

Community hotels: a model of territorial empowerment

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1. Tourism development and local community involvement. Very often the development of tourist destinations presents an exogenous matrix; in these cases not only do we have a large part of the service infrastructures in the hands of external investors, but also the tourism configuration of the destination becomes the result of a hetero-managed planning that reflects and interjects the “cultural” values of the investor and, consequently, of the tourism demand, rather than those of the hosting territory. Tourism, in these cases, can be seen as an agent of *de-territorialisation*, capable of radically modifying the meaning of the place¹, subjecting it to market logic due to which the territory, as a “tourism product”, must be adapted to the needs of the demand, cutting itself off either totally or partially from its true identity matrix.

The exogenous development of many tourism areas is the consequence of an economic disparity between the areas irradiated by tourist flows and the areas of destination. The former, usually the richest –in fact the tourism demand tends to increase with the per capita income – have more capital and skills available to determine the development of tourism in a given territory; the latter², conversely, have less financial resources and less professional skills to enable them to reach an analogous objective. The generic reference to geographic “areas” is obviously not casual in that the relationship described tends to manifest itself on different scales: the *global* scale where the contraposition is between economically advanced countries and developing countries, with the former who control directly or indirectly – through the system of tourism intermediation – the tourism offer of the latter; and the local scale where instead we very often have a contraposition between cities, as the main centres of tourism irradiation, and the small villages in the regions of the destinations (seaside, mountain, countryside, etc.). The result is always the same: the economic dominion translates into cultural dominion and the economically stronger areas impose their own cultural model on the weaker ones, and orientate their tourism configurations. It follows that tourism as a factor for territorial development, potentially capable of contributing to the reduction of economic differences between the areas of irradiation and those of destination, by activating a process of redistribution of the wealth through tourism expenses, often produces the opposite effect or at the very least reinforces the dependency of the latter on the former. Moreover, even the promise of valorisation of the territory and the culture that they represent, too often falls short of expectations because when tourism development is left in the hands of private enterprise, mostly of an exogenous matrix, the interests of capital are put before the interests of the territory and the prevailing attitude of the investors more often than not becomes predatory. It is to be noted on this point that it is the endogenous entrepreneurial component – which should in effect be more sensitive towards the

valorisation and safeguarding of the territory, and above all as regards its attractiveness (natural and cultural resources) – that emulates the predatory, or at the very least opportunistic, behaviour of the exogenous component. If we consider, in fact, that the local entrepreneurial system tends to develop late and does not have large amounts of capital available, we find that its competitive orientation is usually as a *follower* - that is, it tends to replicate the choices made by those who are already operating on the market, thus helping to reinforce the tourism configuration that these have created. It should be noted that these so called “adaptive” behaviours are also less risky and more remunerative in the short and medium term.

The speculative nature of private investments often lead to the creation of a model of tourism infrastructures that not only have nothing to do with the typical characteristics of the place, but also tend to compromise its attractive potential through a utilization of the territory that de-qualifies the landscape and environment and, on the level of immaterial value, compromises the relational network that makes up the foundations of the territory, seeing as it constitutes the social construct. There is, however, no doubt that a development in the speculative type of tourism is caused by the tendentially predatory nature of capitalistic investments, but also and above all by the absence of an efficient plan of action from public institutions and, as already said, by the lack of involvement of the local communities. The latter are given no opportunity to actively compete in the planning or subsequently in the implementation of policies for tourism development, and when they do participate – mostly passively – it is often only through the promise of a job and a general improvement in their quality of life. Benefits that turn out to be only ephemeral, especially if compared to the environmental and social costs that this form of tourism development usually brings in its wake. The nodal question is the unsustainability of these forms of development. As underlined in the vast amount of scientific literature written on this subject and sanctioned by international conferences on the environment, sustainable development is based on two fundamental principles: intergenerational equity and intra-generational equity. On the local level, tourism becomes an agent for the “sustainable development” of the territory if it is capable of guaranteeing the preservation of the environmental balance and the natural and cultural resources for the benefit of future generations and, at the same time, if it is capable of guaranteeing a fair allocation of the benefits produced by the utilization of these resources within the local community, making sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to benefit from them³. Besides, the resources on which territory attractiveness is based and, consequently, around which the whole tourism economy revolves, make up the intangible patrimony of the communities residing there, what they have “inherited” from their past, and it is only fair that the benefits of the tourism valorisation from this patrimony go to them first, just as they should be entrusted with the responsibility of its management⁴. A point that we find superbly expressed in the “Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value

of Cultural Heritage for Society”, 2005 – better known as the Faro Convention from the place in which it was stipulated – where they uphold the nodal role of cultural heritage for human development and the importance of involving the people who are its guardians.

