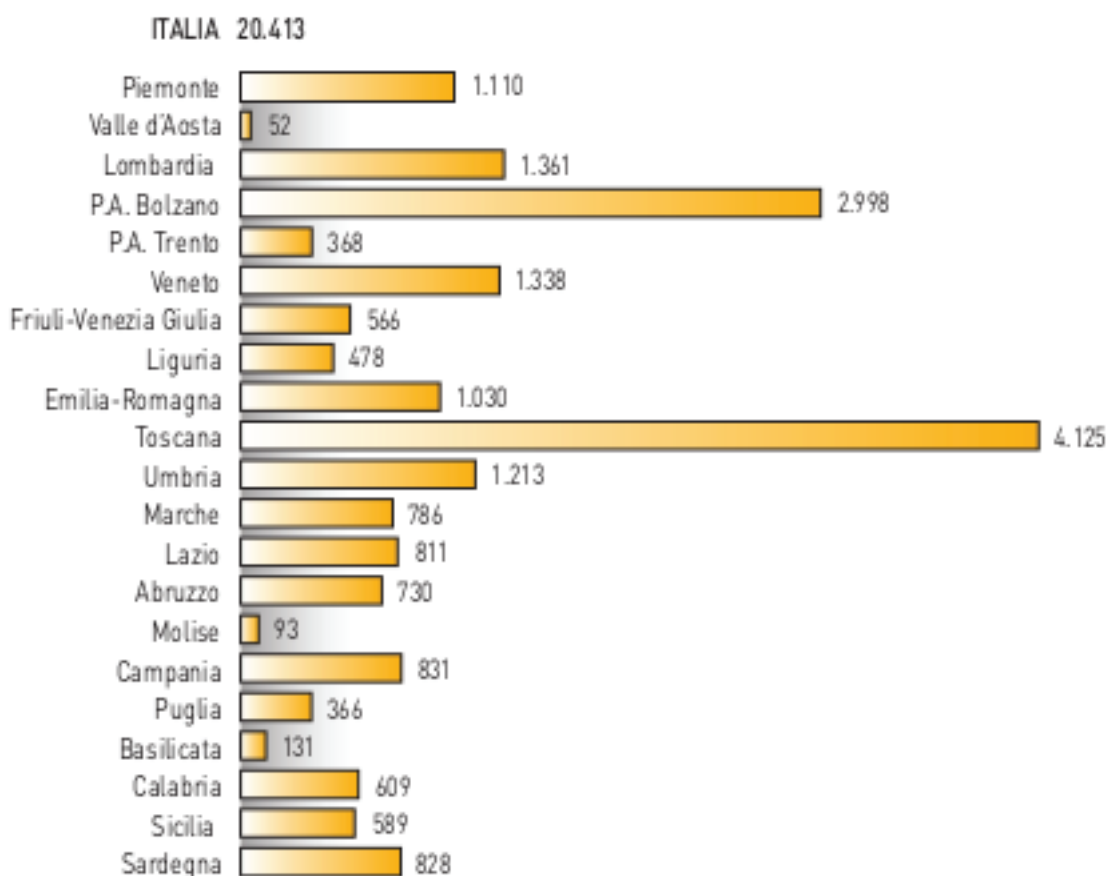
(+3.6%), but a heavy decrease in Basilicata (-42.5%). There was instead an increase in Abruzzo and Piedmont, respectively of 14.8% and 10% compared with 2010.

There is a steady increase of farm holiday companies run by women

(+6.2% against +0.1% of companies run by men) above all in the north (+14.5%). On the whole, one third of holiday farms are run by women.

Companies have continued to offer package holidays integrated with various services, although there has been only a slight average 1% offer increase compared with 2010. Moreover, new forms of entertainment have been introduced, such as for instance the possibility to take part in farming and recreational activities, folk events and cultural debates as well as horse-riding, excursions, trekking, mountain bike, sports and nature watching, an activity which has had a 13.8% increase compared with the preceding year.

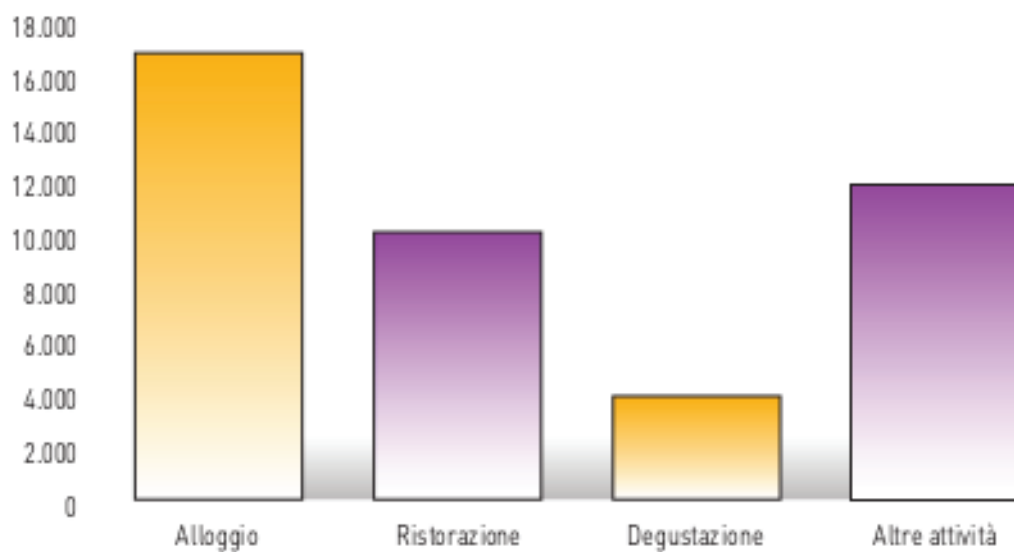
Aziende agrituristiche per regione, 2011



Fonte: ISTAT.

Fig. 11: Region's Farms Holiday

Aziende agrituristiche per tipo di servizio*, 2011



* Un'azienda può essere autorizzata all'esercizio di una o più tipologie di attività.

Fonte: ISTAT.

Fig. 12: Farm Holiday services: accomodation, food, tasting, other...

In 2012, according to Agriturist, the economic turnover in this field, which amounted to 1,168 million Euros, had a 5% decrease compared with the year before and the companies' mean annual turnover dropped to about 54,580 Euros, with a 9% decrease. A 3.4% increase of buildings was counterbalanced by a contraction of arrivals (-4%) and lodgings (-8,1%) and a lower demand of services, with a 20% catering decrease.

However, farm holidays still evidently represent one of the most interesting economic opportunities for farming companies and for this field in general, as these data on the quantitative evolution show. Therefore, it is reasonable to estimate that more and more companies will become involved also because the future of Italian agriculture still seems to be uncertain and holiday farms could represent an integrated source of assets and a means to achieve a new, multi-functional, rewarding outlook for agricultural production.

The laws and rural tourism in Italy.

Synthesis of the regional acts in Italy on rural tourism and holiday farms.

After the Act 991/1952, various direct and indirect legal references concerning rural tourism can be found in laws relating to the implementation of the agricultural field and farm holidays until we find the law by decree dated 18/5/2001 N. 228 : *Orientation and modernization of the rural sector* and Act 20/2/2006 N. 96 *Rules and regulations of farm holidays*.

It is more difficult to elaborate a complete system of legal reference guidelines on a regional level, since rural tourism is a cross-section segment not only of other tourism segments but also of other both social and cultural economic-productive segments.



The Po river

Table 3 Summary of the main regional laws concerning farm holidays and rural tourism:

Region	N. law	Titles and main contents
Abruzzo	31/5/1994 n. 32 24/2/2004 n. 4 18/5/2000 n. 95	New farm holiday laws Modifications and integrations to L.R (Regional Law). n. 32/1994 New laws for the implementation of mountain areas
Basilicata	25/2/2005 n. 17	Farm holidays and rural tourism
Bolzano (prov. autonoma)	10/9/2008 n. 7	Farm holidays rules and regulations
Calabria	19/3/1999 n. 4 30/4/2009 n. 14	Mountain community regulations and provisions in favour of mountain areas New regulations concerning the management of farm holidays and didactic and social activities in farming companies
Campania	4/11/1998 n. 17 6/11/2008 n. 15	Provisions for territory preservation and socio-economic implementation of mountain areas Farm holiday regulations
Emilia Romagna	31/3/2009 n.4	Farm holiday regulations and regulations concerning farming companies' multi-functions
Friuli Venezia Giulia	22/7/1996 n. 25 17/10/2007 n. 25	Farm holiday regulations Modifications and integrations
Lazio	22/6/1999 n. 9 2/11/2006 n. 14	Mountain law Farm holiday and rural tourism regulations
Liguria	21/11/2007 n. 37	Farm holiday, tourism-fishing regulations
Lombardy	8/6/2007 n. 10 5/12/2008 n. 31	Regional farm holiday regulations Regulations concerning agriculture, forests, fishing and rural implementation
Marche	3/4/2002 n.3	Regulations for farm holiday management and rural tourism
Molise	16/6/2001 n. 13	Interventions in favour of farm holidays and implementation of rural areas
Piedmont	1/7/2008 n. 19 23/3/1995 n. 38 9/10/2008 n. 29	Mountain laws Farm holiday regulations Individuation, institution and regulation of rural districts and quality agricultural and food districts
Puglia	22/5/1985 n. 34 22/7/1998 n. 20	Interventions in favour of farm holidays Rural tourism
Sardinia	23/6/1998 n. 18 12/8/1998 n. 27	New regulations for farm holidays management Guesthouse regulations
Sicily	9/6/1994 n. 25	Farm holiday regulations
Trento (Prov. autonoma)	3/11/1998 n.17 l 19/12/2001 n. 19	Interventions for the implementation of mountain areas Farm holidays, wine and food routes regulations
Umbria	14/8/1997 n. 28 12/8/1998 n. 31 11/7/2006 n. 9	Farm holiday management regulations Modifications and integrations Tourism Regional Laws
Valle d'Aosta	27/12/2006 n. 29	New farm holiday regulations
Veneto	4/11/2002 n. 33	Tourism Regional Laws

RURAL TOURISM AS CULTURAL TOURISM

2. RURAL TOURISM AS CULTURAL TOURISM

2.1 WHAT IS CULTURAL TOURISM?

According to the current definition, by cultural tourism we intend that type of tourism which gives particular attention to the cultural aspects of the journey and satisfies the tourist's demand for knowledge, as well as for entertainment and contemplation.

The term culture is associated to a high number of definitions. It refers first of all to the so-called "high culture" concerning artistic expressions such as literature, art, music, sculpture, monuments, cathedrals which were conceived and created as "exemplary artistic works". However, it also includes works conceived as having an essentially functional aim, such as for instance the Roman aqueducts, Naples's underground galleries, the Forums or the great engineering works of the present world, for example the Brooklyn Bridge or the ones by Calatrava or the Navigli in Milan. So, these works - which are the visible expression of the aesthetic taste and the creativity of an epoch - can become great local cultural attractions.

Another meaning of culture refers to its socio-anthropological aspects which, although not univocal, are related to the daily life, the view of life of a society or a community. Therefore, it refers both to the immaterial and symbolic components (values, laws, models of behaviour) and to the material aspects of daily life (customs, traditions, lifestyles) of a population or a social group.

These two meanings of culture are obviously interrelated and the second one is usually the background against which, in the course of various historical periods, the concrete manifestations of the first developed. In other words, "high culture" was and still is the particular expression of the socio-anthropological culture of a community or, more often, of its ruling classes. The high artistic, historical and symbolic culture of a certain area, country or even town, is blended with its daily life dimensions (handicraft,

folklore, culinary heritage and traditions) and this combination is particularly attractive for the tourist.

The Tourist World Organization defines cultural tourism as *the movement of people motivated by cultural aims such as study holidays, participation to live show, festivals, cultural events, visits to archaeological sites, monuments, pilgrimages. Cultural tourism is also about the pleasure of immersing oneself in the local style of life which is an expression of a place's identity*³⁰.

Therefore, it is difficult to give a definition of cultural tourism, since its main feature is not simply the motivation behind the journey, that is, the subjective component of the demand. Its qualifying element also concerns the connotation of the offer, since the relevance of the two above-mentioned main components varies not only according to the landscape and seasons, but also to the implementation strategies adopted by a certain community.

With its huge historical and artistic heritage Italy was until the end of the last century the world's cradle of cultural tourism and represented one of the main traditional tourist destinations, owing to its widespread and fundamental cultural resources. Also today it is one of the most qualified countries for this kind of tourist offer.

In 2011 the amount of money spent by Italian families in the field of "Entertainment and culture" amounted to 7.4% of their total annual expenses, a 2.6% increase compared with 2010 and a 26.3% increase compared with the amount of ten years before (Federculture 2011)³¹. However, Italy spends less than the mean amount of money than other European countries on entertainment and culture. According to Istat, Finland is top of the list of the European countries, while Italy occupies the 21st position out of 27. If we consider Italy as the destination of cultural tourism for foreigners, according to a 2011 survey by ENIT, foreigners show a great interest in the *Italian Style of Life*: the cultural dimension of our country still represents a strong travelling motivation. On the total amount of arrivals, the percentage

30 www.onfit.it; www.unwto.org; www2.unwto.org

31 Federculture. Federation of companies and Institutions for the management of culture, tourism, sport and leisure. It was established in 1997 and represents the most important cultural companies in Italy – some of them are real excellences at European level, too – together with Regions, Provinces, Municipalities and all the public and private subjects involved in the management of services connected to culture, tourism and leisure. www.federculture.it

of culturally motivated tourists was 80% from the USA, Spain and Portugal; 85% from Japan; 52% from Switzerland and France; 60% from Netherlands; 40% from Belgium and Luxemburg; 60% from Scandinavia; 70% from India.

The cultural field still has growing importance for the Italian economy and in 2011 Italy occupied the top position on the Country Brand Index for its cultural appeal (Federculture data). However, according to the eighth edition of the Country Brand Index, in 2013 Italy loses positions and drops to the 15th position (Switzerland is top of the list, followed by Canada and Japan). This is due, according to Future Brand³², to the big Italian economic crisis.



Agricultural landscapes



32 www.futurebrand.com/think/reports-studies/cbi/2012-2/overview/

RURAL TOURISM AS CULTURAL TOURISM

2.2 CULTURAL COMPONENTS IN RURAL TOURISM

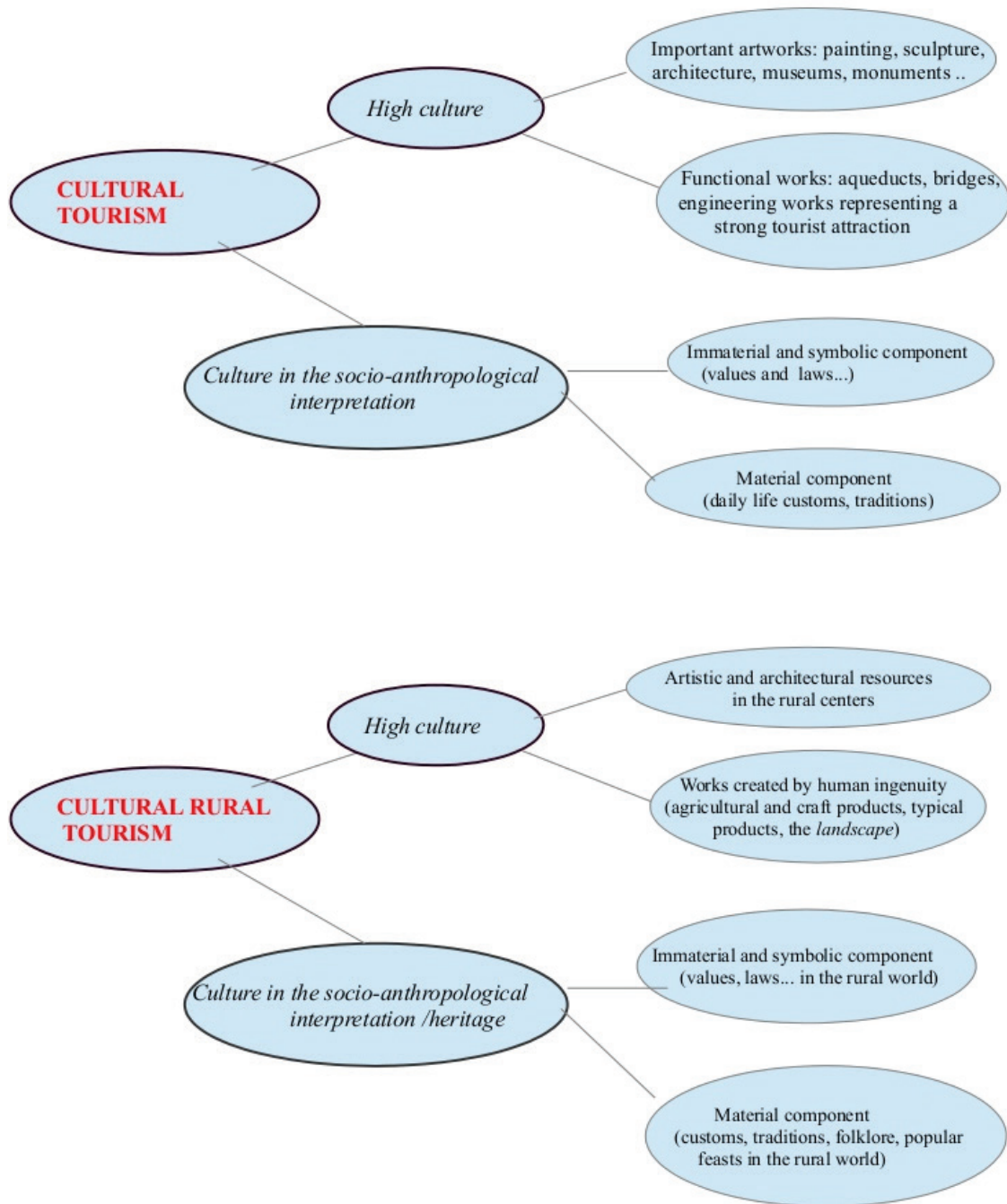
As already mentioned (see *chap. 1.2 Tourism in rural areas*), *rural culture* in all its various forms represents one of the main attractions of the demand of *tourism in rural areas*. The culture of a rural community is the result of a gradual process thanks to which a certain population could build its world in a rural area. It is made up of the traditions and teachings connected to a territory, the environment and life in general which, in the course of time, allowed a certain group of people to define its own world, including its view of life, customs and to leave trace of it.

