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Since November 2017, The Observatory changes its nature, from an institution engaged in supporting the European islands to an institution aiming to support all the islands around the world, then becoming the Observatory on Tourism for Islands Economy (OTIE).

11th OTIE International Conference on Islands Tourism

The aim of the conference is to promote the scientific and technical exchange between international academics and experts on insular contexts in order to address efficient strategies to insular development by promoting a wide cooperation. The conference is one of the working step of the Islands Economy Working Group created in Brussels on November 2017. The scope of the IEWG, as well as that one of this conference is to promote the creation of an International Network of Island Contexts.

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KEYNOTES 2
Undertourism and Overtourism: policies for islands 2
Empowering local population, a key success factor to develop a sustainable tourism 3
Economic impacts of Sustainable Events on Islands Tourism 4
Perception of health, concerns with the travel and satisfaction of senior tourists in the Azores destination 5
Traveling Artists' Roles: Mural Production on the Island of Crete 6
DESTINATION STRATEGIES: TOOLS AND APPROACHES 7
Competitive intelligence for insular territories 7
Develop the identity of islands through citizen approaches? The contribution of Cultural Rights. Exploratory study of two Brittany Islands 8
The systemic complexity of organizational processes in the tourism sector: the emergence of a new follower 9
PRACTICAL APPROACHES FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ISLANDS 10
Factors constraining international growth in nautical tourism firms. The case of the Macaronesia islands. 10
Circular economy in tourism: good practices in the Canary islands hotel sector 11
ISLANDAP PROJECT: multidisciplinary approach to islands circular economy 12
Portuguese continental islands and Canarias as coastal and maritime tourist destinations: a comparative approach of its media impact 13
TOURISM INDUSTRY: CONSUMPTION ANALYSIS, CURRENT TRENDS AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT 14
Wine tourism in island destinations: the case of Crete 14
Wine Tourism Consumption Patterns. A Comparative Analysis Based on the Application of the Benford Law 15
Movie-tourism: a strategy for development island sustainable tourism 16
A special type of tourism: islands Religious Tourism 17
TOURISM SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR ISLANDS 18
The evolution of Malta's tourism product, supply constraints and sustainability 18
From insularity to islandness: the use of place branding for achieving sustainable island tourism 19
Accessible tourism: a value added to economic development 20

KEYNOTES

Undertourism and Overtourism: policies for islands

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Tourism represents a relevant source of income and employment, especially for islands and coastal areas, and at the same time could have unexpected detrimental impacts on environments and local communities. This discussion has been widely argued in the international literature. The attention should now focus on tourism effects, as it can bring development and wellbeing, and the negative aspects if not managed and planned properly. The need to address a sustainable approach and to consider the new available tools, such as new Information technologies, has also emerged. Destinations, indeed, can suffer from two relevant problems linked with tourism: Overtourism, defined as the excess of tourism flows over the carrying capacity limit, and Undertourism, or the existence of a lower level of tourism flows in respect of the potential and the existing resources of a destination. This latter outcome may lead to an underdevelopment of local economies compared with that which one could derive from tourism. Both possibilities derive from several factors that are material and immaterial or cultural. The aim of the paper is to present a review of the studies concerning overtourism and undertourism as well as the emerging potential tools and strategies related to these outcomes. This effort could help to define specific and tailored policies and strategies to address these issues, as well as contributing to filling the existing research gap.

Keywords: islands, overtourism, undertourism, impact, policies, development.

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Empowering local population, a key success factor to develop a sustainable tourism

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Why should Sustainable Tourism stay theoretical? We plead for a practical approach.

There are 3 pillars regarding sustainable tourism: 1) nature protection / respect for environment, 2) support of local economy / implementation of local supply chain and 3) promotion of cultural heritage / how to balance life of local inhabitants. Mainly current approaches focused on environmental protection. What about the others in local tourism strategy when we read such words as “overtourism” or “masstourism” in the newspapers?