Promoting sustainable tourism, therefore, passes inevitably through the active involvement of the local communities, but, as we have already mentioned, this involvement can come about and be efficient only when the right conditions exist, only when the precondition for territorial empowerment has been created⁵. What is needed is to re-focalise the tourism production line onto the local communities, making them the protagonists in the development processes of their territories⁶. This kind of objective is becoming more and more urgent in those areas that are fragile from an environmental and/or cultural viewpoint, areas that are becoming ever more the target for a tourism demand that is looking for places that are still capable of expressing their own cultural identity; very often because they have been left behind on the margins of economic development. In reference to our own Country, we can find many areas with this characteristic; for the most part mountainous areas on the Apennine backbone, but these distinctive traits of marginality can also be found in other territorial areas that tend to have an extremely rarefied economic fabric and are a long way from any significant urban poles. These conditions of marginality have, on the one hand, allowed these areas to maintain their own specific cultural identity and a large part of their material and immaterial cultural heritage, and the shape and form of their historical centres and their landscape contexts; on the other hand, from the second half of the last century they have been the cause of a demographic decline that has jeopardized their very existence. Today, these areas – due to the rising interest they have created for the national and international tourism demand thanks to their “identity attractiveness” – often see an opportunity for revival in the tourism valorisation of their territory: a way out of the marginality that has always hindered their development. The risk, in the light of the considerations we have developed so far, is that they become prey to the speculative appetites of an exogenous entrepreneurial activity, usually inclined to the mystification and/or disneyfication of the local culture⁷, with investments that, even though they might create job opportunities, often have an expulsive effect on the local population.

It follows that for these territories tourism could represent an opportunity for development only where the local communities, as interpreters of their own tourism vocation and by organizing their own local resources, become promoters, either directly or indirectly through their institutional representatives, of an endogenous and in-centred project of development and that they acquire the full responsibility of the relative processes and strategic initiatives.

Of course, analogous needs can also be found outside our own Country, in Europe and in most of the Mediterranean countries, and this is why the Italian Geographic Society has decided to promote, in the Mediterranean area, the project *Future of our Past (FOP)*, funded



Fig. 1 The logo of the project.

by the European Union in the ambit of the ENPI CBCMED⁸ programme. The project intends to promote an alternative model of tourism development for historical centres in the Mediterranean region based on the involvement of the local communities, on the respect for the values of the place's identity and on the reduction of any impact on the environment deriving from the touristic use of the territory. Thanks to a wide and qualified partnership that covers the three coasts of the Mediterranean and has the backing of the Universities, Institutions for research, businesses and development agencies, the project aims at developing an integrated set of actions starting with the historical centres and creating the innermost rings of an international network that one hopes will reach out to involve an ever growing number of Mediterranean destinations, to eventually become

a successful reality on the panorama of Mediterranean tourism and thus restore centrality to what is one of its greatest attractive resources: the cultural wealth of the thousands of historical centres that line its coastal regions. The central moment of this model of "community involved" tourism development sustained by the FOP project is the scattered hotel, or more specifically as we will illustrate shortly, one of its variations: *the community hotel*.

The scattered hotel and community hotel – The community hotel is an example of territorial empowerment in the ambit of tourism services related to cultural heritage; it is a particular type of hospitality service that holds and synthesizes the true principles of sustainable development and "place based" tourism. Basically, the community hotel can be included in the more general typology of the scattered hotel: accommodation structures that in recent years have experienced a strong expansion, especially in our Country where this expansion has benefitted both from the specific geographic conditions (see *ultra*), and from a consistent institutional drive, in turn supported by a lively debate on the efficacy of the market and on the territorial coherency of this kind of solution in accommodation. The scattered hotel is a hotel "situated in a single inhabited centre, formed of several buildings all near each other, with a single management capable of supplying services at the same standard as a hotel to all its guests"⁹. In other words, the difference to other kinds of hotels would be in the distribution of the rooms within an area inclusive of residential structures with various destinations. The use of the conditional is due to the fact that in reality this kind of hotel solution, aside from any eventual definition –which in any case would not be able to represent the heterogeneity of the experiences that it directly or indirectly has to offer – presents a specificity that goes well beyond the "scattered" distribution of the