Therefore, it is possible to define the attraction elements of *cultural tourism in the rural field* in the same way as it is for *cultural tourism*. Also in the rural field we can distinguish a variety of cultural levels. First of all, a high culture represented by the artistic and architectural expressions which can be found in centres scattered in the countryside: the churches, the votive niches, the rural buildings and the important monuments with precious features (composition aspect, decorative elements). It is also represented by the works created by human ingenuity, the manufactured products, agricultural and craft tools, the reclamation works (canals, drains, water lifting plants), the typical products and the landscape. The latter is the most elevated expression of rural culture, the most representative product of ingenuity. The rural landscape is the product of man's intervention on the territory, and the result of the encounter between nature and culture, of man's attempt to dominate nature to his needs.

The other aspect of rural culture, linked to the socio-anthropological interpretation, is an evident reflection of man's outlook, his style of life, the traditions of the countryside which we now consider as rural areas.

As already underlined, also for the rural world - as part of the entire human community - the two components/interpretations of culture are intertwined. The relevance of the three aspects (specific artistic expressions, engineering works and outlook-tradition) varies and usually differs if compared with an urban setting. In the latter there is a prevalence of the first aspect, whereas in the rural world there is greater presence of the second and third component.

Fig. 13 The cultural components of cultural tourism and of rural cultural tourism



2.2.1. From the landscape

The landscape is the most representative product of man's ingenuity presenting itself to us in the dynamic shape of the world and as a spectacle... it is history ...the sum of successive events ... it is alive and speaks to us (Turri E., 2000). It is the great millenary palimpsest on which we can read our history (Argan)³³. It is an immense deposit of labour which nine times out of ten is not the work of nature, but of human hands, it is an artificial homeland (Cattaneo C., 1975, p. XXXVII). It is the shape that man, in the course of his productive agricultural activities, consciously and systematically gives to the natural landscape (Sereni E., 1961). The product of labour mingled with "nature", it is never ending, the result of the interaction between production systems, laws, cultures and cultivations, social conflicts, it is a self creating reality rather than a fact (ibidem). The European Landscape Convention defines it as "a part of the territory, as it is perceived by the population, its features are the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or anthropic factors"³⁴.

The features of a landscape are given by the past, by the distinction man makes between his habitation territories and cultivation land, by the roads, the buildings, by what we call "monuments", by the architectural and topographic traces of the past. The landscape is a complex and sensitive palimpsest of actions, memories and identities. It is a sort of chart of the sense which a community or culture gives to their world - handed down in the visible form of their landscape - and which shows future generations their love and identification with it through the care they give it in the course of centuries. It is what enables us "to feel at home", to have a feeling of belonging to it which does not consist in the fleeting aesthetic joy of the tourist, but in the feeling of being part of the culture and traditions which have pervaded the landscape receiving in exchange opportunities and symbolic wealth (Bonesio L., 2005).

The Italian word for it is *paesaggio*, which etymologically derives from *paese*, *paysage* in French, like *visage*, the visual aspect of a territory, while

33 In the speech attere thirty years ago by Giulio Carlo Argan at the Senate in order to support the passage of the Galasso Act (Act 431/1985)

34 The *European Landscape Convention* is a document adopted by the Committee of Ministers for Culture and the Environment of the Council of Europe on 19th July 2000, officially signed in the Hall of the Five Hundred inside Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, on 20th October 2000. It was signed by the twenty-seven States of the European Community and ratified by ten, among which Italy, in 2006 in Rome.

culture and cultivation have the same etymologic root coming from the Latin *còlere*, to cultivate. *Colère* shows us that the sense of inhabiting a place cannot be distinguished from cultivating, having care. Inhabiting a place means having care of it, giving attention to how we build on it, we cultivate on it and also the way we honour its *genius loci*, its sacredness by recognizing that in every place there is something beyond man and something more than its visible dimensions (Norberg-Schulz C., 1992). The cultural landscape *is therefore to be literally considered as a landscape "cultivated" by man* who has impressed on it the traces of his *culture*. As a consequence, landscapes differ depending on the different natural conditions and the strategies adopted by the community in order to be able to live in it. Landscapes reflect all the geographical and cultural differences, in other words, man's articulated reactions to the environment where he lives.

Italy is a country of many towns and cities, but also of various extraordinary rural landscapes, created by the interaction of nature and agriculture, which present different features according to the agricultural systems adopted. From the beautiful regions where crop-sharing is practised, the Tuscan hills and the Ligurian terrace cultivations where the seed alternation, the geometry of the cultivated fields, the chestnut woods, the olive groves and pastures, the neat rows of trees and low walls, the traditional way of planting trees, contour ploughing and terraced cultivations all confer to the landscapes peculiarly integrating shapes and colours and give evidence of that deep relation between man and nature. Villages, rural houses, large multi-family courtyards, large landed farms, orderly Po valley structures of the Roman centuriation, walled centres in the central Apennines, towns founded along the main territorial roadways isolated in the Sicilian landowner estates..., the list of the Italian agricultural landscapes is very long, it is an immense heritage which includes all historical and pre-historical periods belonging to the rural community. Beyond the methods adopted for a synthetic interpretation of our rural landscape (landscape uniformity, landscape systems, landscape contexts etc.) and beyond the taxonomy adopted to define its features (geographic, geomorphologic, etc.), Italy has a wide heritage variety which we call by the names of the places and cultivations: the landscape of the Crete Senesi (Siena), the

landscape of fodder cultivations, the landscape of citrus orchards, the olive tree landscape ... which form a guideline of the relations between man and his reference landscape. «*Our beautiful country was created by our farmers and it can boast not only of its villages, country homes, gardens and large country residences, but also of its large green spaces and accurately cultivated fields on hills or on plains. This is due to farmers' ingenuity and their ability to create a relation also with the most hostile natural environments [...]. The extraordinary abundance of so many offers [...] which already in the past roused the surprised admiration of agronomists and travellers, represents today a unique experimentation laboratory of enhancement processes and of integrated and sustainable development of the territory*» (Grillotti Di Giacomo M.G., 2007, pp. 47-80).

It is in these terms that the landscape represents the identity of the territory and of society, even before being one of the main aspects of the rural tourist offer. However, it cannot be denied that the creation of the rural landscape, which is linked to the cultivation structure and territorial implementation choices, has a great tourist importance for the definition of quality landscapes from the point of view of the environment, architecture and scenery.

Agriculture finds that tourism can represent an opportunity to diversify its production and to propose itself in terms of a tourist and recreational offer. Tourism finds that agriculture has new resources and can represent a new consumption model based on the beauty of its product. From the strictly agricultural resources connected to the processing of typical products to the more symbolical ones such as the rural landscape intended as a place to be enjoyed both from the physical and cultural points of view, «*agriculture and the countryside can become mental places, ideal and idealized representations*» (Belletti & Berti 2011, p. 29). The landscape is a tourist resource.

As a consequence, the issue of the integration between agriculture and landscape is strategic for the implementation of the product-landscape relation because their quality is directly interrelated. The recommendations of the *Landscape Commission* - appointed by the Ministry of Agricultural Food and Forest policies and part of the Rural Implementation Plan³⁵ - go

³⁵ It is the instrument through which the Government organizes the funds given by the PAC for the period 2007-2013 with a regional distribution by means of the related Plans for Rural Development.

in this direction, as it wishes to implement more intense relations between landscape, goods and services with measures aiming at promoting the preservation of landscape resources and therefore the quality of the products. The landscape represents the added value of agricultural products, as it keeps *typical products and its typical reference landscape in a strict relation*. (Agnoletti M. (Ed)., 2006, pp. 139-142). Typical products and landscape products can become inseparable aspects which, besides increasing the competitiveness of the agricultural and food field, enhance the visibility of the local context and its implementation possibilities. The commercial-advertisement attraction of landscape towards typical products is, after all, a consolidated marketing means which underlines the importance of the role of the symbolic asset intended as all the symbols produced by a local society which, through them, can influence the action of other subjects (Belletti & Berti, 2011).



Wheat field

2.2.2. ... to the products

Therefore, it is evident the link between typical products, landscape and tourism; it is the expression of the endogenous development of the territory, which ideally evokes the image of a “*network connecting the various forces of the territory and producing structural coherence between a variety of symbolic and material elements whose overall organization is determined by collective action*” (Belletti & Berti, 2011, p. 48).

So, on the one hand the typical product represents an identity factor, since it characterises and differentiates the territory where it is made. On the other, the belonging to a specific territory gives the product its typicality. This reference to the material and immaterial elements, such as quality, handicraft, the climatic characteristics of the production places, the cultivation techniques, the bond with local tradition and culture, all make the product unique and immediately recognisable by the consumer-user. Territory and typical production fuse into a unique touristic, and one is essential to the other.

The typical local product is par excellence the general and multifaceted result of history. In time, the values and ways of being of a community or part of it have been generated and consolidated. As a consequence, the communities have kept and developed their specific productive activity.

The local setting gives fundamental inputs to the production system (work and its competences, the specific production culture, attention and helpfulness on part of society and the institutions) which show their essential role both because they are coherent with the specific features of that production and because they can consolidate and perpetuate its values and operative modalities.

As for the system of the local typical product, the production follows a circular system, since it is clear that there is a network interconnecting the mere economic and technical aspects with the cultural and institutional ones. All of them are strongly involved and immersed in the *specific atmosphere* of the typical product, which determines the conditions and prerequisites for the realization of the production and its maintenance. The characteristics of the context culture of the typical product can be found not only in the direct productive activity, but also in a wider context which

generally goes beyond the productive moment. This confirms the social sharing of specific values on part of the local society (festivals and local celebrations where the local typical product and its related productive process are the basis of the communicative uniting and ritual role).

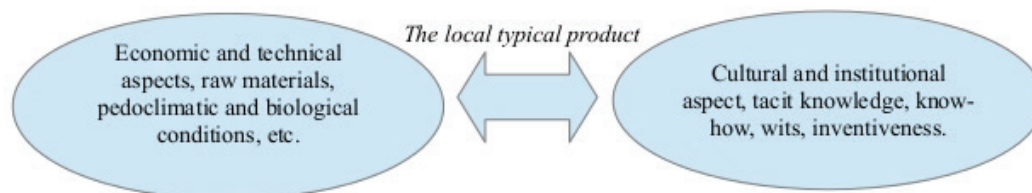


Fig. 14 Interconnected factors in the production of the local typical product

In the production system, particularly as far as the local typical product is concerned, competences are higher conditions, since they refer to a system of specific sedimented knowledge and relations, recognised by the forces of the territory where the product is created. The combination of the cognitive elements, shared by local producers thanks to the contextual culture sedimented in time, allows the control of local resources and of the specific processes – unrepeatable elsewhere – in order to obtain the original product.

The distinctive competence, the wit and abilities of the man-producer, the context, make the qualifying part of the productive culture which finds its concrete expression in the local typical product. These competences are not transferable, they are historically localised, clearly different from the standard ones. In the typical production system the producers' competences are interconnected thanks to the sharing of the processes and the product historically localised: this is why the competences (the operators' knowledge and skills) are distinctive. Knowledge is then contextual, since it is connected to the specific aspects of the localised economic process and to its related environment (often unique in case of typical productions). Moreover, this knowledge is basically tacit and not labelled, it is closely connected to abilities and know-how. It is generated in cultural sharing and it is mainly spread directly.

As we have widely shown, since *the uniqueness of the local typical product* is the result of a productive technique which is closely connected to abilities and know-how, to the accumulation of cultural knowledge, to man's wit, to the particular nature of the raw material, to pedoclimatic and biological conditions, etc. and their related combinations, the challenge now goes from the products to the perceptions they stimulate, to the empathy between consumer and tourist object (place, product, people, history, traditions, lifestyle), to the ability in involving and moving the travellers as new and modern consumers who – pushed by emotive factors - are looking for pleasant and involving purchase and consumption experiences which make them the protagonists of the two actions: choice and consumption.

At that point the value perceived by the consumer does not only depend on the quality of the product but on the type and intensity of the ties it can develop. The ties and social relations are more important than the purchased goods. So, consumption turns from being an economic action into being a social action, and the product bought by the consumer is a social product.

Experiencing something is not the same as merely buying something: experience is deeply linked to what happens to one's identity while we make a purchase, while we consume and tell the others about our purchase. When we live a strong emotional experience, we are so involved that we keep *loyal to the product*, we communicate it to friends and relatives, we want to own it once again and we go back: the experience was so intense that *it changed the buyer's soul*. Therefore, the holidays are not just a pause (to forget), but a piece of one's life which is saved: the people have physically and concretely immersed themselves into the experience and now it is part of life itself³⁶.

The strong identity of a typical product with its specific territory, its pedoclimatic and more generally environmental characteristics, its settling and

36 This is basically the concept expressed by Pine J. II and. Gilmore J.H. (1999) in "*The Experience Economy. Beyond services*", where they face the issue of possible consumption models in advanced societies and the related strategic challenges that companies have to face in order to satisfy the new needs of the clients and in order to succeed despite the changes of the market. On the basis of their observation of American society and starting from the implicit hypothesis by which the demand is continuously looking for new objects and forms of consumption, new emotions and sensations and new consumption needs, the two scholars develop their thesis according to which the time for services has finished and will be replaced by *experience economy*.

– more widely - socio-cultural history can thus draw a potential model of integrated and shared tourist offer based on the territorial surplus value of the enhancement of the relation product-landscape. This relation can reproduce a millenary heritage in terms of identity, saving it from homologation and making it free to be interdependent with the global economic system.

2.2.3. ... to the heritage

From the Latin root *hereditare*, from which the words *heir* and *to heir* derive, too, the word *heritage* is commonly used in Middle English starting from the XVI century to indicate a bequeathed property (aristocratic title, property name, male power, family traditions). Yet, those who inherit it “re-interpret” it, that is, they contextualise that heritage in their present time. Hence, the symbolic, emotional and also imaginary meaning of the term heritage. Therefore, heritage is a mark, an identity mark, the material and immaterial presence of links with a recognised past represented by a group as one's origin, as homeland.

Since an imaginary and interpretative dimension always goes together with the rereading of the past or of one's origins, we must remember that the heritage also includes the mythopoeic and narrative quality where identity and identifications – even if accompanied by material evidence (recognisable objects) – belong to the ‘emotional’ dimension deriving from handed down stories, legends and the epic, the pathos, personal and collective memories.

All the attractiveness of the heritage goes around this polarization (history/imagination, real/invented, truth/fiction, objective/emotive), thus rewarding each of us by discovering ‘belongings’, by recognising ourselves in places and objects, in something that talks about us and includes us (even if not directly).

Involvement is the fundamental element of heritage.

The UNESCO World Heritage List considers cultural heritage what contains all the signs which document the activities and achievements of human action in time, the product and evidence of different traditions, feelings and spiritual trends from the past. So, it is a fundamental element for the personality of a population and the UNESCO recognises it as a relevant concept in the interpretation of the current society and its evolution, “a product of history”, “an asset”. Cultural heritage is the dynamic aspect of the identity and evolution of a territory, representing its distinctive features according to the population.

The UNESCO World Heritage List also includes the historical rural landscape, indicated as belonging to the category of cultural landscape,

since it represents the result of the combined effects of man's and nature's work, as defined in article 1 of the Convention, concerning the category "continuing landscapes" (Fowler P.J., 2003).

It is a vital landscape with an active role in society, associated to traditional lifestyles. Even if it continuously evolves, it keeps relevant evidence of its historical evolution. This vision is suitable for the historical evolution of the Italian rural landscape, which includes the historical forms of Italian agriculture seen as a product of man's work, that form which man, during and in order to deal with his agricultural productive activities, impresses on the natural landscape (Sereni E., 1961).

Cultural tourism is an immersion in natural history, in the human heritage, in the arts, in philosophy and in the institutions of a place. It means involving and stimulating through new experiences, looking for a closer contact with nature or for a way to feel part of the history of a place. Hence, it belongs to the Heritage.

If *heritage tourism* is the tourist's awareness about the value of a place, thanks to which he/she can recognise, live and preserve it in its significant historical, social and demographical features, *heritage rural tourism* stimulates the tourist to look for diversity, to come in contact with genuine rural culture, the landscape, genuine products, in order to reveal their tacit knowledge, craft knowledge, manual skills, the performance of daily activities, to live a unique experience of familiarity and interchange with local people.

Therefore, heritage rural tourism is the constituent part, the excellence of territorial tourist product. The concept of destination matches the one of tourist product, and the tourist product matches the *destination*. A mix of forces, resources and services which, in different ways and intensity, contribute to the determination of tourists' expectations and perceptions.

2.3 THE "CULTURAL" TOURIST IN THE RURAL WORLD

2.3.1 From contemplation to experiential participation to creativity

Basically, the tourist can approach the culture of a territory in three ways:

1. *Occasional*, if culture is used to complete his/her holiday; 2. *Motivated*, if the rural culture is considered the main motivation for the journey; 3. *Deep and personal*, if the tourist is aware and informed, if he/she knows what to see, where to go and considers the journey as an event which can leave a mark in his/her soul, if he/she aims at involving the others – family and friends – in his/her experience.

Pine II and Gilmore (Pine II B. J., Gilmore J. H., 1999) have schematized the process of involvement of a client/guest by using the two main dimensions of experience, in the model of experience scopes.