We want to share with the audience how the destination of Durbuy, a middle-age city lost in the Belgian Ardennes and co-founded member of the Eden Network Association, succeeded to implement a Round Table of tourism in its local management. A place where a real dialogue with all local stakeholders gives practical perspectives to the destination management. This Round Table is a tailor-made tool for the local community, economic actors and local politicians to measure tourism pressure and growth capacity. Durbuy is the first destination of Wallonia (2 million visitors annually). There are more touristic beds than locals (15.000>11.500). And thanks to a partnership with the University of Anger (FR) we conducted a large study with local stakeholders of tourism and local population. We want to share this approach as a tool to help local politicians and decision makers.

Together with the Eden Network we want to tell small island of Europe that self-assessment with local population is a real opportunity to share a strong vision of tourism and that it can help everybody to fix a common frame.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, overtourism, empowerment, tourism strategy, impact of tourism, self-assessment.

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Economic impacts of Sustainable Events on Islands Tourism

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The sustainable events have impacts on small Islands, ranging from cultural, economic, social and environmental. Sustainable events have both positive and negative impacts on their host cities, but emphasis is often focused on the economic analysis. It is the role of event organisers to focus on other impacts other than the purely economic ones that may be created by the event. Festivals and events give greater economic life to the small Islands and raise the profile by developing employment, additional trade and business development. The economic sustainability is the vital for small Islands to understand how businesses use scarce resources and utilise them to increase the economic activities. Clearly, there is evidence that sustainable event management has evolved over a number of years, rather than a concept born out of many national and international strategies.

Therefore, economic sustainability is vital for the UK economy particularly due to expanding global economic market to develop sustainable tools to integrate environmental and social concerns being raised by the environmental organisations (Raj and Musgrave, 2009).

This paper initially reviews literature research focuses on an area of study related to economic growth and the role of festivals in the creation of opportunities for community orientated events and festivals which contrast with tourist orientated events which have tenuous links with local communities. Moreover, paper aims to investigate the changing impact of sustainability of festivals and events on host cities concerning the potential benefits that events may bring to the hosting community by using case study approach. The discussion in the case study will be included on how the positive economic benefits of festivals on small Islands can be measured as an aid to funding a sustainable local festival.

Keywords: sustainable, festivals, communities, economic, impacts, events.

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Perception of health, concerns with the travel and satisfaction of senior tourists in the Azores destination

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In Western culture, despite the increase in longevity, aging (demographic, community and personal) has not always been considered something positive, but instead it tends to be seen as a problem both the society and the individual. Active aging associated with a new paradigm of life promotes senior tourism as a booming sector. In the Azores, tourism has increased in recent years (it has won several awards such as one of the 10 most sustainable destinations in the world and the best destination in the Atlantic), bringing new multidisciplinary challenges. Based on a sample of tourists who visited the Azores (n = 697, ages 55 - 94) this paper proposes to analyze their concerns with the trip, as well as their health perception related to their satisfaction with travel and with life. A senior tourism questionnaire and the Life Satisfaction Scale were used. The application of non-parametric tests shows that: (i) the concern with the location of the accommodation differs according to sex; (ii) the concerns with flight schedules, location of accommodation, medical care and mobility conditions vary according to age; (iii) the concerns with the language barriers, cultural differences, medical care, travel prices and mobility conditions change according to the perception of their health status; (iv) the concerns with the destination security, comfortable accommodation, food supply, cultural differences, mobility conditions and hospitality of the host population change according to their satisfaction with life; (v) the satisfaction with the trip varies according to their satisfaction with life and the perception of health status.

Keywords: aging, concerns about travel, health, satisfaction, senior tourists.

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Traveling Artists' Roles: Mural Production on the Island of Crete

