

The European Union and soft tourism for the protection of the natural and cultural landscape: some problems and different approaches

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1. THE DIMENSIONS OF TOURISM IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: IMPACTS, BEHAVIOURS AND CONSUMPTION STYLES

Europe is the world's main tourist destination. Over 50% of international tourists choose one of the European Union countries for leisure, business, health, faith or to visit friends and relatives, generating 407 billion euros across, around 33% of the world total. This represents 577 million tourists, a share that is constantly growing, although the relative weight of the European continent will gradually decrease to the benefit of other destinations: 41% in 2030 (UNWTO 2011, 2019). The growth rate in the last year has been 3%, higher for the Southern and Mediterranean countries and lower for the Northern countries. Just to give an idea of the size of the tourist flows, overnight stays in accommodation facilities in EU countries are about three billion, equally distributed between European residents and non-residents. The most frequented regions are the Canary Islands, Catalonia, Croatia, Ile-de-France, the Balearic Islands and Andalusia. In the first twenty positions, Italy has six regions: Veneto, Tuscany, Emilia Romagna, Lombardy, Lazio and the Autonomous Province of Bolzano. A third of tourists are concentrated in the summer months of July and August (Eurostat 2016). The countries of the European Union are the preferred destination not only for for-

eigners but also for residents themselves. According to the Eurobarometer survey (2016), the main holiday takes place for 44% of respondents within their own country and 29% within another EU country. Sun and beach remain the main reasons for choosing a holiday (39%), followed by visiting family, friends or relatives (38%), exploring nature (31%), visiting the city (27%), seeking out culture (26%), wellness (13%) or doing sports (12%).

These numbers allow you to make some initial reflections and identify three orders of problems. First of all, tourism is confirmed as a phenomenon in constant growth. Despite occasional downturns due to natural, political or economic events (epidemics, environmental disasters, terrorist acts, financial crises, etc.), the sector has never stopped growing and the countries of the European Union continue to perform well. The growth of well-being in other geographical areas (Asian countries *in primis*) will be a reason to push for long journeys, and Europe's major cities and tourist destinations – major and minor ones – will have to address the problem of how to manage these substantial flows of arrivals, especially in terms of environmental sustainability. The UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development recalls the sustainability objectives for the tourism sector in Goals 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all), 12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns) and 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development). How is the European Union meeting these objectives?

A second issue concerns the object of the tourist's gaze and his travel style. Despite the fact that mass tourism in cultural seaside destinations constitutes and will constitute the main share of tourist flows, the tourist's behaviour has undergone important transformations in recent years. From the search for pre-packaged experiences where the social group defines its contents and values and the ability to blend in with others, we have moved on to a refusal to be treated as an undifferentiated mass and a need for knowledge, relationality, authenticity and slowness. Preferences become more individual and more differentiated in terms of places to visit and activities to do. Tourists prefer to contemplate landscapes, to enter into osmosis with the territory through the activation of all the senses and to recover the centrality of the relationship with the other protagonists of the tourist experience (travellers, operators, residents) in order to explore paths of identity rediscovery and spaces of autonomy (Clancy 2018). The issue is closely linked to the problem of overtourism, which distorts the relational and authenticity dimension of a tourist destination. Will the destinations, now less popular with tourists, benefit from these new styles of consumption and the decline of the most popular destinations, but will they be able to accompany the development of tourism in terms of sustainability and avoid conflicts between guests and hosts?

A third aspect is the increasing attention given to a sustainable lifestyle also in the field of tourism. This term refers to behaviour aimed at ensuring that everything we do, have and use meets our needs and improves our quality of life, minimising the consumption of natural resources, emissions, waste and pollution and ensuring the protection of resources for future generations. Sustainability in lifestyles is a broad concept and includes, in addition to material consumption, activities such as interpersonal and leisure relations, sport and education (Mont 2007). The Ecological Footprint parameter, introduced in the '90s by Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees, measures human demand on ecosystems in terms of area, land and sea, biologically productive and necessary to produce the resources that man consumes and absorb the waste he produces. On a global level, July 29, 2019 was the day on which humanity has exhausted all the resources that the planet is capable of regenerating in a year (World Ecological Debt Day). With regard to European lifestyles, this day occurs early: in May for Italy, France, the United Kingdom, Greece, Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands; in April for Ireland, Norway, Finland, Belgium, Sweden and Denmark; in February for Luxembourg. Locations wishing to invest in tourism will increasingly need tools to monitor and assess the impact of tourism facilities and services, as well as tourists themselves, on local resources. Are local authorities adequately trained to prevent negative impacts and manage the process of participation that actively and constantly involves institutions, operators and citizens?