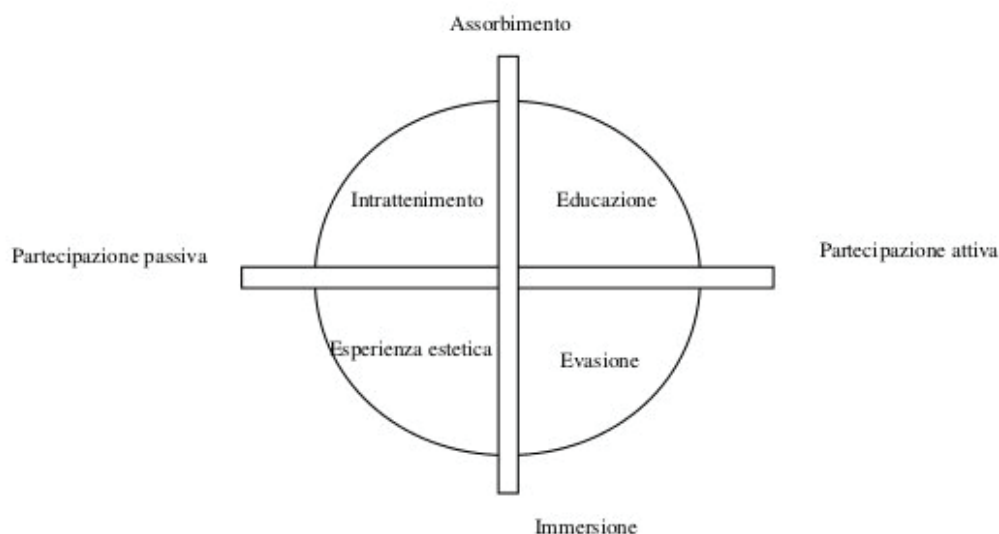


Fig. 15 The scopes of tourist experience. Source: Pine II – Gilmore, 2000, p.35

Absorption/Immersion

Passive participation/Active participation

Entertainment/Education/Escape/Aesthetic experience

The first dimension is that of the guests' participation, represented as a continuum on the x-axis between the two ends: passive or contemplative participation, when the clients do not act or have influence on anything, they are mere spectators; active or experiential participation, learning by doing, where the clients act in person on the performance or event which produces the experience.

The second dimension is that of environmental involvement, which ties

the clients to the event or performance, represented by the y-axis which connects the two ends: absorption, that is, experience carried out through active participation (experience “enters” the person through the mind) and immersion, when the person *enters* the experience by physically or virtually taking part in it, thus making the experience *creative*.

The unification of these dimensions defines the four scopes of an experience, showing the general level of the tourist's involvement: from entertainment or contemplation, to education or learning, to experimentation (aesthetic experience according to Pine II and Gilmore), to creation (escape according to Pine II and Gilmore).

These scopes can also be applied in a rural context and can be mixed in different proportion according to the kind of experience and guest involved. This helps the creation of unique, personal, exceptional events.

The final degree of involvement on part of the client/guest/tourist/traveller depends both on the experience user and on the place where it is carried out, as well as on the people involved.

The scope of entertainment or contemplation occurs when the people passively absorb the experiences through their senses. They are spectators and the rural environment is just the background. There is intellectual participation to activities and the main action is to observe. It is generally the most developed scope.

The scope of education/learning occurs when the guest absorbs the events which happen in front of him/her. Unlike entertainment, this step implies at least his/her aware participation, that is, his/her mind is actively committed and involved: learning is the main action.

The scope of experience/experiential scope/participation scope (aesthetic experience according to Pine II and Gilmore) occurs when an individual is immersed into an event or rural environment without having influence on it, without modifying it (changes can only occur at personal level). This is the scope of experience. A typical experience of rural tourism is that of climbing on the edge of a breathtaking ravine, visiting rural complexes and their active cattlesheds and stables. The experience thus generated in the individual is real.

The *creative* scope (escape according to Pine II and Gilmore) occurs when the *rural creative* experience implies a deep immersion and

Fig. 16 The scopes of tourist experience according to Pine II and Gilmore
 Learn (education); Entertain (entertainment); Try (escape); Be there (aesthetic experience)
 The tourist's participation

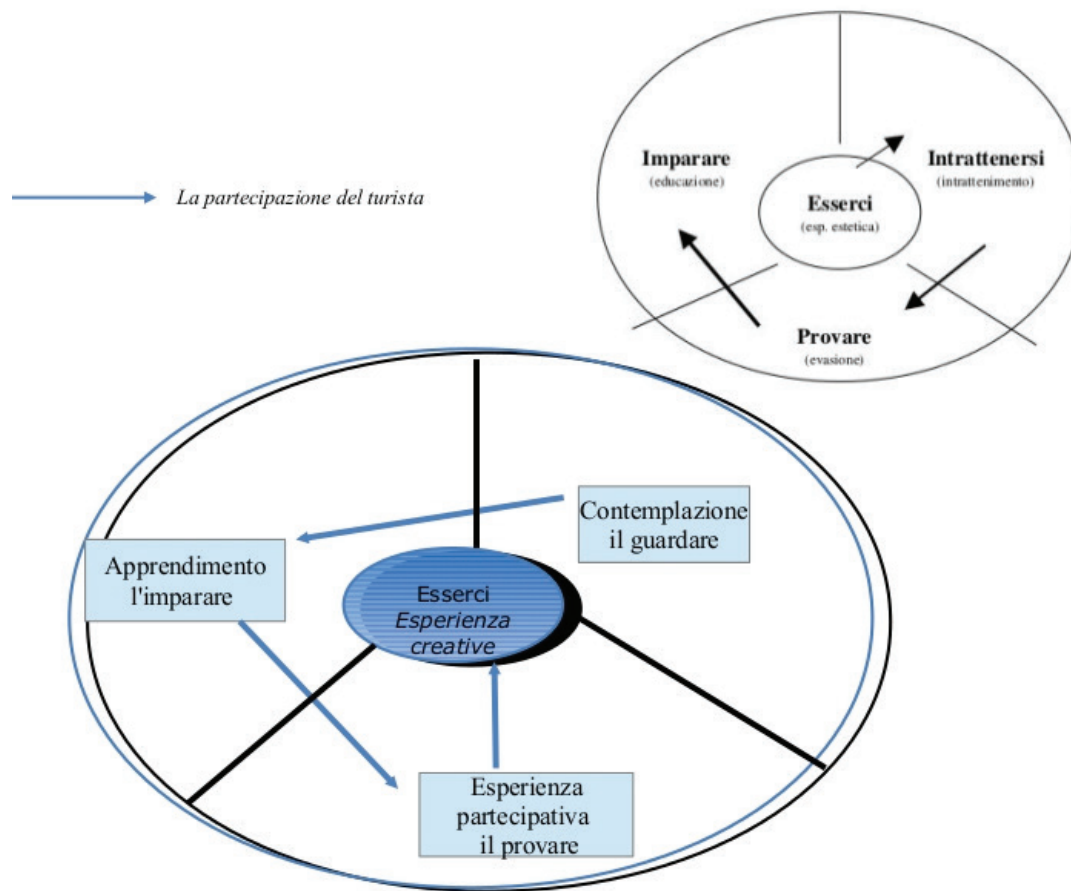


Fig. 17 The scopes of tourist experience: author's elaboration
 Contemplation (watching); Learning (learn); Participative experience (trying); Being there (creative experience)

Trying underlines the need of an individual to experiment a specific situation out of playful or intellectual curiosity. Learning implies the repetitiveness of the action and one's effort in the learning process. Being there means controlling the subject/situation and mastering it in order to be able to modify it.

Since the tourist product always shows different levels of participation and involvement according to the guest, exceptionality, uniqueness and the creative dimension are its highest expression.

Whatever modality the tourist rural experience has, both if the tourist just stops at the participation scope, and if he/she goes on to the creative

expression of being there, he/she will always have to deal with the experiential dimension in order to acquire indelible impressions. Impressions are the experience's "take away", what one can carry away.

The journey has always been linked to the concept of experience: by travelling, man challenges himself and the world [Ferrarotti F. (1999); Forlani F. (2001); Forlani F. (2005); Forliano V. (2013); Pollarini, A. (2001 chap. I, p.5)]³⁷. The Indo-European root of the term experience is *per, that is, "try", "risk". *Per also has several meanings connected to movement, in particular to the concept of crossing. Experience can be decomposed into the concept of "coming from and going through", in a real or metaphorical route. The word Peregrinus in late Latin means "foreigner", "he who passes through" and the journey is for him a metaphorical route leading to an inner change linked to his identity and to the development of a new conscience. Perhaps what has changed in the modern world is only the scope in which this experience is seen as a pleasant activity, yet always an experience.

When the tourist experience, in particular if it occurs in a rural area, also involves direct participation - doing something in a situation - which goes beyond participation, it becomes *creative* and links the tourist (guest) to the territory and the actors who operate there.

37 At linguistic level, experience and difficulty can be connected. Franco Ferrarotti underlines the link between the term *journey* and *toil*. "Toil" and "troubled" recall the vulgar Latin *tripaliare*, torturing by means of a tripalium, hence trip, or journey. Yet, trippen also means, like the middle Dutch trappen, "to stumble", "to slip", "to miss a step". Moreover, the word journey recalls the late Latin *viaticum*, which gives the idea of difficulty since it indicates the "means" to organise for a difficult journey full of negative surprises. It is not by chance that in the language of liturgy the *viaticum* is the means which, like the Last Rites, accompanies the believers to their final journey (Ferrarotti F., 1999, pp. 30-31).

RURAL TOURISM AS CULTURAL TOURISM

2.4 TERRITORY, MOVING FORCES, STRATEGIES FOR CULTURAL RURAL TOURISM

2.4.1. *The community and the institutions*

The creation of a plan for tourism development in a rural area implies its sharing on part of the community, which must be directly involved in it under many aspects, from material resources to the financial, intellectual, operative ones. This plan should be carried out not only in order to favour tourism development - which is one of the means to use - but also to support the utopia of building communities, places and systems of life where the residents and the people "live well" and, consequently, also tourists "must" go there, since it is the only place where they can find something unique, "genuine", inimitable. A place everybody has to visit in order to live exciting dreams and involving experiences.

As far as this scope is concerned, Italy can boast an impressive potential.

When rural tourism "offers" territories/places/landscape in all their complexity and uniqueness, organised by "products" made of *motivating raw material* (cultural, environmental and demo-ethno-anthropological heritage) and characterised by proper organization which enhances their sustainable use, then this is *cultural rural tourism* based on a product which is totally different from that of any other traditional economic-productive or tourism sector.

The "construction" of this offer implies the direct involvement not only of the tourist operators, but of all the subjects which use and live on the territory. That is, the residents, the stakeholders who help building this system of life and help in the management of all its material and immaterial aspects.

Companies and institutions, the public and private sphere, must come together in the most appropriate forms in order to combine economic entrepreneurship, quality and territorial promotion through an enduring union in which history and the deep traditions of a region represent the power of innovation and development. The aim is to build an integrated and coordinated system of enterprises through sharing common qualitative rules and regulations, thus developing a territorial joint action in order to enhance and promote the tourist, agricultural and food, food and wine, landscape offer which is typical of a certain territory.

Therefore, it is necessary to think about the way the territory and tourism should be governed, about the forms to favour and about the segments of facilities to promote in order to enhance tourism built for people, avoiding the irreversible consumption of resources and favouring the contact with the environment and local life.

This view needs coordinated policies of knowledge, protection and enhancement of the heritage, so as to avoid enhancement without protection or protection without knowledge. This implies a total reassessment and reorganisation of the tourist offer, considering first of all the change of the demand in terms of experience and responsibility. This change can give value and attractiveness to all those areas – regions or local territories – which have been unjustly marginalised by the development of mass tourism, by the process of industrialization and by excessive specialization in the tourist sector.

Thus, two essential elements must be taken into consideration both at methodological level and at purpose level: the physical aspect of the territory and the social aspect of participation. In order for tourist development to be really anchored to the territory and not to dissipate local resources, the decisions on the use of the heritage and on the organizational strategies of the sector must be taken as a result of democratic models of choice for the interest of that specific community. As it is well-known, real sustainable development must take into consideration the transmission of the resources to the future generations, considering properly the three fundamental components of sustainability: the economic, the ecologic and the social one. Moreover, sustainable development can only be carried out on condition that it exists in harmony with the local cultural and territorial heritage, in order to favour its vitality and growth. It must also revalue the local aspects, changing the studies and policies from the simplified global model to the complex local model. Controlling this complexity is fundamental, but first of all it is necessary to understand it, explain and root it, thus fuelling the identity process and avoiding a static and immovable vision of identity.

It is necessary to dilate time and reconsider the territory and the landscape in a local perspective which does not mean local interests and separateness, but a global and integrating vision, aiming at the

development of a sort of democratic *grand tour* – not made for the courts and capital cities anymore – along the many places Italy can boast. A grand tour not due to its length, but because it is widespread and within everybody's reach. The tourist sector, in particular the *policy makers* of tourism, must contribute to the construction of a coherent strategy, aiming at the enhancement of the endogenous potential of a specific territory within the scope of a non-dissipative use of local resources, among which the landscape, environment and culture stand out. Agriculture, environment and tourism are not antithetical. They are *citizens' heritage*, fundamental components for the future of the rural world in Italy.



Hay's bales

2.4.2. Local development, policies, governance

The development of rural tourism is a fundamental part of local rural development and, as a consequence, of its overall strategy. In these areas competitiveness combines with territoriality and strategies are based on the territorial resources, that is, on the existing "territorial asset" and of the one that can be built. It is said that a territory is competitive *«if it can face the competitors on the market guaranteeing at the same time environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability based on network organization and on forms of inter-territorial articulation»* (Leader European Observatory, 1999, p.1).

Combined with the other activities, tourism can contribute to the vitality of these territories by acting on several fronts:

1. *Creation of new work opportunities*, especially considering that it is mainly oriented towards the tertiary service. Thus, it favours high-intensity work, both traditional and oriented to new skills.
2. *Differentiation of the effects on the local economy* thanks to the participation of several sectors – from agriculture to commerce to crafts, etc. – and not only those connected to facilities.
3. *Income integration* for companies/families who have the opportunity to improve the level of their earning – even if most of it comes from other sources - for the benefit of their stay in the area.
4. *Improvement of the economic and cultural standard of living* both due to higher production of wealth at local level and for the benefits of the exchange/contact with tourists in the area.
5. *Preservation of the local natural and cultural heritage* thanks to the active permanence in the area, both in terms of environmental management and of cultural vitality of the local community.

Like and even more than in the other sectors, the strategy for tourist development starts from the supply of local resources and from their role in the evolutionary plan of that territory.

Despite the notable potential of tourism in rural areas, such opportunities are not fully exploited. Actually, there is a substantial lack in the offer of rural tourist products able to combine relax and culture, knowledge and

sports, recreational activities and socialization, etc., through structured offer channels.

In most cases the very owners of facilities wait for the clients relying on the promotion and incoming policies of public institutions and the like. This situation is certainly connected to the many entrepreneurial and managerial limits of the rural social-economic fabric. Yet, the distributive segment of the tourist system has some responsibilities, too. Despite the difficulties and the little interest of the big operators in attracting the clients who avoid places characterised by high presence of tourists and who want full contact with the territory, so far it has not been possible to offer proper and efficient entrepreneurial formulas suitable for such specific offer. At the same time, it is necessary to organise the chain, which must be as short as possible and, above all, it must keep in the same place the majority, if not all, the value added generated by the whole tourist activity developed by the territory.

It is totally evident that the development of tourism in rural areas, considered as a contribution to the vitality and general sustainability of such areas, must be faced using the methodological and operative instruments of local development on one hand, and through business development on the other. Intra-business and inter-business organizational and managerial instruments, as well as targeted marketing policies, must be used as fundamental methods and means to plan and develop the tourist activity, which has entrepreneurial characteristics and requires a coherent approach in order to be successful. Moreover, the target clients of *rural community based tourism* offer are not easy to satisfy, since they have different and often complex styles and expectations. In order to achieve such results, a clear definition of a wide-ranging strategy and the adoption of a managerial structure are essential.

A recent study written by Ruth McAreavey and John McDonagh (2011) examined the role of sustainable rural tourism in the rural development in Europe, and analysed some of the challenges to overcome in order to achieve a really integrated approach to rural development.

Tourism can give great benefits at economic level in terms of employment, thus of wealth. However, these interests are often in contrast with the ones

of those who are involved in environmental protection. Yet, according to the study, it is possible to find a balance where economic sustainability through rural tourism can become a pillar of environmental preservation.

The current approach to rural development which can be found in many areas of the world, including Europe, is that of promoting the integration of different rural dimensions, among which food production, the maintenance of rural landscape and the protection of biodiversity, thus providing employment and economic development in a sustainable way.

This study has identified four main challenges which must be faced in order to allow rural tourism to contribute to the success of sustainable rural development:

1. The national legislation should be able to favour initiatives of sustainable rural differentiation, such as the development of recreational and cultural activities, before these plans are promoted.
2. The groups of local action and of the partnerships should have real power, including financial control. These groups should not only legitimate the decisions of the central governance.
3. The different moving forces have their preferences for rural development, and they are willing to promote their interests above the interests of the other parties involved, thus creating a potential conflict. An approach based on adaptive management can help the different group to collaborate in the first phases of the decision-making process about the development plans. The adaptive approach recognises the needs of the different parties involved, it is flexible, it learns from previous problems and allows the choice of different political options.
4. The recent initiatives to widen tourism in rural areas have been focusing on economic growth rather than on the potential environmental impact. The new strategies will have to consider all the challenges of the rural communities in a holistic way.

The role of the Institutions at various levels is quite evident, as is the role of local communities. This requires proper governance configurations.