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This study uses as a case the dilapidated neighbourhood of Lakkos, an urban heritage space on the island of Crete (Greece) to broaden the conventional view of traveling artists as creative producers of artistic spaces with tourism potential. The significant aesthetic-reflexive meanings of Lakkos that attract overseas travelling artists have resulted in the gentrification of this neglected neighbourhood which may eventually lead to the upgrading of the district and the subsequent attraction of an increasing number of artists and tourists (Andriotis, forthcoming). Through the use of secondary sources, observations and asynchronous in-depth email interviewing with 24 travelling artists, involving multiple email exchanges, this study found that the traveling artists under study place emphasis on long-term travel schedules that allow them to perform three roles while visiting Lakkos those of tourists, artists and volunteers. These attributes distinguish them not only from mainstream tourists visiting Crete, but also from cultural, art and creative tourists. At the same time they immerse in various creative learning experiences. The main conclusion of the study is that the attractiveness of Lakkos, as a mural based destination, is not only based on its artistic attributes and its herigate, but also on travelling artists' motivations to visit the place and produce artwork. The findings of the study are discussed in relation to the methodology of asynchronous email interviewing and the findings of past research.

Keywords: traveling artists' roles, murals, Crete.

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Competitive intelligence for insular territories

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Islands…the "Eden of the World" de Backer pictures when describing the East Indies. (de Backer 1874, 3) Those "*tracts of land surrounded by water and smaller than an continent*", have a strange effect on humans: "*obsessed, excited or terrified by islands and their mysterious, haunting charm.*" (Baldacchino 2005). Islands remain a domain of investigation and enthusiasm for all scientists. Besides some biological and physical determinism, for both human and other species, exists a psychological factor that conducts islanders to feel that they pertain to a specific community, are rich of a unique identity. (Gombaud 2007, 593)

For centuries the intrinsic and ubiquitous parameters of insular territories have governed social, economic and political life within the island and with outer territories. They are today quickly and largely impacted by communication technologies and globalization, international law and politics. The rationalization and centralization of work, investment and power, the integration of islands into the financial maelstrom modify usual landmarks. The opening to tourism, international trade, foreign capitals often implies that traditional activities and know-how be abandoned. Business trends, professional standards, success are no more driven by local nor regional needs.

Historically located at the periphery, islands suddenly appear at the centre of multiple preoccupations, become places of conflicts, are concerned by supranational decisions. By now, UN agencies, the EU, foreign bodies through UNCLOS regulate but mostly challenge the "insular ecosystem". Sensitive to pollution and climate change, islands strive to produce energy and water, to preserve environment, to enhance living conditions and offer jobs.

The current paper intends to examine how Competitive Intelligence, by offering an innovative, transversal and holistic framework to support "island development", may allow the strong and balanced evolution of a territory, insert it in the regional and national economy, boost the creation of jobs, identify areas of growth and added-valued. (Dou, Juillet et Clerc 2018).

Keywords: island, insular territory, competitive intelligence, territorial development, social cohesion.

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Develop the identity of islands through citizen approaches? The contribution of Cultural Rights. Exploratory study of two Brittany Islands

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The identity of the insular territories is generally built from top-down and "institutionalized" political logics. However, in the challenge for differentiation between territories and in particular islands, these approaches have their limits. It now seems necessary to give a broader scope to territorial marketing by questioning itself in the following way (Meyronin, 2015): "how to make (...) my territory, a beautiful and desirable thing and history for those who live there and for those whom I wish to seduce and attract? ». It thus appears necessary to coordinate external economic and tourism development issues with local territorial issues, by identifying cultural resources as understood by cultural rights: "The rights of a person, alone or in common, to choose and express his or her identity, to access cultural references, as well as all the resources that are necessary" (Meyer-Bish, 2010, p. 6). Thus, to deploy a renewed island territorial marketing, it would be a question of implementing participatory projects and methodologies to meet the following challenges: How to create a common culture? How to promote citizen tourism? How to reveal the identities involved?

Our research proposes to analyse the challenges of this "reverse" territorial marketing. In an exploratory phase of the research process, the aim will be to analyse the representations in order to enhance their capacity to generate new sources of differentiation of the island territory. How can the island's website, particularly the home page, as place of digital expression of the desired identity contribute to a renewed imagination, excitment and to enhance positive behaviors? What is the contribution of the aesthetic dimensions of cognitive designs versus relational, experiential and emotional designs? We present the results of an exploratory study of two islands in Brittany conducted through a qualitative and a quantitative approach (20 residents; 200 potential visitors).

Keywords: aesthetics homepage website, place branding identity, tourism in Brittany islands, cultural rights, visitor and citizen attitude.