How the European Union reconciles sustainability with the growth of tourism and the management of overtourism in urban contexts and fragile areas will be the subject of this essay.

2. THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The European Commission Communication "Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe" (2010) put attention on some important aspects related to the tourism sector. First of all, it highlights the positive impact on economic growth and employment, while contributing «to development and economic and social integration, particularly of rural and mountain areas, coastal regions and islands, outlying and outermost regions or those undergoing convergence». Secondly, tourism is recognised as an instrument to «reinforcing Europe's image in the world, projecting our values and promoting the attractions of the European model, which is the result of centuries of cultural exchanges, linguistic diversity and creativity». Thirdly, it recalls the need to «reconcile economic growth and sustainable development, including an ethical dimension». Finally, the importance of changes in climate

conditions that will lead to a restructuring of travel patterns and affect tourist destinations is underlined.

The climate is one of the greatest resources for tourism as it contributes to its attractiveness. It determines the seasonality of demand, influences operating costs such as heating and air conditioning, artificial snow production, food supplies, irrigation and insurance costs. Studies by the international scientific community on climate change are not encouraging (IPCC 2019). The climate consequences for Europe will be different. For the Central-Southern area there will be large heat waves that will cause forest fires and frequent periods of drought; the Mediterranean, on the other hand, will become an arid location with few and bad harvests. Northern Europe will increase its humidity and, in winter, heavy rainfall will be more and more frequent, while in urban areas, where there is the highest percentage of population density, there will be high increases in temperatures and many floods that will cause the sea level to rise, causing disastrous inconvenience, since cities are not effectively prepared for subsequent events. International tourism will see an important increase for certain countries and more travellers will flow to cold areas. Climate change will cause a doubling of tourism spending in cold countries and a decrease in hot climates (Hamilton *et al.* 2005; Bigano *et al.* 2007; Bizzarri and Pedrana 2018). The climate issue is a very strong problem for European citizens. According to the Eurobarometer survey (2019), almost eight in ten think climate change is a very serious problem and agree that taking action on climate change will lead to innovation that will make EU companies more competitive.

Also through the European funding programmes (Interreg, Horizon, etc.) the European Union, in close cooperation with the Member States and the main operators in the tourism industry, wants to «consolidate the image and profile of Europe as a collection of sustainable and high-quality destinations and promote the development of sustainable, responsible and high-quality tourism».

According to the Communication, the sustainability of tourism covers a number of aspects: the responsible use of natural resources, the environmental impact of activities (production of waste, pressure on water, land and biodiversity, etc.), the use of clean energy, the protection of the heritage and preservation of the natural and cultural integrity of destinations, the quality and sustainability of jobs created, the local economic fallout or customer care.

The new Green Deal launched by Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, as an integral part of the strategy to implement the UN Agenda for 2030, aims to make Europe the first zero-emission continent by 2050. To achieve this goal, a significant role is given to the tourism sector, which has an impact on the conservation of cultural and natural heritage and which has an obligation to lead the response to the climate emergency and ensure a responsible growth.

Some of the instruments introduced to facilitate the environmental management of businesses and tourist destinations are: a) the European Eco-label which distinguishes products and services with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle; b) the Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) to which organisations (companies, public bodies, etc.) can voluntarily adhere; (c) the EDEN Destinations Network which identifies destinations (especially lesser known destinations) as examples of good practice for sustainable tourism; d) the Tourism and Environment Reporting Mechanism (TOUERM) based on a system of indicators reflecting both environmental impacts (minimum and maximum) and sustainability trends on a European scale; (e) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, suggesting that companies implement a process that integrates social, ethical, environmental, human rights and consumer requests into their core activities; (f) Community Environmental Action Programmes which recognise tourism as one of the key areas for a sustainable land development strategy with a view to: safeguarding the environment, fostering social cohesion, reducing territorial disparities, upgrading marginal areas.