The territorial governance can be defined as the coordination of actions and interventions on part of different public and private organization able

to mobilize resources and forces in order to achieve the development goals. This allows to highlight the importance of *coherence* between the act of identifying the aims of local development and the *capabilities* of local forces, in order to avoid frustration which is generally the consequence of wrong goal-definitions as well as of the overestimation of planning and operative abilities of the local system.

This recalls the importance of defining the aims of local development which must be connected to relevant problems, but which must also be dealt with at local level. This does not mean that the local forces must be self-sufficient, but rather that they must be supported by the superordinate governance levels in a constant interactive process. The technical and financial support of the superordinate governance levels is at least fundamental for a simple consideration on the functions and professionalism at the different levels of the civil service.

Such approach points out the importance of both the *assumption of responsibility* on part of the local forces and of the suitable professional competences to use (hence, the relevance of culture and of the professionalism of rural development, which of course are not innate but which must be built). In order to guarantee the effectiveness of the interventions of rural development, including tourism development, it is necessary to organize a territorial integrated planning. The rural development policies and strategies must be specifically arranged, considering the characteristics of the local economic structure as well as of the existing "*specific resources*".

The experience developed in the management of the Leader Programmes is particularly enlightening on this point. It is a way not only to develop the organizational abilities of the local forces and to help the progressive introduction of territorial integrated development in rural – and often poor – areas. There is also a process of institutional learning which leads to the introduction of specific intermediary institutions such as the GAL.

The coordination within the governance levels represents a crucial aspect for the success of local development. All the governance levels (from the European one to the local one) have competences and are interested in local development. Yet, it is often possible to see conflicts,

misunderstandings, jealousy between the various bureaucratic bodies, as well as control “mania” from above. This condition dries up both the enthusiasm of local forces and planning capacity.



Vineyard

PART TWO

TYPES AND PROJECTS OF RURAL CULTURAL TOURISM

3. THEMATIC TOURING

3.1 SPECIFIC FEATURES

3.1.1 *Origin and nature*

Rural tourism is one of the most popular touristic/recreational activities. Even though it does not properly belong to the category of tourism, since overnight stay is not involved, it has an important role in the economy of rural areas both from the point of view of the demand – as a precursor and incentive of tourism – and that of the offer. Therefore, it can be considered an important resource for local development.

In Italy it dates back to the end of the XIX century with the first excursion associations, among which the workers' alpine society in Lecco and the Gamba Bona in Milan. What we know as excursionism today developed as a mass phenomenon at the end of the '70s, as a consequence of the growing interest in extra-European trekking, environmental issues and the search for new ways of spending one's free time.

Today, millions of people – families, single individuals or groups of friends – love walking or cycling along paths with the use of maps and guides to orient themselves along duly signalled itineraries, thus fully contributing to sustainable rural development.

A standard feature of rural tourism is the motivation connected to nature, the search for a pure and intact environment, landscape contemplation. People can enter and enjoy a soft relationship with nature, there is no presence of wilderness, no love for risk but rather a search for physical and mental wellness.

Discovery is one of the fundamental aspects of tourism: the discovery of a region or a part of it, local lifestyles, the natural, cultural, historical heritage, etc. Every element can be part of a discovery as long as it is close to nature and it is "genuine". Another common aspect shared by the majority of tourists is curiosity: they certainly share true cultural motivation,

even if it is not their priority.

Not only are tourists on an excursion facilitated by signalled itineraries, they can also better enjoy the region they are visiting, with its landscape and identity, being informed of the most suitable itineraries, services and hospitality. All these elements give added value to tourists' sojourn before, during and after their stay.

The terms "rural touring" automatically recall the term "itinerary" which, in turn, relies on infrastructures which have been designed and prepared for that purpose. For this reason an itinerary is a product requiring organization and maintenance in the scope of an aware strategy which involves both public and private subjects in the area, according to their different roles.



Snow in the plaine

3.1.2 Methods and aims of realization

There are several types of circuits, whose length may vary from one to more days, characterised by ring routes which lead tourists back to the starting point or point-to-point itineraries. Since it is a tourist activity, tourists can find on their route both basic services such as lodging, refreshments and transport, and the possibility to be accompanied by a guide. Besides, marked signs accompany rural tourists along their walks almost systematically. These signs are now more and more integrated with other means of information such as topographic guides, Web-pages, audio-guides, CD-ROMs, USB pen drives.

The main ingredient remains the territory and its strength lies in the quality and diversity of the landscape, the variety of its natural heritage, the power of local traditions, the presence of important historical or cultural heritage, a respected and protected environment. However, another relevant element is the *loisir* – that is, the leisure that more and more people can enjoy and dedicate to their spare time for their education, health or mere pleasure.

The offer of a product such as an excursion itinerary is the result of an association between public and private. This is why it is fundamental to build a strong partnership from the very beginning of the project, in order to clearly define the strategy to be adopted as well as the action plan. All institutional parties, tourist facilities and service companies must be involved, not to mention the skills of the local inhabitants, which are pivotal.

Rural tourism has various goals: introducing the territory, contributing to its development, promoting a form of tourism which respects the environment, giving traditional tourism new energy or consolidating it by contributing to its diversification. Moreover, it should bring changes in traditional economic activities such as the ones linked to agriculture, help safeguard the local heritage respecting its culture, habits, traditions, natural goods and traditional economic activities.

Rural tourism can lead us to the discovery (or rediscovery) – village by village, site by site – of a whole territory, to help us interpret the signs of nature and the evidence of man's age-long presence with a new awareness.

In time, rural tourism has turned from a mere recreational activity to a real tourist matter and it is today fully part of a strategy of sustainable development. Thus, it can be considered as a real resource for local development.

3.2 CASE STUDY

*Going along the Reclaimed Landscape. A naturalistic, cultural, social itinerary for aware tourism*³⁸

3.2.1 Context

The territory of the Land Reclamation Consortium of Central Emilia³⁹ includes a wide area composed of different environmental, socio-economical and architectural fields. From the plain of the Po river to the Emilian Apennine, the territory of the Consortium, with a surface of 312,734 hectares, includes more than one region and extends in the provinces of Reggio Emilia, Modena, Parma, Massa Carrara and Mantua. The “ordinary and necessary” normality of the flat landscape in the plain of the Po river has unique features in Italy, yet it is less recognisable than other more famous landscapes in our country. Thus, the daily work carried out by the Consortium is really necessary for territory preservation and for its use in agriculture or other purposes. The network of canals shapes the territory, defines its borders, identifies the crops and built-up areas, witnesses the history of the area, which used to be marshy before reclamation and is now one of the most productive areas in our Country. The minor construction jobs operating in this wide territory (sewers and draining pumps, irrigation sockets and bridges, detention basins, etc.) are part of the historical, architectural and landscape heritage. At least ten or so buildings built between the middle of the XVI century and the beginning of the 1940s give historical-artistic evidence of recognition and preservation. The same value, on a different level, must be attributed to the territorial width of detention basins, which are not only controlled extensions having the aim of pressing down the levels of the flood, but are real naturalistic areas.

The owner of the project *Going along the Reclaimed Landscape. A naturalistic, cultural, social itinerary for aware tourism* is the Land Reclamation Consortium in

38 The itinerary described here is made by the Land Reclamation Consortium in Central Emilia and was funded by the Telecom Italia Foundation in answer to the Announcement of Competition: *The invisible cultural heritage*, 2011.

39 The Land Reclamation Consortium in Central Emilia was established in October 2009 from the fusion of two historical and ancient Consortia: the Moglia-Secchia Land Reclamation Consortium in Parma and the Bentivoglio-Enza Land Reclamation Consortium. By means of a complex network of canals and a capillary distribution of plants, it guarantees the correct management and distribution of surface water for irrigation and environmental purposes, for territorial preservation and development and in order to guarantee the best life-conditions to the population who live and work in this territory.

Central Emilia, while the subjects involved are all the municipalities in the territory supporting communication in the stages within their competence and the organization of initiatives. Such initiatives aim at the interaction between the route and museums, the historical-architectural, archaeological fields, the historical centres, the naturalistic reserve within their competence. The staff involved mainly belongs to the Land Reclamation Consortium and to the Public bodies and Associations on the territory: Civil Defence, Voluntary Ecological Guards, TUTTINBICI/FIAB (Italian Federation of Bicycle Friends), ADSI/Italian Historical Residences, ANBI/ National Association for Land Irrigation and Reclamation and Land Improvement, URBER/Land Reclamation Regional Association for Emilia-Romagna and the Province of Reggio Emilia.

3.2.2 Objectives

The project aims at developing an itinerary (whose aspects concerning supply, communication, fruition and tourism will have to be taken into consideration) covering a large area of about 90 km, in order to get to know two Regions: Emilia Romagna with the provinces of Reggio Emilia (9 municipalities: Boretto, Gualtieri, Guastalla, Novellara, Reggiolo, Campagnola, Rio Saliceto, Fabbrico and Rolo) and Modena (municipalities of Carpi and Novi di Modena), and Lombardy with the municipalities of Moglia, Quistello and San Benedetto Po in the province of Mantua.

The signs created by the complex and varied work of land reclamation – by now icons representing the identity of the place into which they have become fully integrated - are necessary to the territory, to the security guaranteed to urban areas, to the protection of the soil against floods: the project aims at highlighting their presence which, although evident, have never been fully perceived with awareness. It will be carried out through the integration of knowledge and communication with the environment, through sport and physical activities, the economy, technology, museology, history, didactics, local and national tourist training. These areas have now become a strong attraction and are available to young people and adults alike, to students and sportsmen, art and nature lovers, people attracted by farming or by the hydraulic electromechanical technology of land reclamation. It is a journey through traditions, landscape, the life of the original settlements in the plain of the Po river.



The main initiative for the enhancement of the territory's culture and traditions concerns the whole project itself, which involves a global and specific analysis

of the various identities of the landscape of the area. The reading, interpretation and observation of typical places for farm production and specific protected naturalistic areas along the route will enhance their typical features. For example, the route from stopover 1 to 2, which goes along the wide allotments of permanent pasture, represents an important component for the economy and landscape of the area where Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese is produced, as well as for the western provinces in Emilia Romagna. This land and the wide areas of centuriation which are still visible are brought to light to the benefit of both tourists and the younger generations of the local community, and they offer visibility to the farms in the area. The same applies to the area dedicated to rice-fields (route from stopover 3 to 4).

The objective of the activity carried out by the Land Reclamation Consortium is therefore to spread knowledge and enhance material goods (architectural, historical and naturalistic heritage), intangible property (knowledge and learning, the culture of places and people) and create work opportunities for the local Communities which interact along the route.

3.2.3 Ways of fruition

The first pieces of information are given by direction signals along the whole route, signals and information tables in the various stopovers, "traditional" paper maps which everyone can carry along in the itinerary by bus, by bicycle, on foot. Thanks to technological progress applications for mobile phones/satellite can be found (smartphones and Iphone). By connecting to a specific website or to the QR code of paper maps and informative panels, many data and a great amount of information can be downloaded: georeferenciated maps, information and illustrations on the itineraries, video and audio material, so as to allow also those who go along the route "on their own" to be accompanied by pleasant voices providing information and stories describing the landscape. Moreover, the website gives the possibility to plan tours, see the condition of the itinerary in real time, organize a group tour, listen to the testimonials, read the cultural, historical and artistic references of the places. Finally, there are *plugs-in* connected to social networks, YouTube and photo-albums which can easily be uploaded on the website.

Then the "real" experience begins, when, in certain periods, the excursionist can go along the itinerary in a mini-coach duly provided with video, audio and information maps. It is also possible to use the bicycles provided in the various stopovers along the itinerary.

RURAL TOURISM AS CULTURAL TOURISM



3.2.4 Route and themes

The itinerary consists of six specific stopovers and is organized as a journey through the reclaimed land landscape. Each stopover is described according to its specific features. The route can be carried out by individuals and amateur cyclists alike, while in some periods of the year tours by coach are available.

The itinerary has been organised so as to indicate along the way the environmental sites of interest, the landscape, the architectural buildings or minor construction works which are characteristic of the route. Each stopover is provided with its specific panel providing audio and video communication. Also, further nearby cultural and environmental points of interest are signalled and can be visited. Every stopover is equipped with facilities for amateur cyclists and is provided with drinkable water. An attended parking area and bike rental are also available.

1st stopover: "A virtual and multimedia journey through the landscape of the Reclaimed Land"

Chiavica di Boretto, Boretto, Reggio Emilia, Hoisting Apparatus

The lock for irrigation in Boretto, in the lee of the Po river, is about 15 km far from Reggio Emilia. The building was built in the 1920s together with its twin lock building. It is a wonderful example of fascist architecture: grand and solemn, almost twenty-metre high, it stands out against the typically flat farmland and flood bed landscape.

The building hosts the permanent multimedia exhibition "The Landscape of the Reclaimed Land – History Territory Security", consisting in a series of images and sounds of the urban, rural and farm territory of the Reclaimed Land projected on the 2000 sq. m of the internal surface (walls, ceiling, floor).

2nd stopover: "History and Hydraulics. Networks and canals in the territory"

Plant in Torrione and Botte Bentivoglio, Gualtieri, Reggio Emilia

The second stopover includes the tour to the draining plant of the Torrione (1920-33), to the Botte Bentivoglio (1576, half XVI century) and to the arboretum wood. The Botte Bentivoglio - a building where the collector of shallow waters underpasses a non-consortium canal where deep waters flow - is the first building of its kind (commissioned by the marquis of Gualtieri) built in the Renaissance.

The tour to the plant includes a pedestrian route in the open air provided with direction signs for the overall vision of the network of the plants and canals. It is possible to stop in a sort of natural cavea provided with benches, and listen to an audio description about the history of land reclamation in the Renaissance. Moreover, the former workshop in the Guard House of the Plant hosts a permanent exhibition and a room where it is possible to get information about the history of land and hydraulic reclamation. The setup consists of a central independent structure provided with panels and exhibition plinths including an information area and a computer station. Audio/video equipment as well as computers provided with internet connection to the website of the Reclaimed Land Consortium are available.

3rd stopover: "The Fauna, Flora and vastness of artificial basins"

Detention Basins Plains of Novellara, Novellara/Reggiolo, Reggio Emilia

A tour to the naturalistic area of the Plains of Novellara, a huge territory used as detention basin for the Land Reclamation Consortium, where a poplar plantation was planted in the 1920s: visitors can immerse in the beauty of the



landscape, rich in avicultural fauna and trees, characterised by the works for landscape control which have always been taken care of by the Consortium. Coaches can reach the Plains directly, and pedestrian routes are available in the naturalistic areas. A panel at the coach stop indicates the meeting and departure point. A pavilion for observation, shelter and rest helps visitors understand the territory.

4th stopover: "Country work: rice-fields and rice weeders"

Rice-fields in the Valle delle Bruciate and Tresinaro Valleys, Carpi/Novi di Modena, Modena

Tour to the rice-fields in the Tresinaro Valleys (included in the 2000 Emilia Romagna Nature-Network, important community areas with special protection for the avifauna). The history of local rice-growing, even before the beginning of massive seasonal migration of female farm labour, started around the end of the XVIII century and hugely increased at the beginning of the Twentieth century, to become a tradition within the rural economy of the well-irrigated Po Valley.

The informative panel in the comfort area is provided with audio reproductions of the old songs sung by the rice-weeders (the *Novi Rice-fields*). It is also possible to see two wide rice-fields and receive explanation on cultivation techniques. A tour to the rice dryer is also available.

5th stopover: "Monumental Engineering of hydraulic and land Reclamation and the Liberty romantic park"

Draining plant of Mondine, Moglia, Mantua

Tour to the monumental draining plant in Mondine, erected in the early decades of the twentieth century, and to its landscape and architectural area. The Mondine draining plant is used to lift the waters coming from Reggio and Modena. From 10 openings at the foot of the building, the water is sucked up by 5 pumps, lifted up to the height of 7 metres and poured downstream by means of 5 pipes into the discharge basin. A large park containing trees of interest - dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century - can be found alongside the plant. Inside the park, notice boards indicate the species which can be found. A lodge for tourists is placed in the refurbished rooms of the former warehouse. It is used as a refreshment area for tourists and amateur cyclists (provided with toilets, refreshment services with self-coffee machines and multipurpose rooms with information and recreational purposes). In the entrance, informative panels describe the Mondine Plant and the history of Land Reclamation. Moreover, it is possible to listen to several interviews concerning the world of Land Reclamation and the socio-cultural and human aspects which link it to the territory. It is also possible to find the "*Land Reclamation table*": an equipped table whose surface and drawers contain the "story of land reclamation", the overall map and informative touch screen monitors for website connection.

6th stopover: "Places for Art and Nature"

San Siro Drainage Plant and Foce Secchia Flood bed Park, San Benedetto Po, Mantua

Tour to the drainage plant and to Foce Secchia Flood bed Park. The San Siro lock for the lifting of shallow waters is used when natural water inlet into the river Secchia is not possible. The plant, dating back to 1919-1926, presents monumental features. It develops inside a big park which includes a botanical garden with officinal herbs. The Foce Secchia Park includes the flood beds of the final tract of the river Secchia up to its confluence into the Po. It is characterised by the geomorphological aspects of the territory, dominated by the river's thick meanders, and by the imposing works for land reclamation. The park is suitable for cyclists, thanks to its practicability and to its convenient position near populated areas of great historical-architectural importance. Another *land reclamation table* is placed in the draining plant room. Moreover, as in the Torrione stopover, an audio system entertains the visitors in the park with fascinating stories about the area.

3.2.5 Communication

Providing information and advertising the forms which have been used to enhance the territory are fundamental goals. Communication is mainly carried out through IT media (specific appliances and mobile/satellite apps which can be downloaded for free from the website) and a website, both aiming at promoting the unique aspects of the *Reclaimed Landscape*.