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The systemic complexity of organizational processes in the tourism sector: the emergence of a new follower

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The systemic complexity established in socio-economic interactions between territories, organizations and tourists/ customers is undergoing a profound state of change and it appears sometimes, especially nowadays, difficult to process. That's because over time contexts – places where communication takes place - have changed, as well as interdependencies between the actors involved in the communication exchange, one of the most common practices in everyday life. In the social media era, conversation, sharing, and presence which occur on ecosystems like Instagram,

Twitter or Facebook, are symbols of both potential follower/customer and public bodies/employees.

The aim of the research is to critically analyze the digital communication processes that occurs between users and place communicators, in order to test which behaviors - and possibly also biases – distinguish today's communication flow. The chosen methodology will be twofold: on the one hand a social experiment on Instagram account, to verify the digital followership attitude to critically analyze and discuss the destination contents they choose to see; on the other, a content analysis of the interactions of digital users and their behaviors. The implications that could derive from the analysis that authors intend to conduct aims to investigate two fundamental issues: on the one hand, imagine what effects users behaviors would produce on the supply of tourism services. Assuming the emergence of a new follower figure, which is also the uncritical main actor of digital marketing scenarios and contexts; on the other, to assess whether the quality of interaction between followers and communicators allows marketing managers who work on behalf of brands territories to set up a productive dialogue with those new followers.

Keywords: tourism, social media, communication, business organization, sustainable tourism.

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Factors constraining international growth in nautical tourism firms. The case of the Macaronesia islands.

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In tourism, the entrepreneurial internationalization is considered a measure of the development of the industry and a key driver of innovation, competitiveness and the enhancement of tourism image. It also contributes to financial risks´ reduction and prestige increase. In nautical tourism, research is still scarce to support firms´ internationalization processes and explain their success. This paper analyses factors constraining international growth in islands-based nautical tourism firms. In this attempt, a sample of 60 nautical tourism SMEs owners operating in six different islands in the Macaronesia Region (from Canary Islands, Madeira and Cape Verde archipelagos) were interviewed. As a result, we provide up to date information about current conditions and barriers to the internationalization within the segment and also identify the profile of the firms with the best international performance. Results are of great importance for managers and entrepreneurs of those islands destinations seeking specialization and positioning within the international nautical tourism market, as they provide a guide on the areas that require special attention to warrant the success of international investments. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of promoting a wider cooperation among islands with common interest on nautical specialization. Joint initiatives promote knowledge transmission between islands, and may contribute to the sustainability of the tourism industry in the Macaronesia Region.

Keywords: internationalization, nautical tourism, SMEs, Macaronesia islands, competitiveness.

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Circular economy in tourism: good practices in the Canary islands hotel sector

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Circular Economy (CE) proposes production models with zero emissions / waste through the creation of circular and inclusive processes. A successful transition towards a CE will generate long-term prosperity but requires the implication of all the economic agents: firms, consumers and governments. They must work together for a common goal: to implement a fair, social, collaborative and sustainable economy. In fact, in the hotel sector there is a huge pressure on

resources (energy, water, land and materials), food waste, and generates negative externalities (congestion problems, loss of biodiversity, CO2 emissions and pollution). Hence, CE business models can be an alternative in the way resources are exploited and waste managed, recycled and reused in the hotel industry (Ghisellini et al., 2015; He et al., 2018). This work analyzes first, the knowledge and attitude towards the CE concept in the hotel industry and second, studies the circular practices implemented by hotel establishments of a well-known mature resort destination (the Canary Islands). The procedure used to obtain the information was through an online survey which was administered from February to May, 2019. The surveys followed a structured questionnaire in four main sections: circular practices and innovation, energy and water, waste and policy and Corporate Social Responsibility.

Preliminary results indicate first, that the knowledge about CE is increasing and attitude towards the implementation of circular practices in the hotel industry is very positive and second, that the most widely used circular practices are those related to energy efficiency through the use of renewable energies and sustainable practices in water management (Kularatne et al., 2019; Jacob et al., 2010). There is little information and staff training on the need to change to a circular model, and a lack of incentives offered by hotel firms and public sector to implement circular practices.