To this list can also be added the Network of European Regions for Competitive and Sustainable Tourism (NECSTOUR), since 2007 committed to implementing the principles of the “Agenda for Sustainable and Competitive European Tourism” (EC 2007). Not to be forgotten is the Natura 2000 Network, established under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC to ensure the long-term maintenance of natural habitats and species of flora and fauna threatened or rare at Community level. The Directive recognises the value of all those areas where the centuries-old presence of man and his traditional activities has allowed the maintenance of a balance between human activities and nature, ensuring the protection of nature also taking into account «economic, social and cultural needs, as well as regional and local particularities» (Art. 2). Among the economic needs is, of course, also included tourism.

Although not an EU initiative, the “European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECST)” should be mentioned which belongs to the Europarc Federation (2000), a pan-European organisation of protected areas. The Charter is a methodological tool and certification that allows a better management of protected areas by institutions and tourism professionals who express the will to promote tourism in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. The Charter commits the contracting parties to using methods based on partnership through precise agreements and cooperation between the authorities of protected areas, tourism businesses and the local population.

The issue of sustainable tourism and recreation is an important area of responsibility of Regional Nature Parks (Köster and Denkinger 2017: 42-45).

Regional Nature Parks are responsible for setting up and maintaining an infrastructure for recreation, such as walking and cycling routes. These activities mean Regional Nature Parks can be relied upon to provide high-quality experiences in nature and sustainable and natural tourism. Regional Nature Parks play an important role as an interface between different interest groups, such as tourism, education, regional development and conservation.

3. THE LIMITS OF TOURIST DEVELOPMENT

The growth of tourism is not always perceived and evaluated positively. Models on the relationship between tourists and residents of Doxey or on the destination life cycle of Butler or on carrying capacity of O'Reilly's remind us that overcrowding from an excess of tourists can cause irritation of residents and tourists and the abandonment of destinations. Over the last few years, there has been a growing resentment towards tourists. In the district of Ciutat Vella in Barcelona live about one hundred thousand people but it is invaded by more than thirty million tourists and commercial activities are dedicated to the use and consumption of tourists. In the face of the disrespectful behaviour of tourists (nocturnal shouting, scenes of nudism, bottles left in the street, etc.), many residents have started anti-tourist campaigns ("Tourist go home", "Tourism kills the city", "Barcelona is not for sale" are some of the proposed slogans). Even Venice suffers from the unsustainable growth of tourists (about 23-25 million per year) with a population of about fifty thousand (constantly decreasing). In Amsterdam, more than eight million tourists are "sinking" the capital by forcing the national tourist board to block the promotion of the most attractive places (museums, canals, red light district, etc.) to encourage visitors to discover lesser known destinations. Tulip fields also suffer from overtourism. During the Easter weekend more than 200,000 visitors invaded the largest Dutch flower garden (Keukenhof). A selfie in a tulip field is an incredible temptation but the damage to the growers is enormous. In Florence, it is almost impossible to think of opening up non-tourism related activities. Dubrovnik has imposed the limit of four thousand accesses per day and installed cameras to monitor the flow and behaviour of tourists. The closed number is also planned on the beaches of Galicia to protect the coast and the marine ecosystem during the high season, especially on the islands of Cíes, Ons, Sálvora and Cortegada. In the Cinque Terre, the relationship between visitors and tourists is becoming conflictual, prompting the administrations to take measures to limit access and to increase transport to regulate the daily chaos for the residents. In the Balearic Islands, the brake has been put on all those promotions that encourage the tourism of *borrachera* (drunkenness) and the stop to

private homes rented to tourists. Iceland is studying how to distribute the more than two million tourists on the island, which has experienced double-digit percentage growth for more than a decade (+344% in the period 2011-17). Finally, the real estate market in the most popular destinations is practically affected by rentals on the platform Airbnb.

These examples bring to light a fundamental point: uncontrolled mass tourism ends up destroying the very things that made a place attractive in the beginning: the unique atmosphere of local culture and beauty. They also highlight two phenomena: *overtourism* as the excessive presence of temporary visitors in certain areas influencing the lifestyle and level of well-being of residents (Milan *et al.* 2019) and *tourism-phobia* to refer to movements of opposition and criticism of the phenomenon of overtourism.