Moreover, a link to the project and related website can be found in the main social community networks, thus further contributing to their visibility. A periodical newsletter informs a mailing list (all the associates to the Land Reclamation Consortium, all the schools for compulsory education in the territory, the various cultural, social and sports associations, etc.) about the initiatives of the project, about the opening periods of the itineraries and other possible concurrent events. In turn, the subjects involved in the project contribute to forward the news to their informative bulletins. Finally, maps and “traditional” paper itineraries, billpostings, press releases and articles addressed to the main national newspapers and to specialised magazines (design, architecture, landscape architecture, science, agriculture and current affairs), as well as the participation to national and international meetings and congresses, are further instruments for the advertisement of the project.

3.2.6 Expected results

The results will be verified through questionnaires distributed to all visitors, to Local Communities, Associations and schools (the Municipality of Reggio Emilia alone counts about 25,000 students from primary school to high school). Thanks to them it will be possible to receive feedback on the overall progress and evolution of the project, in order to introduce changes, improvements, employ it in similar contexts or reassign it to other contexts.

Since the project began only recently in May 2013, objective and weighted data are not yet available (number of visitors involved by age and type, number of students by school type, number of public events organised in the territory in relation to the itinerary and attested level of participation, number of volunteers involved, number of online access, visited pages, number of downloaded apps, number of inserted events, origin of access, number of newsletters sent, prominence on the press and web, etc.).

Considering the accessibility of the routes, their position nearby populated areas, all characterised by historical/archaeological/naturalistic features, it is possible to estimate a considerable number of tourists/citizens/sportsmen/amateur cyclists/students/etc., around 15,000 units/year, who will interact with the routes according to their needs.

Organizational sustainability is guaranteed by the presence of the staff and by internal resources of the Consortium, as well as by the Associations/Bodies and Municipalities involved.

Technical sustainability is controlled by the technological expertise of the Consortium staff; economical sustainability is supported by the funds annually presented by the Consortium, but also by the resources offered by Local Authorities, the Region and the Provinces.

The project can be a starting point for the establishment of a system of touristic-environmental-cultural enhancement and knowledge of the regional territories in Emilia Romagna and Lombardy, as well as in other areas. It can be of support and assistance to other bodies in the Po valley aiming at enhancing their contexts through similar itineraries⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ The Land Reclamation Consortium in Central Emilia is part of the ANBI, a national association which represents and safeguards the interests of the Consortia for land reclamation,

Irrigation and land improvement operating in Italy. All the Consortia members of the ANBI have the task of making and running works for hydraulic protection and regulation, for the provision and use of the waters, mainly for irrigation, as well as for environmental safeguard. Therefore, they have a multipurpose role, aiming at territorial, environmental and food security of the Country. By doing so, they contribute to sustainable economic development. For each of them the enhancement of their work and of the territory they run is an important way of communication with the community. More than 130 consortia associated to ANBI work on flat landscape in the Italian territory which has similar characteristics to the landscape of the Land Reclamation Consortium in Central Emilia (with a surface of about 14,000,000 hectares and over 1300 plants for irrigation locks), so these structures can use the indications and features of this context in order to apply them to their context.

4. COMMUNITY-BASED RURAL TOURISM

4.1 SPECIFIC FEATURES

4.1.1 *Origin and nature*

Community based rural tourism is a particular kind of tourist reception which relies on the active role of the local community's hospitality and on all its multiform assets. Under such formula the local community and its various territorial components have a central function and are organized in order to provide a tourist offer. The local community, formed by a group of people and enterprises sharing the same cultural and environmental setting and *milieu*, thus becomes the vital and active protagonist of this offer which becomes possible thanks to the organization and fruition of its resources and the involvement of recipient subjects.

The creation of a local tourist system, which can also represent a means of growth and development of the area, is based on many factors of attraction and of services for all tourists and in particular for those interested in enjoying a direct experience in the life of the local community and getting involved in the typical activities and settings considered by the local inhabitants as significant parts of their heritage. An experience particularly significant for tourists who wish to enjoy a rural immersion and who consider travelling as a form of knowledge and cultural growth as well as a personal contribution to the conservation and development of the territory and its values. Such conception of holiday making gives life to a social process: in order to meet this demand all the social structures of the community which is supposed to provide hospitality are involved and called into action. As a consequence, tourism becomes one of the aspects of the life in the community, a cultural and also economic event.

As one of the economical components of the local economical system, community based tourism contributes to the development of the rural area according to the concepts and practices of sustainability and

responsibility. However, the specific nature of community based tourism involves and draws attention to a fundamental theme: the local social-cultural identity namely the system of shared social-cultural values in which the community recognizes itself.

The opening of the community to tourism leads the way to further cultural possibilities besides those deriving from the processes of industrialization, the expansion of the service industry and the widespread development of communication; the general involvement of the community in the formulation and activation of a *community based* tourist offer has indeed the effect of making the community reflect also on itself. The social-cultural identity, the specificity and authenticity of the local products and cultural traditional expressions contribute to the creation of a territorial image and reputation and are fundamental for the development of community based rural tourism.

If in general the pathway from resource to product is the challenge one must overcome in order to develop tourism in rural areas, this challenge is even greater for *community based rural* tourism: the active role, the responsible involvement, the promise of a gratifying experience and stay are not simply the distinctive features of this form of tourism, but are also the necessary preconditions to overcome competition and for the creation of wealth in rural areas. Among the resources of these areas, most important for a successful offer of rural tourism is the role represented by the typical local productions, mainly agricultural and food products as well as artistic and traditional handicrafts.

The peculiarity of these products is given by the activity of the “creative-workshops” which relies on the following three elements: raw materials, competence and processes and therefore on the local nature of these elements. The local raw materials with which the typical products of the area are made according to tradition are in a strong mutual relation with the geographical context. However, it is above all the competence, intended as high quality production conditions, which gives its indelible mark to the deriving processes and products. It is a “distinctive competence” which characterizes the actual culture of a local system and its productive phases which may be of a more or less wide extent, but are always strictly contextualized (Endrighi E., 2002).

Such know-how, which is expressed in the characteristic local manner of production, has a double value in the context of rural tourism: on the one hand it is the object of a cultural interest (material culture) in subjects who do not belong to the local context; on the other hand, it is a fundamental component of the elaborative/operative process through which the unique typical local product is created transforming it into a fundamental tourist attraction pole.

The choice of a rural territory and therefore of the community living within it and which recognizes itself in it, to found its development also in the field of tourism is a strongly strategic choice which engages and conditions its very future, above all from the cultural point of view. It is often an undervalued or neglected aspect, which should on the contrary have significant relevance and priority in the consideration of a community and its various organized institutional expressions. This strategy is part of the overall development strategy of a local rural system. For these areas competitiveness is strictly linked to the territory and strategies depend on the resources of the territory, that is, on the existing "territorial capital" and the one which can be created. Like and even more than in other fields, the strategy of tourism development begins with the possession of local resources and with the role they are given in the evolution projects of that territory. However, a fundamental and unavoidable role is played by the inhabitants of that area. It is in fact evident and obvious that, if the various elements of tourist attraction are given both by the material and non material resources of the area with all their specific features, the general conditions of development of sustainable tourism can only be created by the local community, the repository of all those material and non material resources.

By adopting the approach to enterprise development based on the resources (Grant R. M., 2005) and by transferring it to the local system, it emerges that the decisive elements in the territory's competitive strategy lie in the localized material and non material resources which, if we compare the advantages, become critical factors of success; the competitive potential is therefore to be ascribed to the availability of distinctive resources combined with their mobility and imitation restrictions. In other terms, it is a matter of making the various and unique resources of the territory - which must undertake to maintain them in the future - the sources for the

dynamic creation of a competitive tourism offer in conformity with the organization and management modalities of community tourism.

The agricultural and forest-agricultural enterprises dedicated to farming and animal breeding strictly connected to the territory and its traditions, the agricultural and food companies processing local products, the local artistic and traditional craft workshops can become interesting resources of tourism not only if the activities carried out in them can be directly visited but, above all, if the repositories of this underlying material culture (implied contextual know-how) consider it as a non material value which can become the object of cultural interest for subjects not belonging to the local system.

Likewise, also the natural and historical-architectural elements of the territory can become tourism interesting resources not only because of their intrinsic value, but also for their connections to the typical cultural, historical and traditional popular traditions which can be seen as an identity component of the area. In the same way, the local community must be engaged to make the environmental/natural resources accessible to the outside world thanks to its direct knowledge, its time-consolidated experience and to its presence in the territory. The local community can first of all offer and guarantee tourists a warm welcome and hospitality within the community itself. For "responsible" tourists it is the disposition of the local community and the manner in which they are greeted which matter and lead them to prefer one territory over others; what matters is the local community's ability to give hospitality to tourists, treating them not as strangers, but rather integrating them in the main social moments of daily life.

4.1.2 *Methods and aims of realization*

A precise operative model for creating and implementing specific rural tourism projects, taking into account the above described strategic approach, has been studied. The most important points and steps of this model are presented in this paragraph.

A. Identification and creation of the local entrepreneurial core

In a non-touristic rural area, the resource controllers are civic owners or entrepreneurs who are initially unconcerned with the tourism industry. Only some of them will participate in the entrepreneurial core. The locally embedded and distinctive resources are inputs for a process that must be initiated and must work to offer touristic products.

The creation of business ideas must be bottom-up so that the community can improve its knowledge in this field, become conscious of the matters that affect the community's future and make decisions regarding its development.

Constructing the entrepreneurial core of the new business is the most decisive step; its structure and features must be carefully designed and implemented.

We must consider two dimensions: the extension of the touristic resources of the community that are under the control of the core and the role (in terms of generating income) of the tourism activity for the members of the core.

As for the first dimension, at one end we can have the case in which the entrepreneurial core does not own or directly control any of the local resources and, consequently, it typically develops market relationships with resource suppliers. In this case, the community risks being only marginally involved both in the use of local resources and in their future development. At the other end there is the case in which all the resource owners are members of a collective firm. Every individual makes his own resource available and receives payments in relation to his contribution to the business's economic results. In this situation, the fact that the community is very involved is a positive feature but, at the same time, it is quite difficult to identify and value the contribution of every resource. The distribution of added value among the shareholders is based on bargaining, and marginalism theory cannot be of any help to us. After all, in this case, there are too many decision makers who produce negative consequences during the decision process. As we all know, this characteristic is typical

of cooperatives; in this case, the situation is even more complex due to the differences among the resource controllers' strategic goals. Owing to these problems, this type of configuration is difficult to achieve.

As for the second dimension, at one end we can have the case in which all of the core entrepreneur's income is generated by the tourism industry; at the other end, there is a small portion of the entire income. In the first situation, the engagement and investment in touristic activities are more important, and therefore, this situation would be preferable. However, in rural areas and, above all, at the beginning of the touristic offer, the second solution is preferable.

B. Implementation of the network and improvement of its compounds

The endogenous and embedded resources that are not controlled by the entrepreneurial core must be linked through a network system. Constructing this network system is most likely the most complex but necessary step to carry out the global project. The local resources simultaneously represent the foundation of tourism attraction and non-touristic inputs in the perception of their controllers. Consequently, two related processes are necessary: commoditising these tangible and intangible resources and involving their controllers in the creation and management of touristic products. This matter is cultural and, therefore, complex and time-consuming.

The involvement of the "large community" - which includes the village where the project is developed and the inhabitants who live and work in the surrounding areas, who control touristic resources and are interested in the project - is vital.

A certain cultural evolution is necessary to the acceptance of tourism as a social phenomenon that involves the whole community, influences and cross-fertilises its value system also producing changes in its behaviour.

One of the most important initial steps is the inventory of potential local touristic resources. This step is very important both for providing explanations for potential partners, as it makes use of real examples, and for determining the number and features of existing and possibly available resources.

Traditional agricultural-food products constitute a very important type

of local resources and the role of producers is essential to their activity, as their actions, knowledge and abilities are equally attractive to tourists.

Generally, these producers are not accustomed to being observed at work and having their factory, processes and work-in-progress displayed.

They are not accustomed to explaining their work to visitors. Consequently, specific courses must first of all be set up to help them accept the presence of others during their work which increases the tourists' positive perceptions; besides, these operators will receive instructions on how to explain to tourists all the connected phases of their work and the particular features of the processes involved.

A second very critical type of resource entails the knowledge and the skills related to the environment and its compounds, the landscape's history and the traditional jobs of that area. This knowledge can sometimes be possessed by people who use it for their jobs or hobbies. Sometimes, it is possessed by elderly people who would never have dreamed of having to share it with other people. An interesting example could be the ability of some people to recognise wolf tracks and interpret wolves' howling or, for example, the ability to make charcoal kilns, which was once a very common traditional activity but is now abandoned.

Other types of resources are the local culture, traditional handicrafts and heritage; coming across and analysing these types of resources can be very difficult, but they are absolutely fundamental, moreover their adequate management is essential to the creation of tourist products.

A very appealing and helpful source of information can be represented by elderly people and, above all, women, who are repositories of local culture, folk tales and fables. These people should be involved to encourage tourists to visit these places through cultural activities containing elements reproducing the past.

After taking the preliminary actions which have the aim of involving local people and developing tourism culture, a micro-pact must be formulated among the resource controllers who intend to participate in a particular business project. Subscribing the specificity of this approach is necessary; embedding it in the local culture represents a very long process, the realisation of which is facilitated by the development of tourism activities.

These are all very complex matters because of their social-cultural

nature; therefore, it is necessary to follow a community-based cooperative method to strengthen and improve the local tourist system; besides, all these cultural activities must be continued even after the establishment of the touristic business.

Each member of the micro-pact is committed to supplying their specific services which are necessary to the creation of a unique local offer of rural tourism.

The economic relationship between the members of the network and the entrepreneurial core is problematic. Clearly, the relationship is neither a market relationship nor a shareholder partnership, and the added value distribution method depends on the degree of cooperation. The most common type of relationship is the supply contract, in which the trade-off terms are previously established. However, this contract is only one element of the relationship that, in perspective, must evolve towards a partnership.

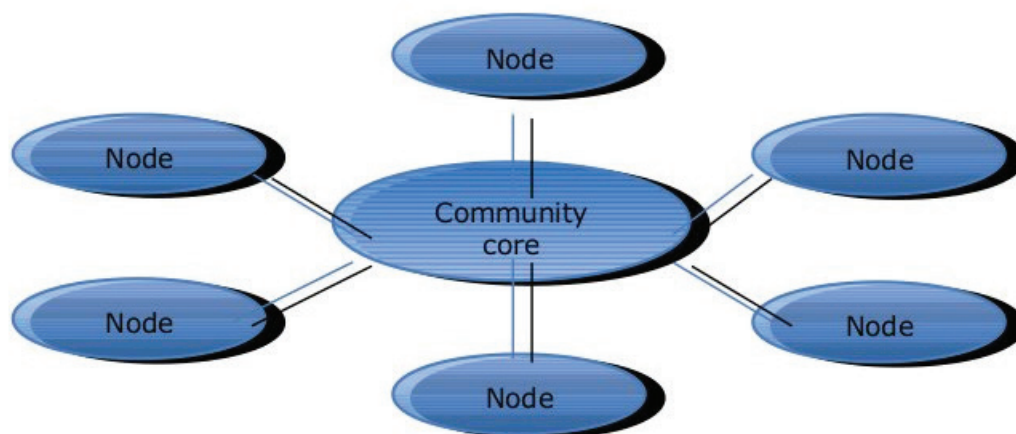


Fig. 18: Identification of the constellation nodes

C. The local tourism system

The activation of a number of micro-systems of local community based tourism in a certain, possibly neighbouring, rural territory represents a composite yet substantially homogeneous offer which can characterize the specific territorial system.

Such situation brings us back to the debate on the adoption of approach for local Systems which is receiving interest also in the field of tourism concerning

analysis, reflections and the study of incremental policies. In particular, the debate refers to local tourism systems intended as “homogeneous tourism contexts” and to territorial areas where the conditions to create a tourism based economy exist or may be created relying on the aggregation of local protagonists who intend to start a unifying network of communication around the resources of tourist attraction also innovating organizational and offer models. The community based approach innovatively deals with this theme even in its beginning phase, the constellation. The aggregation of a number of activated constellations in a certain territory can represent a local system of *community based* tourism offer organized in order to be able to give its substantial contribution to the overall social-economical growth of that rural territory. All this underlines once again the need for a general approach to the development of local systems and for integrated territorial planning.

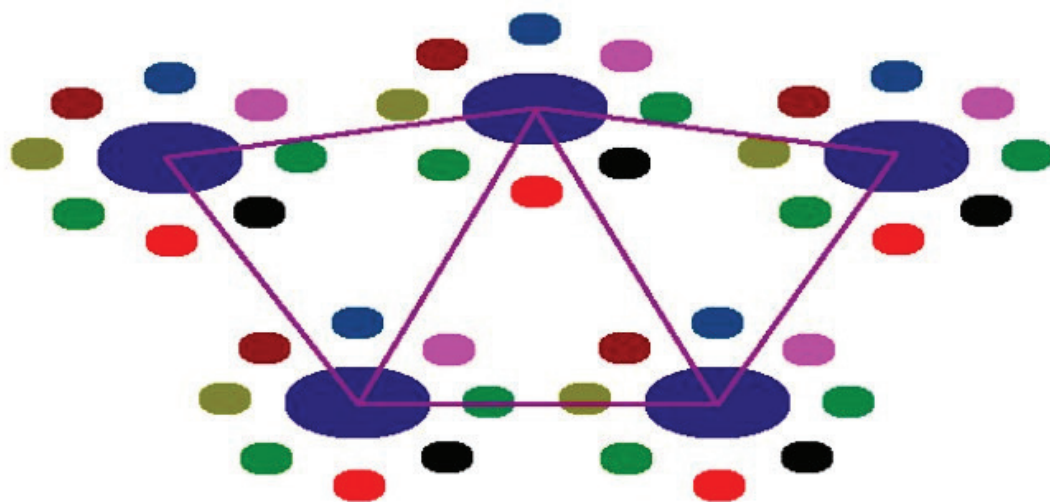


Fig. 19: The local tourism system.