Keywords: circular economy, innovation, sustainable tourism, knowledge, attitude

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ISLANDAP PROJECT: multidisciplinary approach to islands circular economy

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The scarcity of resources and the problems generated by the large amount of waste generated in the European Union (EU) has led to consider the transition to a Circular Economy (CE) model one of the EU priority objectives. According to Suárez-Eiroa et al. (2019) circular economy is a regenerative production-consumption system that aims to maintain extraction rates of resources and generation rates of wastes and emissions under suitable values for planetary boundaries, through closing the system, reducing its size and maintaining the resource's value as long as possible within the system, mainly leaning on design and education, and with capacity to be implemented at any scale.

However, the CE literature on tourism is scarce even thus it is a sector where huge consumption of energy and water, food waste, congestion problems and CO2 emissions and pollution take place. González Camazón (2016) argues that a tourist generates twice as much garbage as a resident. According to Vargas-Sánchez (2018) this is an area that will deserve much more attention at international level in the years to come from academics, practitioners and public policymakers.

This study is being developed in the context of the Project "R+D+i TOWARDS AQUAPONIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE UP ISLANDS AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY-ISLANDAP" where one of its main objectives is to create a multidisciplinary network to promote the sustainable primary production, the bio-resources valorization, the biotechnology, the circular economy and the education in all these areas. This Network has already been created to inter-connect all agents and actors involved to implement circular business models in a tourism-based islands' economy in order to generate an opportunity for tourism companies to obtain greater sustainability and profitability. Also through synergies between tourism and local agriculture to solve excess organic waste problem by generating new byproducts, agricultural compost, fish feed, among others.

Keywords: circular economy; tourism; islands; networking.

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Portuguese continental islands and Canarias as coastal and maritime tourist destinations: a comparative approach of its media impact

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Based on the concepts of coastal and maritime tourism, we intend to develop a comparative approach to the media impact of the assumptions and socioeconomic and environmental implications of these types of tourism in two insular contexts: the small Portuguese continental islands, sparsely populated or depopulated, although near the coast, and the Canary Islands. Situated 10 km west of Peniche, in the mainland, with a surface of 143 ha, Berlengas Islands are a nature reserve. These islands with more than 65 000 tourists per year generate more than 12.1 million euros from the capture and sale of fish, diving activities and sport fishing Culatra and Deserta, with approximately 7 and 8 km of variable lengths, are part of the Ria Formosa Natural Park, a wetland in the south of the country, with a total area of 18000 ha. The economic activity is developed around fishing and bivalve capture, salting and tourism, the latter very intense in the context of the Algarve. It registered about 36000 visitors in 2017. Canary Islands, near the coast of Morocco, with around 7500 km2 of area and more than 2 million inhabitants constitute an archipelago that is one of the most sought after tourist destinations, with around 14 million of tourists in 2018. Considering the great differences and taking into account the peculiar perspectives of coastal and maritime tourism between the Portuguese continental islands and these Spanish ocean islands which share the fact that they are both insular vulnerable spaces objects of scientific studies, we will analyze the representations that tourism marketing and the media in general communicate about these tourist destinations, which are important namely for the construction of their images as tourist products.

Keywords: coastal, maritime tourism, continental islands, vulnerability, tourism

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Wine tourism in island destinations: the case of Crete

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Wine tourism is a type of special-interest tourism which has recorded a remarkable growth over the past few years (Alebaki et al., 2014), creating challenges and opportunities for wineries and wine regions to diversify and gain a competitive advantage (Hall et *al.*, 2000). Many wine regions around the world – including several island destinations such as Tenerife, Sicily, Santorini, Corsica, Sardinia – have found it financially beneficial to promote such tourism, although much effort is needed to transform a wine region into a wine tourism destination (Carlsen and Charters, 2006). Within this framework, this paper aims to explore the level of wine tourism development in the Greek island of Crete, by examining local wineries' involvement with tourism activities, the type of services they offer to their guests, their promotion activities, the winery owner's perceptions of the benefits that arise from their involvement with the tourism activities, and finally their perceptions towards the factors that could boost the further development of wine tourism in the island. To achieve this objective, a survey was conducted via a structured questionnaire in the wineries which participate in 'Wines of Crete', a network of 32 wineries operating in Crete. Results indicate that the majority of wineries in Crete have engaged in wine tourism, providing multiple experiences to their visitors, as their owners recognize significant benefits to their wineries and the island as a whole. However, they have not managed yet to exploit the full potential of wine tourism, proposing specific measures for its further development. Findings and discussions of this study are useful both to wine industry practitioners and to academic researchers interested in wine tourism.