Overtourism produces negative social consequences that often result in conflicts between the resident population and the local administration. These conflicts concern processes of gentrification or the emptying of specific neighbourhoods as a result of the purchase of real estate for the tourist market, the transformation of commercial activities into tourist activities unrelated to the needs of residents, high dependence on the tourist sector (monoculture effect), crowding of roads and transport that make difficult for residents to live their daily lives, high levels of pollution and waste production, uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources and trivialisation of urban and rural environments. There is also a problem of identity and sense of belonging. Tourist monoculture generates gentrification, turning neighbourhoods into trendy places and forcing residents to move to the suburbs. The locals thus feel evicted from the interests of real estate, financial and tourism entrepreneurs.

Anti-gentrification movements have arisen against the choices of local governments and against the tourists themselves. These movements are made up of citizens of different social backgrounds who promote anti-gentrification, anti-speculative practices and against the commodification of spaces for tourist purposes. As is pointed out, there is not only a direct expulsion that takes place through evictions; urban regeneration projects that increase the value of real estate and tourist projects that transform places and local memories into a tourist product to be consumed are also responsible for the abandonment of neighbourhoods. Copenhagen was known to be the city of social assistance; today, it is a green city after the interventions on the harbour, the creation of greenways and green areas, the connections between neighbourhoods, etc. Absolutely “cooler” but with a new social class.

In the '80s, in Barcelona, tourism was identified as one of the main objectives for the urban regeneration of the city. Today, the “Assemblea de Barris per un Turisme Sostenible”, which get together thirty-five neighbourhood associ-

ations, has launched a campaign in favour of a decrease in the tourism sector to reduce the numbers of tourism (visitors, overnight stays, economic activities, etc) as a first step towards a more socially and ecologically equitable city model, through policies of seasonal adjustment, delocalisation and decongestion. Similar movements have sprung up all over Europe, all united by the need to defend a right of residents to their city where they can grow, live and work. This attachment to one's place of origin and participation in a movement of "resistance" can be defined as a form of "restranza" (Teti 2011), meaning the position of those who decide to stay by renouncing to sever the link with their land and community of origin, not out of resignation but with a proactive spirit. The experience of these movements shows that residents are well informed and have a strong awareness of the impact of tourism on local society and how to react; the point is that they do not have the political tools to reach local bodies and policy makers.

In 2018, the Founding Manifesto of the SET Network – Network of Southern European Cities Facing Tourism (*Red de Ciudades del Sur de Europa ante la Turistización*) was made public. Fourteen cities initially joined it (Barcelona, Donostia/San Sebastián, Canary Islands, Camp de Terragona, Girona, Lisbon, Madrid, Malaga, Malta, Palma, Pamplona, Seville, Valencia, Venice), a number that is constantly expanding. The movement is not "against" tourism but aims to spread awareness of the problems caused by the current tourism model and possible alternatives. The Manifesto stresses the importance of imposing limits on the tourism industry and of tourism degrowth accompanied by policies to stimulate other more socially and environmentally equitable economies. Experiences already started include the closed number, the limitation of the number of licenses granted for accommodation facilities and tourism-related activities, the administration of prices in the real estate market, the preference for widespread ownership, the distribution of extra profits of large financial oligopolies and real estate estates, encouraging economic activities with a civic vocation.

Tourism can be a valuable ally for protection and conservation, but it must be properly managed. Administrators and operators must seek the right mix of governance and culture of hospitality. It is important that administrations collaborate with these movements. No one benefits from a destination that collapses because of tourism, not even tourists who do not want to feel overwhelmed by other visitors. But, above all, it is important to have a clear vision of which city to hand over to future generations. This vision must be built in partnership by mapping the needs of communities and building policies aimed at places. The experience of ecomuseums can be a good starting point. Briefly, the ecomuseum focuses on the natural environment and relies on a series of cells formed by the residents of a territory who share the way of life and work and the local culture.

The ecomuseum is built around a shared experience of building a community map that identifies the landscapes and memories, heritage and knowledge that constitute the identity and vision of the future of those who design and live it and wish to pass down it on to future generations (Zago 2018).

4. THE CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE LANDSCAPE AND ITS MEASUREMENT

Talking about the landscape, it is natural to start from the European Landscape Convention, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of Culture and Environment of the Council of Europe on July 19, 2000. The aim of the Convention is to promote the protection, management and planning of landscapes in the European territory. The Convention applies to the whole territory, on natural, rural, urban and peri-urban spaces.