RURAL TOURISM AS CULTURAL TOURISM

4.2 CASE STUDY

Borgo di Cerreto Alpi. An initiative of Community based tourism in the Reggio Emilia Apennines

4.2.1 Context

The ancient centre of Borgo di Cerreto Alpi is situated on the top of a rocky cliff rising on the confluence between the Cerretan canal and the river Secchia. A few kilometres south there is the Pass of Cerreto, a natural geographical boundary between Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany. Cerreto Alpi is one of the nine suburbs of the Municipality of Collagna (the others are: Acquabona, Cerreto Laghi, Oratorio, Passo del Cerreto, Ponte Barone, Porali, Valbona, Vallisnera) which is at the distance of 3.93 kms; is 915 metres above sea level (Collagna is 830 metres.)

According to the data by Istat⁴¹, the resident population has progressively and constantly decreased. Yet, while in the capital (Collagna) it has halved in fifty years, in the hamlet of Cerreto Alpi it has reduced to one quarter: from 489 units in 1961 to 125 in 2011, with a particular decrease in the 1980s (Scheme 3).

Table 4: Resident population in Collagna and in Cerreto Alpi

Census year	Collagna	Cerreto Alpi
1961	2024	489
1971	1379	329
1981	1242	290
1991	1111	137
2001	1005	143
2011	990	125

Borgo is subdivided into three living units: the first, the oldest, is situated in the area around the Parish Church; the other two are set on the top of the hill above Borgo and are on the right of the Cerretano canal.

The architecture of the village is the typical one of the Reggio Apennines: the buildings are small, two-storeyed and close to one another in order to ensure protection against hostile weather and present small paved farmyards. They are built in stone, the covering coat was originally made of slabs of stone or rye straw. Nearby the Cerretano canal, in the eastern side of Borgo, we can find one of the most important portals of the 17th Century in front of which the open space of

41 The data were provided by the Municipality of Collagna, registry office.

the Vecchia Osteria of Cerreto Alpi extends.

Its peculiar geographic position has always conditioned the life of the village and traces of the ancient road leading to Lunigiana is still present in the narrow paved mule tracks interspersed with majesties along the ravines of the "Schiocchi".

Cooperative Briganti del Cerreto, Cerreto Alpi, Collagna, province of Reggio Emilia (society born in the 2006)



In 2003 the cooperative "*I Briganti del Cerreto*" was founded by a group of young men who, not wanting to abandon their birthplace, tried to exploit the resources of the mountains to promote the local activities; this was the starting point of the community based tourism project which began in 2005.

4.2.2. *The entrepreneur subject*

In relation to the two basic issues (the extension of the community's tourism resources that are under the control of the core and the role of the tourism activities for the members of the core), in this case a middle ground was adopted in both dimensions. The survey and the analysis completed by LAG confirmed the framework described below:

- The cooperative, named “Briganti del Cerreto”, was to become the initial entrepreneurial core, which would enable it to carry out tourism activities in addition to its own, as an important opportunity for its development strategy. The original activity concerned the maintenance of the environment, land, woods overcoming a lack of experience in the tourism industry;
- Although they were interested in the project, the other community resource controllers did not intend to build a larger cooperative to manage the tourism business together.

At that time, the cooperative controlled only some of the resources that are useful in rural tourism such as:

- their tacit knowledge and work experiences regarding plant features, wood management, chestnut production and the creation of the local landscape;
- their tacit knowledge and experience with regard to the features and behaviour of wild animals and winter sports;
- their tacit knowledge in relation to tradition and local heritage;
- some chestnut woods producing chestnuts and wood.

LAG primarily decided to implement specific actions to support a rural tourism project in that area with the objective and principles previously described. In particular, LAG intended to support the community to perform the following:

- analyse rural tourism, its evolution and the present-day tourist's expectations;
- identify the local resources that could be used to create tourist products;
- set up a specific strategy.

At the end of this first phase, the cooperative decided to perform the

following tasks:

- develop its business in the rural tourism industry as well;
- be the entrepreneurial core of the community project and develop partnerships with the other community tangible and intangible resource controllers, as explained in the next paragraph;
- become controller of some local tangible resources that are very important for the creation of adequate and attractive touristic products. To accomplish this end, the cooperative decided to rent specific local buildings, land and tools, such as the following:
 - the metato in which chestnuts are dried, and the water mill, in which they are ground to obtain chestnut flour, which in the past represented the principal source of nourishment in this area. These elements were very important to the completion of the chestnut chain. At that time, these buildings were damaged and unusable and, therefore, had to be rebuilt. During recent years, the owners and the cooperative have performed the following actions:
 - renovated the old rectory to create a holiday residence to accommodate tourists;
 - built and equipped stations in specific locations in the mountains for the observation of wild animals;
 - realised the production of charcoal kilns, in specific locations in the woods, that were used in the past to produce coal;
 - built a wooden building a part of which was equipped for particular types of restaurant service (cooking courses, tastings, etc.);
 - learnt tourism management skills.

It is evident that the entrepreneurial core – the cooperative, in this case – has made important investments as a consequence of its strategic choice to develop tourism activities as an increasingly important aspect of its business.

In the following years, thanks to an agreement with the owners, the old mill was perfectly restored and a part of it was transformed into some bedrooms

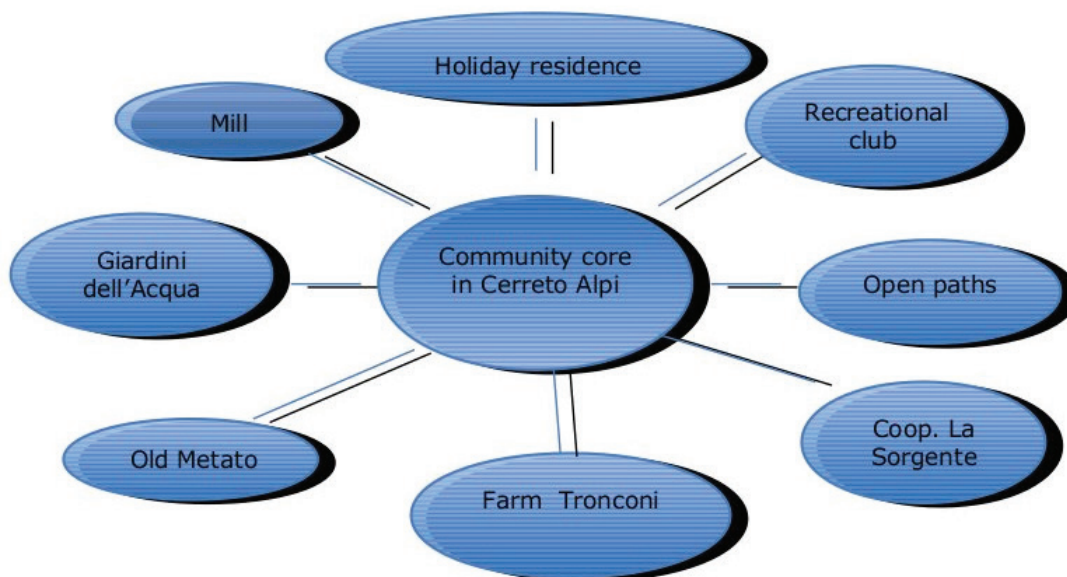
4.2.3 The Network

Following the above described model and itinerary, a local network was immediately set up and gradually developed and improved.

The current main members of the network are:

- the Parish of St John the Baptist which offered the former vicarage transforming it into a Holiday residence with 30 beds for tourists.
- the hotel “da Gianni” offering typical cuisine
- the Recreational Club of Cerreto Alpi, which runs the only food shop in Borgo and supports the Cooperative in the organization and management of the tourism activities
- the Farm Tronconi, which attends to the tourism activities connected with agriculture and supplies local products
- the trout-breeding firm I Giardini dell’acqua-trocoltura Alta Val Secchia in Collagna, which organizes guided tours as well as trout fishing excursions;
- the Cooperative “La Sorgente”, which provides guides for environmental and didactic tours.

Fig. 20: The core and constellation in Cerreto Alpi



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Organizziamo escursioni, ciaspolate e corsi di Nordic Walking nel territorio del parco dell'Appennino. La nostra squadra è composta da addetti all'accoglienza turistica, accompagnatori faunistici, istruttori di nordic walking e guide ambientali espertissime che con un grande amore e una profonda conoscenza del territorio ti conterranno.

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Un'escursione con le ciaspolate è un'esperienza unica, che riporta chi la vive ad un passato lontano, quando le scie fatte da neve rappresentavano per la gente d'Appennino l'unico modo di spostarsi in inverno, quando le nevicate erano abbondanti. Ai nostri ospiti proponiamo ciaspolate diurne la domenica, con ritrovo alle ore 9:00 e ritorno il sabato sera, con ritrovo ore 18:00. Al termine delle ciaspolate si rientra in rifugio, dove si potranno gustare piatti tipici locali come polenta con funghi e cinghiale, polenta di castagne, torte casalinghe e liquori ai frutti di bosco. Per chi lo desidera si si potrà fermare anche per dormire nella nuova struttura "Il mulino di Cerreto Alto" un alloggio turistico ricavato all'interno di un antico mulino ad acqua sulle sponde del fiume Serchio, che dispone di 10 posti letto, di un bagno interno e una cucina, di un'angolo cucina attrezzato, e di una ampia sala da pranzo.



GENNAIO:

- 5 GENNAIO LUNATA DELLA BEFANA
- 13 GENNAIO LA VALLE DEL RIO SBANCO
- 20 GENNAIO REAL BOSCO E LAGHI CERRETANI
- 26 GENNAIO LUNA NERA "WOLF HOWLING"

MARZO:

- 3 MARZO PRATO DEL MONTE E VALLE DI MARBERO
- 9 MARZO LUNATA DELLE DONNE
- 17 MARZO SINTERO DI BORGANIVI
- 23 MARZO LUNATA DI PRIMAVERA

FEBBRAIO:

- 3 FEBBRAIO SINTERO DI CARBONAI
- 9 FEBBRAIO LUNA NERA "COSCIANELLE STELLE"
- 16 FEBBRAIO LUNATA DEGLI INNAMORATI
- 23 FEBBRAIO CASPOLARA GASTRONOMICA

APRILE:

- 1 APRILE CASPOLA "S'OCSONI"
- 7 APRILE LAGHI CERRETANI
- 13 APRILE LA NOTTE DEI BRIGANTI
- 21 APRILE VAL DI MARBERO
- 27 APRILE LUNA NERA - "LA NOTTE DEI FOLLETTI"

Walk in snowshoes



Telling stories

4.2.4. Tourism offers

Some very attractive packages, such as those summarised below, have been created along these lines in the Cerreto area.

A. Chestnut world

Chestnut world aims at submitting tourists to a very instructive and involving experience while acquainting them with information about chestnut woods and trees; chestnut harvesting; preparation of the metato once used to dry chestnuts; a small indoor gathering in the



evening features an elderly lady telling stories and fables in the manner of the past; a visit to the water mill where the flow is produced; brief courses on the preparation of chestnut-based food and meals cooked with chestnuts. This package includes a genuine mix of nature and culture, fresh air and heritage, relaxation and activity, pleasure and knowledge, as well as experiences and emotions.

B. Animals' world

Animals' world includes: a guided tour in the woods for the identification of wild animals' tracks on different types of ground (soil and snow); the observation of several wild animals, such as roe deer, red deer, boars, hares, foxes and many birds using specific devices in various stations. The fascination here derives from the relationship established between animals and humans: the habits of animals in their habitat and the local people's tacit knowledge, which was often used in the past to hunt these animals and is now used to comprehend and admire nature. A guided evening walk that includes listening to wolves' night-time howling during winter, when the land is covered by snow, is a memorable experience. Moreover, walking and learning in the open, fresh air becomes a cultural activity

resulting in an unforgettable active holiday.

C. Parmesan Cheese world

Parmesan Cheese world is an active immersion into the Parmesan Cheese system that begins with an afternoon observation of the milking of cows and transport of milk to the dairy farm, where it remains during the night; the experience continues in the evening with the description of the structures and features of the entire chain and process and resumes at seven o'clock in the morning with the observation of all of the dairy operations. Brief tastings of differently matured Parmesan Cheese are offered, and various uses and combinations of the cheese in the kitchen are explained.

D. Transhumance

In June, in the period around Saint John's celebration day (24th June, patron of Borgo) the transhumance celebration takes place in order to recall the traditional seasonal migration of the flocks to their pastures.

On this occasion stalls with typical products can be found along the streets of the village while the older inhabitants show tourists the old process of pecorino cheese production. This product is eventually consumed, when ready, with the tourists in Borgo.

E. Mushrooms

In autumn a particular day is dedicated to children: the Mushroom day. On this occasion excursions to the woods are organized in order to pick every kind of mushrooms. The mushrooms are then classified and selected carefully by an expert in the refuge; prizes are finally given to the best mushroom pickers according to their variety and peculiarity.

F. Walk in snowshoes

This experience takes us back to old times when there was a lot of snow and snowshoes were the only way for the people living in the Apennines to get around. This package offers tourists walks in snowshoes (on Sunday during the day and on Saturday night) along routes chosen in order to show the territory surrounding the village of Cerreto. Through mule tracks

and paths, beech-trees and firs, turkey oaks and chestnuts, it is possible to see historical places also devoted to popular worship such as examples of votive Majesty. The day ends with the return of the participants to the refuge in order to enjoy typical local dishes: polenta with mushrooms and wild boar, chestnut polenta, homemade pies and soft fruit liqueur.

G. Dark Night

The “Dark Night”, an event which has attracted a high number of visitors in the last few years, is organised every year in August. On this occasion the lights are off and Borgo is only illuminated by torches and candles.

All the inhabitants of Borgo collaborate to organize this event offering different menus in every farmyard giving tourists the opportunity to taste different dishes. During the night it is possible to listen to story-tellers, watch stilt walkers and take part in fire shows. On the occasion of this event Borgo is fully booked so several tourists sleep in tents.

These packages have been modified following customers' indications and according to relationship marketing; the direct interrelationships between tourists and local actors make it possible to increasingly improve the local tourist offer.

Results

The specific application previously discussed is recent: the project began only seven years ago, and its development has obviously been slow. Consequently, there are not many elements with which to realise an in-depth evaluation of the results and outcomes regarding all dimensions (socio-economic-cultural-environmental) and relating to the large area and various actors involved in these tourist activities. However, it is possible to consider some indirect indicators:

- Since the beginning of the activity (2006) the number of tourists has progressively and constantly increased. In the year 2013 one thousand

overnight stays were registered, while around ten thousand people – coming from different Italian regions and from abroad - took part in the various activities;

- Before the beginning of the project, every year, less than one thousand non-inhabitants visited this village; the majority were people who were originally from the area and owned homes there. Since then, this number has progressively increased, and over the last two years, there have been at least eleven thousand tourists per year; natives constituted a very small portion of this number while the remaining were tourists from all over Italy and abroad and, above all, from cities.

- Many old buildings have been refurbished: both traditional buildings with high historical content, which have been involved in the tourist offer, in addition to previously damaged homes, some owners of which decided to return occasionally to the village thanks to a socially improved environment; the outcome is a very important renovation of the local capital.

- Local life conditions have been modified because of both expanding job opportunities (only some units; however, this modification has been very important for this community) and the improving social situation. Not all young people have to leave to find a job, and some inhabitants, in particular resource controllers, can improve their quality of life.

- The increasing attention of local and regional institutions, which have understood that the recognition of tourism potentiality in rural areas requires specific conditions and a proper entrepreneurial approach.

- Other small communities in the surrounding areas have demonstrated increasing interest; because of different and particular resources, tourist offers will be improved to satisfy the growing demand for cultural and active rural tourism. Constructing a local touristic system with the features described in this paper this will be possible.

- An element that is often not considered must be underlined in this case: every year, roughly ten thousand people improve their culture. In particular, some children who were born and brought up in cities learn about agricultural and food processing directly, gain understanding of the countryside culture, appreciate landscape and environmental sustainability, as well as study wild animals, their features and behaviour: a significant cultural enrichment for these children and a very important condition for the future of rural areas. Indeed, only those who know and appreciate the countryside can retard its decline and, perhaps, contribute to its revitalization directly, by purchasing its products or by touring around, and indirectly through agreements with the policies, such as the Common Agriculture Policy, which allocates public money to rural areas.

The community tourism carried out by the cooperative I Briganti di Cerreto has been included in the 20 cases of innovation and good practice at European level. This decision has been made by the Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services in Kent (UK), which has carried out the research on behalf of the European Commission. The evaluators appreciated the aspects related to innovation, community participation, diversification, sustainability and replicability.

RURAL TOURISM AS CULTURAL TOURISM

5. CREATIVE RURAL TOURISM

5.1 SPECIFIC FEATURES

5.1.1 Origin and nature

Creative tourism was defined by UNESCO (2006) “travel directed toward engaged and authentic experience with participative learning in the arts, heritage or special character of place. It provides a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture”. A type of “Tourism which offers tourists the opportunity to develop their creative potential by actively interacting with the place and its living culture” (Unesco, 2006).

This new conception has recently been receiving growing interest in the field of tourism both from the point of view of the demand and from that of the offer, considered as a business opportunity⁴².

In the present demand for tourism there is a constant growing request for new motivating experiences in addition to the place of destination. It is in this view that *creative tourism* represents the most innovative segment of cultural tourism which has a strong experience connotation compared with the more traditional and merely contemplative vision of cultural tourism.

Therefore, *creative tourism* is an innovative and very qualified form of cultural tourism which can have an interesting and applicable version in the rural sphere. Awareness is the fundamental component in it (as in all the forms of *creative tourism*), it is the necessary aspect of the tourists who, in their creative/participative act, meet and realize themselves, underline their identity, give a definition of themselves also thanks to their direct involvement in a process of *learning by doing*.