Fig. 2 Specchia's historical centre, where there is a scattered hotel.

accommodation offer. In fact, it is characterized by the use of separate buildings for accommodation purposes within the historic centre of the town and endowed with its own intrinsic potential attractiveness. The appeal of the scattered hotel lies not so much in the characterization and the situation of the rooms, as in the possibility offered to the tourist to “feel part of the local community”. It

is not by chance that among the conditions that characterize the scattered hotel is that of the presence of a “live community”, with its own distinctive cultural values¹⁰, because the objective of the tourist is becoming more and more that of “living places” rather than “visiting” them. These means, therefore, that those accommodation solutions recuperated from abandoned rural houses cannot be included in the category of scattered hotels because they lack the characterizing element: interaction with the local population. Besides, the accommodation formulas that present analogies with the scattered hotel are various and it is not always possible to distinguish one from another. If we limit our analysis to historic centres then the principle elements of differentiation between the various feasible typologies are: the typology of the owner and the nature of his activity; the typology of the services supplied; the accommodation solutions available. In fact, the range extends from private enterprises – in reality more similar to an estate agent's than to a true and proper extra-hotel structure – who rents out to tourists small apartments distributed over the historic centre – supplying, on the customer's request, a series of support services – up to solutions more of the hotel type in function of the kind of services supplied. All these accommodation solutions, independently of the fact that they can be or cannot be included in the scattered hotel category, present some advantages that we would like to highlight:

- The tourism objectives allow the recovery and valorisation of the cultural property of the historic centres that, due to depopulation of these areas, are often in conditions of advanced deterioration with the risk of this heritage being irreparably lost;
- They reduce the risk that the demand for hospitality that follows tourism development in this kind of territorial context could determine a growth in built up areas with damage to the landscape and environment;
- They promote a general requalification of the historic centres by making them a tourism attraction.

The effects of development on the landscape and the environment of this form of scattered accommodation, therefore, seem to qualify it as an efficient instrument of sustainable valorisation of the territory¹¹. In reality, if we take a look at the experiences already come to fruition – the reference here must be Italy because it is the Country where this formula of accommodation initiated and has already reached a considerable development – the scattered hotel is often seen as an initiative of an exogenous nature that in some cases even leads to the expulsion of the local population, which is the exact opposite of what a sustainable development aims to obtain. In other words, the tourism entrepreneur, by exploiting the attractive potential of the historic centre and the value of the property which is often cheap – due to depopulation and the widespread conditions of property degradation – constructs his accommodation offer and effectively contributes to the recovery of the built heritage and the valorisation of the site, but the actual effect is that the residents are driven to selling their homes and leaving the historic centre. This kind of driving force is increased by the pressure of the property demand fed by the request for second homes following the valorisation of the historic centre. The phenomenon also tends to interest the economic activities, thus robbing the area of its original functionality and consequently of its identity references . Therefore, even though we cannot deny that the scattered hotel contributes to the recovery and valorisation of the built heritage of the historic centres, we must also take note of the fact

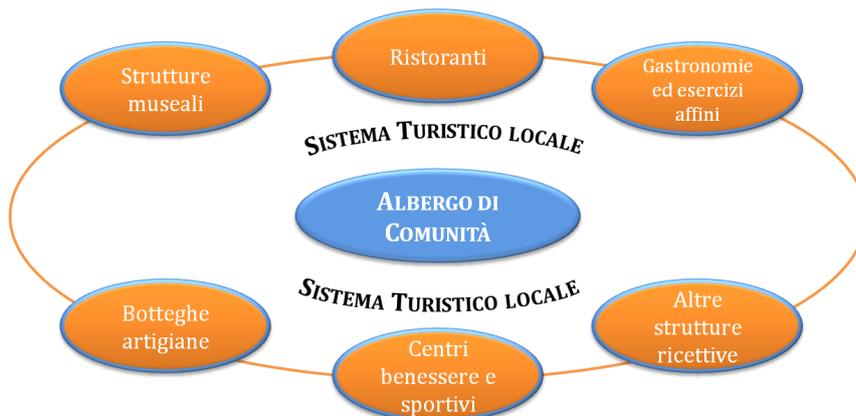


Fig. 3 The community hotel and the local tourist network.