In the declination provided by the Convention, the landscape is no longer considered exclusively in its most aesthetic or scenic components, but is understood in a more inclusive way, also taking into account its historical and economic components, giving a new value to the landscapes of everyday life. In this sense, the Convention has offered an innovative perspective on landscape, starting from the definition given in the first Article: «“Landscape” means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors». The Convention, therefore, in addition to the natural beauty of the landscape, highlights how the interrelation between human and environmental factors generates the peculiar characteristics of the landscape and the role that the local population plays in giving it meaning.

Furthermore, the Convention describes the “Landscape management” as «actions, from a perspective of sustainable development, to ensure the regular upkeep of a landscape, so as to guide and harmonise changes which are brought about by social, economic and environmental processes» and the “Landscape planning” which indicates, instead, «strongly forward-looking actions to enhance, restore or create landscapes». Finally, in Article 5, it states that each party undertakes «to recognise landscapes in law as an essential component of people’s surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity».

Recalling what is written in the Preamble, the landscape «constitutes a resource favourable to economic activity and whose protection, management and planning can contribute to job creation» linked to the development of sustainable tourism. Thus, the active participation of the local community becomes crucial. The residents of a territory, therefore, both those who have been established for a long time and those who are newly settled but, one could add, also those

who are passing through (such as tourists and hikers), become responsible for the knowledge, protection and transformation of the landscape.

These definitions well interpret the characteristics of the new tourist offer where the landscape is the place of living and production know-how, capable of promoting tourist development paths (Calzati 2011: 66). This development can only be achieved by increasing collaboration between actors on projects for the implementation of local identities and the networking of excellence, so as to help promote endogenous development of the territories in a perspective of sustainability too. This means that what is offered by a territory must be closely linked to the will of its residents to preserve and promote it because it is felt.

When we talk about landscape and the relationship between the various actors, it is important to analyse their “perception” of it, what are their mental images and the processes with which these images are constructed. The question is less theoretical than it seems following the signing of the Convention that introduces the perceptive aspect as a fundamental element of the definition of landscape. Referring back to Bourassa (1990), one can hypothesise how this perception can be first of all “instinctive”, because some responses to the surrounding environment are innate and conditioned by natural selection occurred during human evolution. But since the times of the savannahs, human society has evolved, and with it, human responses to the landscape have also progressed. In addition to the instinctive, primordial responses, there are others that derive from education and processes of socialisation and acculturation, which, being filtered by acquired behaviours tend to differ according to culture, age or past experiences of each individual. In addition to the instinctive one, there is therefore also this “affective” perception of the landscape, derived essentially from the first phase of learning, and therefore subject to change according to the cultural or social context in which an individual grew up. But, as Tempesta (2006) observes, the value of landscape also depends on what is called “cultural perception”. This is the ability of people to correctly interpret the historical importance of a given landscape framework or some of its components. The “cultural landscape” can therefore be defined as the history of the territory, everything that that territory has been and now remains written in the profile of places, manifesting itself only to those who pose themselves as culturally prepared observers of a given reality.

From what has just been written, it can be said that the visual quality of the landscape can be traced back to instinctive and affective perceptions, therefore to a type of emotional relationship with the environment, while the historical-cultural one can be traced back to the ability to see in the landscape the typical elements of a territory that constitute its identity basis. These perceptions, these cultural representations of the landscape presuppose in some way an ability to read it, a desire to go beyond the superficiality of the gaze, not only by visitors but

also by residents. The call for a path of development and promotion of the shared territory returns.

To improve the management, information and monitoring of tourist destinations, with particular reference to an environmental sustainability approach, the European Commission (2013, 2016) has proposed the European Tourism Indicators System for sustainable destination management (ETIS). It is not intended to be a certification system but it has been conceived as a process to be formed and conducted at local level for the collection and analysis of data and help destinations to develop and implement plans with a long-term vision. The toolkit consists of forty-three main indicators and a set of additional indicators. The first are divided into four sections (destination management, social and cultural impact, economic value, environmental impact) and the second into three sections (maritime and coastal tourism, accessible tourism, transnational cultural routes). The strong point of the system is a guided process that accompanies destinations to build a process of participation able to implement the indicators. The system suggests how to form an interdisciplinary team, establish priorities, roles and responsibilities among the actors involved in the management process. The phases foreseen for implementation are: raise awareness, create a destination profile, form a stakeholder working group, establish roles and responsibilities, collect and record data, analyse results, enable ongoing development and continuous improvement.