Keywords: wineries, wine tourism, island destinations, Crete.

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Wine Tourism Consumption Patterns. A Comparative Analysis Based on the Application of the Benford Law

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International literature on wine tourism has rapidly grown over the last decades (Getz & Brown, 2006). In this period of time, the wine tourism business has increased: wine tourism and winery visits are becoming increasingly significant components both for the wine and the tourism industries, as it has been underlined by many studies focused on different countries (Hall et al., 2000). Wine tourists choose a journey for experiencing wineries, wine regions, and tasting a different lifestyle. This choice may be affected by both service provision and an adequate destination marketing. The wine tourist is a not conventional consumer: there is no stereotypical wine tourist, even due to the fact that there are many different reasons on which the wine tourist bases her own behavior (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002). Our research goes in the direction of better understanding the consumption behavior of wine tourists from 7 different countries: Australia, Chile, France, Italy, Netherlands, South Africa, USA. Thanks to the application of the Benford Law, we used the technique of the data analysis in order to understand the differentials in terms of consumption of wine tourism in the mentioned countries.

Keyword: wine tourism, data analysis, consumption, Benford Law.

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Movie-tourism: a strategy for development island sustainable tourism

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For many decades, cinema has been the main way of "traveling through images", of discovering distant places and getting to know different realities. Places able to represent an event, to transfer an experience, able to transmit emotions thanks to what has been seen and experienced by participating in a story.

The simple place in a film can be represented in a way corresponding to the film location, depicting itself and being easily identifiable (as, for example, Kastellorizo in Mediterraneo, winner of Oscar in 1992), or it can represent imaginary places (just think of New Zealand in the Lord of the Rings), or finally reproduce other real places (as it happens for the historical films: Braveheart is filmed in Ireland but set in Scotland, while The Passion was filmed in the Sassi of Matera).

Today, the transition from place to location before and to destination after has become fundamental for tourist promotion by institutions and organizations (DMO, FC), which have as primary objectives: to leverage the media attention generated by the set to promote the island destination; to make known a island territory in its entirety; participate in a communication action to launch new business opportunities, such as themed travel packages, to which more players can participate. The relationship between cinema, island and tourism are the center of this paper. The focus is on both the economic-occupational repercussions in the island due to the presence of the set, and the long-term effects on tourist incoming, determined by the modified perception of these places by national and international tourists.

However, it is not enough to recognize in an approximate way the value that the permanent relationship between cinema and territory can provide to the latter. It is necessary to recognize its nature, the different ways in which it can be generated, the probability of obtaining it in a constant way, the possibility of directing its flows, the ability to development a sustainable tourism for island.

Keywords: tourism, island, cinema, development, sustainable.

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A special type of tourism: islands Religious Tourism

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Over the last few years, in addition to the traditional forms, attention has been paid to the religious tourism which is able to produce consistent flows of people towards those places considered as "ecclesiastical cultural heritage".
Legislator considered the assets belonging to the institutions and institutions not only of the Catholic Church, but also of other religious denominations. Therefore religious tourism is closely connected to churches, chapels, museums, archives and historical libraries, expression and testimony of the "sacred" and of the religious.
Religious cultural heritage is characterized not only by its cultural and historical values, but mostly by the religious significance, actual or even historical.
As stated, it is connected to another relevant issue, represented by religious tourism in the islands, characterized by the constant presence of churches, moasters, chapels.
In particular, the Greek islands are characterized by the existence of places of pilgrimage, religious, monuments of incomparable architecture and historical importance, with icons, hagiographies, priceless heirlooms, Byzantine churches and early Christian, chapels in the islands capitals.
The Greek islands are also characterized by the coexistence of different religious communities, from the Orthodox to the Catholic, living together in full harmony, so much so that the islands are a destination for pilgrimage and therefore for tourists. Greek islands are not only a destination for religious tourism, but this type of tourism is constantly evolving also in the Italian islands.
In Sardinia for example there are many religious paths: walk along sacred rare paths to learn about the island following the paths of Christian religiosity.
This has been shown up to point out how religious tourism on the islands may be a tool to encourage an ever increasing presence of visitors.