Awareness is here the distinctive feature in that the *creative rural tourist* is someone who approaches the rural world with awareness and who, at the end of his/her travel - representing for him/her an authentic experience of

42 This topic is treated in chapter 2.

discovery, of participative interaction with the local arts, heritage, culture, with the world of the people and special character of the place - will have gained a formative experience and learnt many new things which have become part of his/her own personal culture.

With these features, *creative rural* tourism becomes an important opportunity for agricultural companies to diversify their economical income making them more competitive on the market.

If awareness is the prerequisite in order to enjoy an experience of *creative rural tourism*, the offer for this kind of experience must necessarily have a rural connection in order to meet the *creative rural* tourist's expectations, that is, to enjoy with awareness a possibly unique, involving and lasting experience. The elements involved in this specific context are non material elements, that is, the culture, the farmer's skills, the products made in a specific environmental context, the landscape itself. The values which lie beyond these components have a strong potential for the realization of experiences of *creative rural tourism*.

Therefore, this *creative* aspect is fundamental, as it makes the offer innovative and it distinguishes it from the wide range of other offers of rural tourism, agritourism, green tourism etc. It represents a necessary and fundamental condition of distinction within a wide and generalized offer of rural tourism.

So, *creative rural tourism* represents a new entrepreneurial opportunity for the enhancement of all the rural territory. Adopting a policy of creative rural tourism means giving value to the identities and the *genius loci* of a place, giving importance to its territorial capital (in the sense of all the tangible and intangible elements of the local offer system), describing the peculiar and identity features of a place. It implies a synergic system of offers which allow the tourists to come in contact and actively interact with the peculiar features of a place.

5.1.2 Realization modalities

The above described elements are to be considered as belonging to the “rural cultural components/fruition modalities introduced in paragraph 2.2 which provide a wide gradation picture of the possible experiences a tourist can choose in the rural field. A fully satisfying concept of the term *creative* has not been reached so far. In fact, it can have different gradations. According to Cloke, we can distinguish four different types of rural tourism depending on the degree of experience involvement: *tasting*, *placing*, *performing creatively* and *performing interactively* (Cloke, 2006, p.40).

Tasting is a strand in which “tourists taste the creative performance of others and in so doing develop their own creative potential and expose their identity to change or cultural acquisition” (Cloke, 2006, p.41). Expositions of agricultural food products or typical craft products of a rural community/territory and the possibility to follow their various production phases belong to this type. In this case, the tourists' participation is mainly a sense-involving activity which does not, however, entail a passive role. Their creativity is intellectual and: a) can be fully involving and can produce a high level of satisfaction; b) it can be the first stage which will lead the tourists to engage in more creative experiences in other strands. As Cloke argues, *tasting* “involves practices and performances which develop creative knowledge, intuition, capacity and skill.” (Cloke, 2006, p.42). One of the most significant experiences here consists in tasting and comparing the different varieties of the same product (for example cheese) under the guide of the producer and considering all the local features (environment, climate, tacit knowledge, tradition, etc.) which are typical of the context and have a great appeal.

Placing is a not very frequent modality and essentially consists in an intellectual involvement such as organizing artistic expressions of local elements on the territory. The creative process – mainly artistic – is not realized by the tourist but by others. Yet, it makes the tourist come in contact with an intellectual creative context, read and interpret some local artistic elements: a typical landscape or, for instance, an exhibition of paintings, realized through different technical approaches, showing different moments, points of view of the landscape of the place where the exhibition is held.

Performing creatively includes a wide range of generally creative and highly involving activities which are carried out in a rural context although not directly involving “rural elements”. In this case we can speak of “creative tourism” in a rural context – the territory and its relative landscape – which is chosen as the background of the proposed activity for its appeal, which is definitely superior to any industrial or urban setting. Therefore, the *creative* aspect here is very important, whereas the rural one is very limited. In spite of this, the interaction between the tourist and the rural world is activated and the tourist's knowledge of it will improve.

Performing interactively is the type which better translates the concept of creative rural tourism, in that the two aspects – creative and rural – are combined and integrated through the realization of creative activities in a rural context performed by the tourist and, above all, it involves factors, customs and typical modalities of that rural context and its community. The role of the community is fundamental in this case, both in terms of reception and of willingness to share one's culture, know-how and traditions with the tourist. The delicate nature of this process is evident, as it relies on the mutual recognition between the tourist and the community. This recognition socially entails not only mutual acceptance, but also gratefulness for the reciprocal contribution to the relationship which is created. As already underlined, this requires a particular attitude of the tourist consisting in cultural attention, responsibility (in the sense of responsible tourism), the ability to form relations and mutual recognition.

If the picture proposed by Cloke certainly has a heuristic value, owing to what has already been underlined, only the fourth type can really concretely accomplish the concept of *creative rural tourism*. We will now concentrate on this type of tourism. This does not exclude the other forms which, however incomplete under some aspects, can integrate a tourist offer and make it more attractive. In order to be considered as creative rural tourism, a tourist offer must have at least one element belonging to the category defined as “performing interactively” of Cloke's model.

5.1.3 Models of firms in creative rural tourism

In order to help spread information concerning the phenomenon of *creative rural tourism* especially from the point of view of the offer, in other words, of its connotation as an entrepreneurial economic activity, we are herewith submitting an outline of the most significant entrepreneurial types of touristic offers. We are thus applying the conceptual instrument of “entrepreneurial model” although we are fully aware that this definition is not at present very clear and is often used imprecisely. It is used here to indicate the various modalities (representational models) which can be adopted in order to implement an entrepreneurial activity in a certain field. We are referring to the strategic level, that is, a long term structural level which describes the features of an entrepreneurial business activity in a certain field. There is an evident difference and a conceptual distance between this and the concept of “business model” which has recently received so much acclaim in management studies. Although there does not exist a unique shared meaning also for this term, a more restricted interpretation has been adopted in recent years to indicate a firm's implementation strategy modalities. A business model describes a firm's business logic by which it gains profits and it includes the following elements: HOW is the value offer created and sold? What does the firm offer its clients? WHO are the clients to do business with and how can they be reached? (Ostweralter A., 2004). In short, a business model requires a representation – a business system model – of the logic adopted by a firm by which it is possible to create a value offer to submit to the client, realize it and withhold part of the economic value generated.

With the concept of firm model we are on a superior level if there are the conditions for an economic activity in a certain field. The vagueness of this definition can be overcome only by clarifying the parameters adopted to identify and distinguish different business modalities so that, by comparing them, it is possible to establish representational models. The latter can be compared to Weber's ideal-types, that is, abstractions created to avoid the confusion due to complexity and to supply theoretical references from which it is possible to analyse concrete firm types. As for the entrepreneurial activities in the market of *creative rural tourism*, we

adopted a central parameter for the definition of representational models based on the entrepreneurial modalities. In particular, it refers to the nature of the subject of the entrepreneurial activity and its relation to the economic context and, therefore, also to other operators in the same field of interest, that is, the *creative rural tourism* offer. There are also other two management parameters which are not completely independent from the configuration of the central one, although they can present a certain range of configurations. For this reason, they are considered as options by the operators. The combination with the first parameter determines the specific type of *creative rural tourism* offer. Three configuration levels are identified and proposed for the first parameter:

- The *self centred model*, in which the single firm creates a tourist offer whose main components – both material and immaterial - are within the property of the firm itself. Therefore, it has in itself the resources to make an offer and its relations with the outside are of a commercial kind. As we are dealing with rural tourism, a firm of this kind must be of a rural, almost always agricultural order.
- The *locally articulated* model has a configuration according to which, besides a main entrepreneurial entity in a local limited area, there can be other subjects which have their own tourist resources and collaborate with the central firm. Also the latter usually has communitarian features being a cooperative formed by local subjects who have a major commitment in the specific activity. It is not simply a matter of integration, but of relations based on supply contracts which have the aim of implementing the tourist offer in a certain local area. The ideal-type is represented by the evolution of the *community based* model going in the direction of the tourist's greater creative involvement in the cultural, productive, environmental characteristics of the local community. This means permitting the tourist to go beyond an essentially intellectual involvement and to actively participate in the typical traditional activities of the local community under the guide of community members.
- The *coordinated network model* is one in which the essential element is represented by a net of subjects not (necessarily) belonging to nearby areas, but who deal with the same touristic offer product. These subjects

are legally autonomous from one another and make agreements concerning creative tourism offers each placing their own touristic product in the shared network. Unlike the two preceding models, in this model the subjects are free from firm and/or communitarian conditionings concerning the creative tourism offer resource supply. The subjects can make special, consistent offers because the function of the network is both to aggregate single operators having certain features and also to enhance the creation of new ones. However, all subjects must have the specific features of creative rural tourism. As the subjects belonging to the network are in competition, a central subject with the aim of coordinating the network is evidently necessary both in the planning and in the operative phase, with the function of communicating/advertising the overall offer, too. The autonomy of the single network members also allows them to operate outside, but not in competition with the network.

The other two dimensions of the models are:

- The *area in which each offer is made* and, above all, its extension and heterogeneity. The importance of this parameter must be underlined owing to the relevance of space in the rural world and in rural tourism. The landscape, which gives a territory its identity and which represents a touristic attraction, is intimately connected to it. Compared with the main parameter – the entrepreneurial configuration – it is evident that the importance of the extension and heterogeneity of the landscapes with which the tourist comes in contact gradually grows from the first model (self-centred) to the third (network). This certainly represents a further competitive advantage for the second and third model.
- The *heterogeneity of the offer*, that is, the variety of creative actions/participations offered to the tourist. It is an important component which characterizes each single offer and significantly affects the tourist's choices. Compared with the main parameter, it is evident that the importance of the heterogeneity of the offer, that is, the various product and operative experience activities, gradually grows from the first to the third model. The peculiar feature of the latter – network – is the creative experience heterogeneity offer.

The combination of these two parameters with the main one and the modality in which these models are practically carried out greatly affects the models, at least in their basic formula.

The self-centred model has a very limited area. Therefore, the tourist is given the opportunity to come in contact with a limited landscape. The same can be said of the heterogeneity of products/experiences, since the single firms do not have the possibility to diversify, as they remain within their own resources/competence. This is the case of the farm holiday which, availing itself of its material and immaterial resources, can make some creative offers. This product evidently comes along with the other, cultural and non cultural, elements present in the firm which can enhance the overall offer. Above all, a specific creative offer involves accommodation in a farm and total immersion in the agricultural environment.

The locally articulated model refers to a medium size area. Therefore, it represents a stimulating experience for the tourist, above all from the point of view of the landscape and of local culture. The same applies to product/creative experience heterogeneity owing to the intervention of subjects with different resources/competence which all belong to the culture of the host community. This gives coherence to the tourists' whole experience, permitting them to live in a total immersion in the physical/cultural world of a local community and also to enjoy any less creative (according to Clock) elements/opportunities.

The network model operates in significantly distant and heterogeneous landscapes which certainly represent an interesting cultural experience for the tourist. On the whole, it excludes a long immersion in the local community's culture owing to the substantially scattered quality of the experiences offered by the network which, however, answers specific and special tourist demands. This relies on the specialization of the network operators and it aims at specific communication targets. A particular and interesting case occurs when the network coordination role is played for instance by an advanced and unconventional museum. In the case of rural tourism, it could be an ethnographic museum or, rather, a museum of peasant culture or an eco-museum. It is evident that this model depends on a new entrepreneurial spirit of the museum which must have the necessary skills, not only organizational, and means to accomplish this

innovatory role in creative rural tourism. The next paragraph deals with this particular version of network model.

It must be added that in concrete operations, entrepreneurial structures may present hybrid connotations and particular adaptations (references to other models), a sort of transfer of single and specific elements having the aim of enhancing the tourist offer. This phenomenon can be seen in particular in the third model, according to which the network members might be a farm holiday firm offering a specific *creative* activity or one or more operators who are part of an organization offering community-based experiences which we know belong to the second model. In this case, these operators are part of two networks: a local one, which has the local socio-cultural features of the community where the network for the realization of community-based tourism is developed, and a larger functional one, which has essentially economic features and which represents the structure for a specialized creative rural tourism offer.

5.2 CASE STUDY

Creative tourists in rural Emilia⁴³

5.2.1 Context

The geographical area to which this offer of Creative Rural Tourism refers is the territory of Emilia between the Po river and the mid hills. It is a territory which still bears traces of its original agricultural vocation, in spite of the intense urbanization which on the one hand has subtracted a large amount of agricultural land, and on the other has intensified the agricultural processes. The local production of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese - which necessarily relies on forage rotation with cereals, on the availability of manure and the presence of an effective capillary irrigation system - has ensured the survival of even small and medium size agricultural firms whose farmers have once again managed to update and renew the experience and knowledge handed down from one generation to another. After all, it is the farmers who in the course of time have built the means and tools of their work, who have shaped the land, formed the landscape modifying and varying crops: a combination of elements, of farming techniques and means employed, obtained products and by-products which are deeply interconnected and which have origin in the farmers' knowhow and hard work. In some areas of this territory there still survive stories of the rural activities which are dependent on the features of the territory itself and on the activities which have developed over the centuries and interweave with the historical and social events of the place.

The various phases of the creative experience enjoyed by the cultural rural tourist are based on these traditional and artistic handicraft activities. This can be compared to the artistic craft workshops which are part of the creative tourism offer available in some European towns and places: from the village of Biot in the south of France to Paris and Barcelona, from the Styria region in Austria to Galicia in Spain.

These workshops of local rural crafts can be found in various parts of the territory as they are linked, for a number of reasons, to these different

⁴³ This project (*Mastery in the Crafts Landscape*) gave life to the initiative presented in response to the Announcement of Competition organized by Telecom Foundation 2013 *Invisible goods. Places and craftsmanship of craft traditions*.

rural areas. This distribution over the territory is consistent with the type of strategic theme choice which strongly characterizes the offer.

The evident need for a strategic-operative link between the various phases and referring subjects can be seen in the adoption of the “net centric” business model described in point 5.1.2. In this specific case, as it will be shortly described, the role of the coordinating centre has growing importance, since it has the task of creating the conditions which make it possible to identify in advance the tourist’s cultural and creative needs before taking part in a workshop.



House Museum dedicated to the Cervi's family



The tractor and the glob, symbols of the Institute.

5.2.2 The coordinating promoter centre: the Cervi Institute

Nature and features

The Cervi Institute, an internationally recognized cultural centre, has the double task of connecting the network and of realizing the first phase of the tourism offer “*Mastery in the Crafts Landscape*”. It has a long tradition of promotion and diffusion of peasant civilization, it has its own museum and, together with the Emilio Sereni Library-Archive, it is involved in the study and enhancement of rural landscape. The Institute is situated between Reggio and Parma, a few kilometres north of the Via Emilia, in Campi Rossi, belonging to the Municipality of Gattatico.

The Institute Alcide Cervi⁴⁴ runs:

- the *Museum Casa Cervi*, the house which once belonged to the Cervi family. It has a large farmhouse structure with a farm of about 20 hectares, situated between the municipalities of Campegine and Gattatico. An itinerary-visit can be made around the rooms of the house (kitchen, cellar and furnished bedrooms) and the outhouse (stable containing tools for the work in the fields, the instruments for attending to animals and daily life implements such as the loom), where one can learn about the daily working activities and the life and issues of the Cervi family. The visit gives evidence of the complex cultural, political and social world which characterized country life in Emilia in the first half of the XX century.
- The *Emilio Sereni Library-Archive*⁴⁵, A study centre on agrarian landscape, whose scientific, didactic and promotional activities make the ideals of Sereni known in the annual *Summer School, Emilio Sereni History of the Italian agrarian landscape* and *Emilio Sereni School of Territorial Management*: lessons, seminars, workshops where

44 The *Institute for the history of agriculture, farmers' movements, anti-fascism and Resistance in rural areas* (D.P.R. n.533/1975) aims at promoting and carrying out scientific, cultural and educational activities about the historical features of the XX century: fascism, anti-fascism, agriculture and the rural world.

45 Emilio Sereni (Rome 1907-1977) , intellectual, historian of agriculture, expert in landscape and in farmers' movements, politician and member of the constituent assembly, author of *Storia del paesaggio agrario italiano* (History of the Italian rural landscape, Bari 1961). *Sereni Library*: 22,000 volumes and 200 magazines on the history of agriculture, production techniques, rural society, farmers' movements. *Historical archive*: 1600 folders containing documents on the history of the Italian farmers' movements. *Sereni Fund*: 800 folders with 63,000 pieces and *bibliographic file*, huge collection of thousands of voices (over 300,000 files) and bibliographic notes on almost everything.

scholars, experts, administrators, educators meet and debate on the complexity of issues connected to the territory and its landscape and how to protect, enhance and spread knowledge of it.

- The *Agro-Environmental Park*, situated next to the farm, contemplates a guided tour in the natural, cultural and productive environment of the Po Valley. It hosts the *piantata reggiana*, a planitial hedge, and a *Garden of ancient fruits*⁴⁶ as well as a germplasm Bank containing varieties of soft wheat created by the BIOGEST-SITEIA Interdepartmental Centre of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia⁴⁷.

It is visited by an average of about 32,000 people every year coming from all over Italy: students, teachers, scholars, professionals and ordinary people.

In association with it, a thick web of Institutions and Public Corporations periodically participate in their specific fields in research projects and organized events ⁴⁸.



Emilio Sereni's Library-Archive

46 Series of fruit trees directly generated by other patriarchs scattered over Emilia-Romagna in order to keep their germplasm (L.R. Law 1/2008) and monitor the phenological phases for a comparison with the current climate changes.

47 Field experiments in order to keep and renovate the plant collections of soft wheat (*Triticum aestivum*)

48 The partners geographically going from the Municipality of Rivoli (further north) to the one in Piazza Armerina in Sicily: 150 ordinary partners (towns, municipalities, provinces, regional councils) and 4 founders (Province of Reggio Emilia, national Anpi, Cia, Municipalities of Gattatico and Campegine).