5. FINAL REMARKS

From what has been written, let us now try to make some observations by recalling some points analysed. First of all, the way of choosing the trip has partly changed. Alongside mass tourism towards known places, a simpler tourism is emerging, made of relationality, responsibility and ethics. This tourism was born as a reaction to the stress to which people are subjected in everyday life. Industrial and mass-produced products are reacted to by searching for authentic goods; the lack of security and orientation is responded to by interacting with other people more rooted in the community. A “suffocating” urban context is responded to by taking refuge in rural contexts, perceived as more reassuring. The countryside has become a tourist destination, for the services it offers, together with diversified and quality products, also guaranteed by certifications of origin.

With the emergence of the culture of sustainability, tour operators found themselves faced with a tourist concerned about the significant consumption of environmental and territorial resources of mass tourism and less interested in making his further contribution to crowding and, therefore, to the deterioration

of extremely attractive but deeply deteriorated destinations. The Eurobarometer survey already quoted shows that there is a share of European tourists that, in the choice of a destination pay attention if the local destination had introduced sustainable or environmental-friendly practice (17%), if the destination was accessible by means of transport with low impact on the environment (15%) and if the hotel or accommodation had introduced environmental-friendly tourism practices (13%). One in ten respondents were influenced by the fact that the destination or services used was certified with a label indicating sustainable or environmental-friendly practices (10%). Young people in the 14-25 age group (Z generation) are more influenced by at least one of the aspects indicated.

This attention to “green” translates into a growth in the competitiveness of a destination that is so inextricably linked to sustainability, defining the former as illusory in the absence of the latter (Chiarullo *et al.* 2016) and in a benefit for destinations with a high level of tourism (such as cities) that see a reduction in visitors but a risk for fragile areas that risk seeing parks and reserves stormed by new tourists. Just think that in Italy there are about thirty million visitors linked to nature tourism and the potential of nature parks is even greater, representing the heart of nature tourism products. The Park can be, therefore, the subject able to see in culture the opportunity to stimulate coordinated policies of environmental safeguard and to build common projects for a sustainable future (Chiodo and Salvatore 2017).

Soft tourism, therefore, produces numerous advantages: «the development of new high quality products based on natural and cultural resources, with long-term prospects; cost reduction through collaboration with protected areas; the improvement of the company’s image; new markets; an increase in income and standards of living; the revitalisation of local culture, the uses and customs of craftsmanship; support for rural infrastructure; the improvement of physical and mental well-being» (Angelini and Giurrandino 2019: 8).

Sustainability management is, however, a delicate process because it involves a number of actors in the tourism system who have different interests and who pursue goals that do not always coincide. Corvo (2007: 73-74) recalls some paradoxes linked to the sustainable management of tourism: the promotion of places and attractions whose costs can only be justified in the presence of substantial tourist flows, while at the same time putting them in danger (paradox of the economy of scale); the risk of transforming the specific elements of local culture into realities that are better suited to the needs of tourists (paradox of the globalisation of the typical); the attribution of a non-priority value to the conservation of the ecosystem and local culture by communities, preferring to access the economic benefits of mass tourism (paradox of good value); the transformation of resources not yet degraded by tourist flows into

attractions and then generating problems in the management of their use (paradox of destructive protection).

In conclusion, this specific planning requires tools based on participation and sharing of programmes and decisions that enhance local skills and knowledge and must also embrace the concept of social eco-compatibility, i.e. the cultural and symbolic code through which a population connote and defend itself and its identity. The protection of the social cultural diversity of a community must be just as important as the protection of the bio-diversity of flora and fauna (Nocifora 2019: 123). Quoting Aime (2005: 64): «We have divinized art (and one could add nature, ed.) to the point of placing it above the parts, of making it superhuman: we are willing to defend the Buddhas from destruction much more than we would be to defend the Buddhists». The point is that places have an intrinsic (non-economic) value, regardless of what can be done with them, so that their alteration or destruction makes a community poorer (Del Bò 2018: 78-79). These natural and cultural places are the common thread that joint generations and transmits identity, and in this sense the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites that the European Union supports to encourage a slow and careful tourism (<https://visitworldheritage.com>) should be read.

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