Keywords: tourism law – tourist use of the territory – islands - religious tourism.

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The evolution of Malta's tourism product, supply constraints and sustainability

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The study aims to analyse historic developments in Malta's tourism industry, focussing on the changing characteristics of demand and supply. The recent surge in inbound tourism appears to be largely driven by increased air connectivity to and from Malta. The advent of low-cost carriers is considered an important positive supply shock on the local sector. At the same time, the sustained shift towards stays in private accommodation can be partly explained by changing preferences, but also by capacity constraints in collective accommodation establishments. Moreover, the paper discusses the economic importance of tourism for the Maltese economy. It also examines the issue concerning sustainable growth of the sector and seeks to draw some policy inferences.

Keywords: tourism economics, demand factor, supply factors, over-tourism, sustainability

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From insularity to islandness: the use of place branding for achieving sustainable island tourism

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This paper aims at contributing towards outlining the role that place branding plays in shaping a new framework for sustainable island tourism. Islandness, as contemporary context, underlines that islands share a set of unique features and they need to be studied on their own terms; they combine elements of urban regions and rural at the same time. Place branding is evolving as a crucial tool for differentiated marketing that conditionally can also form an alternative tool to achieve sustainability for island regions. Therefore, policy makers need to examine tourism policies for island regions through the lenses of nissology.

It is common knowledge that globalization has intensified the competition among countries, cities and regions to attract various potential audiences and visitors. A number of factors play a significant role in shaping the context in which places develop nowadays: climate change, new technologies, tourism pressure are only a few to pinpoint from the public discussion and academic debates. A growing number of researchers argue that place branding could be that strategic planning procedure needed, able to achieve multifaceted sustainability of an island destination. One very important issue raised often both by academics and practitioners regards the role of stakeholders and the local governance in such strategic processes like sustainable tourism development of a destination.

The literature review attempted in this specific paper explores why islandness and place branding have become gradually very significant for islands' sustainable tourism development. Therefore building on existing cross-discipline theoretical foundations, the present paper aims at (a) highlighting the link between islandness and contemporary place branding, and (b) suggesting a potential framework deriving from this linkage as a proper solution for contributing to the next era of sustainable tourism development for island regions.

Keywords: islandness, island tourism, place branding, sustainable development.

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Accessible tourism: a value added to economic development

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Tourism has become a fundamental social need in our society; the desire to discover new places and new cultures has led to a substantial increase in tourism. Is it not only an important economic factor, but it is also an instrument of personal knowledge and emancipation. Precisely for these reasons, it is necessary to develop and guarantee accessibility for all to tourist facilities, products and services, regardless of the economic, personal and social conditions that could limit their use.

Accessibility, or the absence of architectural, cultural and sensorial barriers, is the indispensable condition for guaranteeing the enjoyment of the tourist heritage and should be the central part of any responsible and sustainable tourism policy.

Tourism without barriers is a resource for the territory, and a territory with a tourist vocation should always allow full accessibility to cultural and public interest sites. Local tourism policies must rethink the destination in terms of accessibility, mobility and reception of travelers with special needs.

The purpose of this work is to analyze and deepen the concept of accessibility in the tourism sector. We will analyze the normative of accessible tourism, the analysis of the demand for European and Italian accessibility and the measures aimed to ensuring the tourist offer accessible. Finally, we will compare some existing realities and some activities promoted by public and private entities.

Keywords: accessible tourism, tourist destination, opportunities, competitiveness.

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