Roles and activities in the tourist offer

The Cervi Institute has a fundamental role in the activation of the tourist offer. Its starting point is the Museum. However, not less important are the other specific structures and the activities carried out within them which all have a role in the enhancement of the tour/experience in which tourists are involved.

a. Guided tour to the Museum of Peasant Civilization of the Cervi Institute

The tour starts from the porch of the farmhouse and continues inside its rooms which introduce us into the history of farmers' activities. The documents, the objects, the furniture carry the tourists into the past of the daily life and hard work of peasants, putting them in contact with that atmosphere of sharing and simplicity which is part of the values of the land. A full immersion into the *Quadrisphere* follows: an imposing multimedia instrument, an innovative installation which involves the visitor in an all-embracing experience of images, sounds and emotions concerning all that the museum contains.

Visitors enter a small dark room and the moment the *Quadrisphere* is turned on they become literally part of a new world made of infinitely multiplied images thanks to a system of mirrors and lights which even seem to absorb the visitors⁴⁹. This immersion into a multiplicity of images and their infinite refraction is a spectacular way to end the visit to the Museum.

The route continues outdoors with a visit to the Agro-environmental Park, which visibly represents the bond that ties man to his territory. Explicative panels tell the history of the Po Valley, the *piantata reggiana*⁵⁰ in situ, the botanical route for the identification of the shrubs and trees, the Garden of ancient fruits, the experimental field of soft wheat.

⁴⁹ The film is made of a symphony of four types of intersected editing. Through the stimulating power of technology, it describes the rise and fall of farmers in the first half of the XX century. In particular, it deals with the Cervi Family: the war, poverty, fascism, the tenacity of field work as social liberation. Length: seven minutes.

⁵⁰ Emilio Sereni (1961): "The constituent elements of the modern plantation of the Po Valley were already being elaborated in the XVI century through the division of the surface into regular fields. Their borders were marked by chubs and ditches whose steep banks hosted rows of vines.

b. Journey into the EVOLUTIONARY TUNNEL - *Emotional craft tunnel*

It is an emotional and fascinating high-impact multimedia room (made out of the former *Second barn* attached to the Museum). Tourists are welcomed into its darkness with charming sounds in the background, while a series of videos, projections, panels give the room some light. They describe the evolution of the landscape in Emilia-Romagna between the Po river and the hills. They show the evolutionary phases of the peasants' craftsmanship in the manufacture of various products. The VIDEOS describe objects in solid wood (from utensils to inlaid furniture, to frames), to wood shavings (from plaits to hats), to wickerwork (from baskets to ornaments), to hemp (from ropes to embroidered fabric), to pavera (from chairs to baskets), to embroidery yarn (from trousseau to ornaments). The videos share the same sequential structure and deal with the various evolutionary phases. More space is dedicated to the videos concerning draw-plate and the craftsmanship which have found a new role in the contemporary world (inlay of Rolo and Ars Canusina in particular).

TV monitors can be used for video projections while ceiling projectors project captivating large backdrops on the walls in order to embrace visitors into a 180° projection scenario. Spotlights turn on unexpectedly taking the visitors by surprise to illuminate relevant objects along the route and visitors are invited to touch them in order to establish a direct contact with the materials. The diffused audio system accompanies the visitors throughout the tour, alternating voices and readings to the sounds of the landscape and of typical popular music.

c. Immersion in the INTERACTIVE ROOM with tutor – *Interactive room*

Outside the TUNNEL, in a special room (made out of the former *Second barn* next to the museum) an INTERACTIVE EXPOSITION is set up concerning the typical products of the various draw-plates in their successive phases. It is possible to enter into contact with the objects on display by means of specific ICT applications (*Information and Communication Technology*). For instance, it is possible to observe the artistic/ technical beauty of

details of the objects through magnifying lenses; on each one of them there is a QR-CODE⁵¹ for on-demand download of the contents on one's smartphone for personal use. On display are also panels of the materials giving details of their origin/presence/link with the landscape of Emilia; video and guided recordings describe particular landscapes or displayed objects.

The visitor is the real protagonist of the tour and will have learned a lot by the end of it.

d. It is possible to participate to workshops in the TRAINING ROOM with tutors and experts who describe the more "theoretical" aspects of the crafts and give information on the technical aspects concerning the materials, utensils, schools, design etc.

Role as the centre of coordination and promotion

Coordination between the various ateliers for the organization of tourist experiences and activation/enhancement of the promotion of the tourist offer.

Communication, considered as a means of promotion and advertisement, is one of the main means to call attention to a territory and invite the visitor to an active, participative experience. The aim is the creation of a wide community of interested people. This is possible through:

the creation of a website supplying information on all the planned and effected activities, with a download area for maps, documents, brochures; a photo and video area, a newsletter and contact area; a virtual shop;

presence on SOCIAL NETWORKS (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, which can be used in real time, have media support and a great visual impact) providing direct, real time contact to visitors who can leave their comments, inform, communicate links, share and tag photos, images, contents etc.

Traditional forms of communication through advertising matter and

⁵¹ The QR Code is a two-dimensional barcode (or 2D code), that is, a matrix barcode. It consists of black modules arranged in a square grid on a white background. It is used to save information which is generally read by mobile phones, smart-phones or tablets. So, the QR Code contains an enhanced reality which can include mere texts but also videos, music, pictures. It is an evocative world which can be endlessly enhanced.

brochures for journalists, territorial and tourist promotional, travel agencies and tour operators, institutions, schools, etc.

The immediate recipients are the 150 Members of the Cervi Institute (each one of whom is connected to their contacts and mailing lists), obviously in addition to the over 30,000 yearly visitors of the Cervi Institute (adults and students), the paper and e-mail mailing lists and social networks contacts.



Alcide Cervi agri - park



5.2.3 Network of the crafts workshops

The workshops are, for the above described reasons, distributed over the territory which is the context of the tourist offer.

The very specific features of the activities carried out in them are deeply rooted in the local culture and traditions, so there are also a number of local associations concentrating on a specific craft around them. Likewise, these local institutions are engaged in safeguarding and enhancing such crafts which they consider as fundamental symbols of the local culture.

Woodcraft: Inlay of Rolo

By *inlay of Rolo* we refer to the manufacture of a type of furniture inlay whose origin dates back to the Eighteenth century when furniture was inlaid according to certain patterns which were also appreciated outside this particular area. Not only did Rolo cabinet makers adopt neoclassical patterns in fashion at that time, they also created their own extremely refined ones, as we can see for instance in the insertion of thin racemes made above all with local wood. The activity eventually evolved into the manufacture of inlaid dining room tables. At present, only some elderly people remain as the last masters of this craft.

The Museum of Inlay is situated in the Municipality of Reggiolo which, together with the attached Centre of Documentation and Research, promotes the knowledge and enhancement of the great heritage tradition of local wood inlay.

Woodcraft: Ars Canusina

By *Ars Canusina* we refer to a particular, unique type of craftsmanship which adopts features deriving from the Romanesque Mathilde style. This type of woodcraft can be found in the decoration motifs in capitals, bas-reliefs, baptismal fonts, in the friezes of monuments of the epoch of Mathilda (churches, oratories, monasteries) which can be found in the territories over which the Countess Mathilda of Canossa ruled and which are geographically identifiable in the area of the Po castles. Such motifs became a source of inspiration for original artistic decorations with great historical and cultural charm. The historical decorations were transferred

on drawings and eventually on various materials – embroidery on fabric, stone, wood, etc. – by some craftsmen who created objects of great value. The fields they explored were brick decoration, glass, stone, embroidered fabric, wrought iron, ceramic, wood, painted and hand-printed fabric. All the products coming out of the Consortium bear the trademark *Marchio Ars canusina®*⁵².

Given the specific nature of the project, the Ars Canusina workshops make frames and various ornaments out of wood.

"Pavera" Crafts products

"Pavera" is a type of spontaneous marsh which used to grow abundantly in the marshy areas of Novellara. Owing to its resistance and flexibility, it was used to weave chair seats, bags, baskets and carriers. This consolidated skill was tacitly handed down from one generation to another to the present and is now reoffered by the 'Association of Saint Bernardine in the Municipality of Novellara, which every year in June organizes the popular feast "Farmers' feast of the Pavera" in the Tenuta Riviera of Saint Bernardine.

Wood shaving Crafts

From willow and poplar branches it is possible to obtain thin uniform wood shavings of the same width and length which are then weaved into a long plait to make hats⁵³. Willows and poplar trees can be found all over Emilia. They could be frequently found along ditches and along the boundaries of the farms before the introduction of agricultural machines in farms. The willow in particular is very versatile and useful to farmers for the strength and extreme flexibility of its branches, which are also employed in vine growing. In the municipality of Luzzara, a suburb of Villarotta, it is possible to find some elderly people who still master this skill.

52 Originally it was Mathilda of Canossa - great diplomat and warrior, mentor of the universal Romanesque language infused in the art of her times – who invented the Ars Canusina. Yet, the creator of the current Ars Canusina was the psychiatrist and historian Maria Bertolani Del Rio, who invented it mainly for medical purposes in 1935. This is the date of origin of the Ars Canusina, which keeps the same shapes and styles of the time. The collective trade mark *Ars canusina®* belongs to the Municipality of Casina and it was given to Consortium Art Canusina, which includes craftsmen in the province of Reggio Emilia.

53 Definite evidence of this activity dates back to the beginning of the Sixteenth century, yet its origin are certainly much older. This activity can be related to agriculture, since the raw material used for the production of hats was first the willow (*Salix Alba*) and then, from the 1920s, the poplar (*Populus Tremula*).

5.2.4 Tourist offers

Tourists can actively take part in real workshops in direct contact with crafts experts in traditional techniques: they are involved in the manipulation and manufacture of products under the guide of masters; in the creation and production of various objects; in debates and exchanges with the other participants, teachers, tutors.

There are five planned workshops: in Rolo, at the Inlay Museum; in Casina for Ars Canusina woodwork; in Bibbiano for embroidery in Ars canusina; in Novellara for pavera weaving; in Villarotta (Luzzara) for woodshaving.

Table 5: the table shows the type of materials employed and the possible product which can be manufactured by the creative tourist in the workshops of the territory

Material	Current Production	Ennobled production already on the market	Artistic objects realized in the workshops
Solid wood	utensils furniture	Inlaid Rolo furniture	Various objects in Ars canusina
Wood shavings	Wood shaving plaits	hats	Furnishing objects
Leaves (willows), cane	Baskets, chairs	Baskets, chairs	Furnishing objects
Pavera	Chairs, baskets, carriers	Chairs, baskets, carriers	Furnishing objects
Hemp	Fabric, clothes	fabric, clothes	Fabric, customized clothes
Embroidery yarn	linen	Embroidery of value	Embroidery in Ars canusina

RURAL TOURISM AS CULTURAL TOURISM

CONCLUSION

According to the analysis of this paper, it is possible to conclude first of all that rural tourism is a form of cultural tourism. On condition, of course, that by rural we mean all those material and immaterial elements which are part of the countryside territory submitted, in the course of centuries, to the combined action of man and nature. And on condition that by cultural we mean all that which characterizes man, distinguishing him from nature in itself: in short, all the values, outlooks, knowledge, symbolic systems and all those artistic expressions which give evidence of human ingenuity. We can consider tourism as rural if what attracts the tourist is the rural world itself with all its variety of forms and expressions. On the contrary, it cannot be so if the holiday spent on that territory has nothing to do with it and simply concerns a matter of providing logistics and supplying services.

The attempt of this paper was also to provide some outlines which could be useful to understand the features of the growing tourist interest towards the rural world not only in itself as a “social phenomenon”, generated by a post-industrial society, but also as a basic element of a specific strategy. In fact, tourist attention towards the rural world is to be seen as a prerequisite for the adoption of adequate strategies for the implementation of touristic activities which aim at satisfying this particular kind of demand. This aim is strictly connected to the great number of opportunities this evolution can offer to the rural society, first of all to the agricultural operators, but not only. In short, if the tourist’s interest in the rural world is a cultural one, the implementation and the development of entrepreneurial touristic activities must be directed to the satisfaction of the tourist’s cultural interests in all the different, articulated, dynamic forms which make it possible. In fact, it is evident the effect that this cultural “connotation” has on the more apposite strategic and operative options which have to be adopted by economic operators and communities and on the specific policies adopted by local institutions. Greater attention has been given in this paper to the strategic

options and the connected operative and political modalities that the rural world can put into practice to implement tourist activities which can contribute to the sustainable development of rural territories in our post-modern societies. It must be underlined that the entrepreneurial ability to adequately satisfy the demand of tourists interested in cultural compounds of rural areas does not simply have entrepreneurial efficacy (greater competitive capacity), and economic outcomes (business produces an economic value). It also has socio-cultural importance, as it fosters cultural growth in all citizens, first of all youths, and the dynamic preservation of material and immaterial heritage – present in the rural world – which is a treasure for all the society. Because of this double effect of the economic activities based on rural tourism, special attention must be given to the construction of analytical schemes and process models to implement this type of tourist offer.

Complexity is the basic feature that informs the entire rural tourism argument, as with the broader topic of rural development, of which the former topic is a part. The nature and the fabric of resources and their controllers, the nature and the relationship of the entire community and the tourists' demand, the role of the actors in the innovation processes and the conditioning of the material and cultural structures create a very complex picture. Consequently, for analysis, constructing a model and building a project, the epistemological reference involves the notion of complexity and the concept of complex systems. This conceptual framework, linked to the theory of complexity, remains as a backdrop to the analyses presented here, the nature of which is rather managerial and is aimed at the suggestion of a business model.

The topic of the development of rural tourism activity must be examined using the theoretical framework of firms' development principles and tools: strategic management, organisational construction of intra- and inter- firms and relationship marketing. All of these approaches must be connected to the endogenous local development theory, which utilises macroeconomics concepts and tools.

Today, a complete theory integrating the above-specified concepts does not exist. The model presented in this paper references this theoretical

composite framework both in the analysis and in the construction, but the primary goal of this paper is not a theoretical construction. However, it is undeniable that much work remains in this field.

At the operational level, the application synthetically presented in this paper has demonstrated that, regardless of difficulties, possibilities of implementing rural tourism projects in non-touristic rural areas exist. Despite the general perception and the small dimension of this business, the construction and the implementation of projects similar to those presented is very intricate.

It is worth underlining the very basic role of three compounds: local entrepreneurship, the networking culture and the touristic hospitality culture.

Entrepreneurial culture is vital. Unfortunately, it is often minimal in rural areas. Therefore, the most important goal to be pursued by local institutions and, above all, by development agencies, such as GALs, is the increase in entrepreneurial culture and capacities. Competences in the management field are absolutely complementary; despite general perception, they are fundamental to building entrepreneur development strategies in a particular field, such as rural tourism, in which the demand is rather new, particular and chiefly immaterial. Within this framework, a specific business model and the related methodological scheme for realising and implementing operational projects are very useful and almost indispensable.

The rural world's ability to answer the latest trends of the touristic demand and to provide adequate tourist offers is the core matter of the project. In fact, only by having full awareness of the nature and features of the specific demand is it possible to set up adequate plans to implement touristic offer. Equally important is the "entrepreneurial" ability on all firm, community and network levels. The presence and the improvement of such elements is the prerequisite for the implementation of the tourist offer in the rural world which can potentially resist competition and meet both touristic objectives and satisfy the subjects involved in the offer. The rural system can present some features which can limit and prevent the capacity to seize new opportunities coming from the evolution of the

tourist demand.

Therefore, it is necessary to promote rural development policies which can avoid this gap and enhance favourable conditions for the integrated sustainable development of rural territories. The Leader programme fully responded to this spirit and had such aims: it would be advisable to return to it after corporative attitudes, centralistic visions and administrators' top down logics and also bureaucratic inefficiency have debased its value. The most interesting experiences of innovative rural tourism have been developed by GALs in Leader programme.

The present study gives particular attention to two recent particularly qualified (from the cultural point of view) and advanced (from the point of view of tourist's active involvement) trends of cultural tourism which can be suitably introduced into rural tourism: community-based rural tourism and creative rural tourism.

The former underlines the tourist's active involvement in the physical-cultural context of a small community, essentially a rural village with a relevant role of the landscape. The phases and modalities of this "immersion" are various and can be of an intellectual-contemplative or operative kind and can have different grades of the tourist's participation/ activity. The *fil rouge* which unites all the different moments of the experience is the "community character" shared by the tourist.

The other type (creative rural tourism) is a more restricted and, at the same time, a deeper experience in that its main feature is the tourist's creative participation: it proposes only a specific type of cultural tourism, but offers a wide range of cultural expressions (from art to handicrafts, from agriculture to cooking) which usually take place in different places or landscapes. The peculiarity of creative tourism based on rural culture is that it is widespread over the territory – almost always – compared with the first and still prevailing versions based on art and crafts promoted by urban institutions such as museums or cultural centres.

In the description of the two types, two models are presented with the aim of providing useful instruments of analysis/interpretation and of realization. As community-based tourism is sufficiently defined, greater attention was given to the definition of a model which could be used to verify realization conditions and to implement strategies to be followed

if and when a rural community decides to undertake this sort of tourist development. The case presented confirms the usefulness of this model, which includes a verification phase of the realization conditions, beginning from some necessary conceptual pillars for the analysis of a complex and also peculiar context, followed by a phase of creation of entrepreneurial conditions and of the choice of products to propose to specific tourist sectors.

As creative tourism is at its first rural stages, greater attention was dedicated to the definition of an interpretative instrument of the socio-economic models it can have in the rural field: specifically some ideal-types defined by the more realistic combinations of some parameters. The main one concerns the nature/type of the entrepreneurial subject which promotes and manages the specific tourist offer. A further confirmation that the fundamental and necessary condition of rural cultural tourism depends on the entrepreneurial ability and the efficient management of any economic activity.

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