that when there is no active contribution from the local community there can be negative effects on both a social and cultural level, and thus compromise the immaterial cultural heritage. For the historic centres the scattered hotel can be fully

considered as an instrument of sustainable development of tourism only if introduced in a wider project of territorial valorisation and implemented with the active involvement of the residents. This is particularly true for the minor historic centres that are experiencing the process of depopulation, but at the same time have the attractiveness potential to develop forms of sustainable tourism.

This brings us to the need to promote the development of “community hotels”, by which we mean those scattered hospitality structures that originate from the bottom, bringing together any available property of the local community and sharing the management through administrative bodies that represent the community. In the community hotel the property

remains under the ownership of the residents who make them available¹³ to the body designated to the management of the scattered hotel in exchange for a percentage of the introits generated by its use as a hospitality structure or, alternatively, through other forms of business participation. The managing body can take on various configurations, though the usual form is that of a cooperative with functions that include a wider range of incoming activities. Cases of public management, such as in the wider category of scattered hotels, are, on the contrary, quite limited, even if the local body usually has an important role in the initiatives that can also include financial support, often with recourse to regional and/or community funding. The local body also has the task, by no means secondary, of implementing the contextual initiatives bent on increasing the attractiveness and productivity of the historic centre, such as for example: the functional recovery of the public buildings – above all those of artistic and monumental interest; the valorisation of the cultural heritage, both material and immaterial; the urban requalification of the historic centre.

The hospitality structures of the scattered typology benefit from the community hotel because they allow the active involvement of the local community who have the chance to express themselves as a “collective entrepreneurial subject”. The initiative also tends to reinforce the sense of community, often becoming a reference of identity so that this very territorial identity expresses itself and feeds off the entrepreneurial activity. Proof of this can be found in the case of those Municipalities who, in the activities of tourism promotion – and sometimes not only in these cases – have added to their topological denomination that of “Hotel Town/Village” or other similar names as a claim of attractiveness.

The reinforcement of the territorial identity, and its “utilization” in strategies of branding¹⁴, is important for the activation of the dynamics of endogenous and in-centred development and, not less important, for the reinforcement of the local economy’s competitiveness¹⁵. Moreover, the economic involvement of the local population creates lateral interests that reinforce the participation mechanisms and attention towards the dynamics of development and the quality of the territory’s landscapes and environment¹⁶.

One of the main benefits deriving from the creation of a community hotel – also because it is more evident and easily quantifiable – remains however that of the restructuring and re-functioning of the private built heritage. Many houses in the historic centre are not restructured by their owners for financial reasons and at the same time are not put up for sale for emotional reasons; in fact, even when the owners do not live in them, the affective link for the house remains because they are part of their family history and guardian of their memories. We also need to consider the fact that often these properties are shared so that alongside the owners who have little interest in restructuring there are also others who having diverging interests and who want to buy the shares held by the other owners but do not have the necessary resources. So, conferring the status of community hotel to their building means that it is restructured for the owners without them having to sell the property and with the further advantage of being able to use it in certain periods of the year and/or

with particularly favourable financial conditions, in accordance with the contract conferred. Moreover, in this way the rate of usage of the property is much greater than that of usage for second homes and, consequently, the financial introits for the historic centre and the overall territory tend to be considerably higher.

This kind of hospitality solution does not only allow to restructure property in the historic centre thus avoiding ulterior deterioration that threatens its stability¹⁷ and, therefore, its preservation, but it also maintains the link with those who, even while living elsewhere, continue to feel part of the local community and for this reason do not intend to sell their homes¹⁸.

A community hotel – conversely to what happens with other types of scattered hotel set up under the initiative of single entrepreneurs – can be activated by a group of residents, owners of property in the historic centre, or by a local institution that foresees an opportunity of tourism development and requalification of the historic built heritage in this kind of hospitality structure. In both cases it is the Town Council itself who takes charge of the restructuring of the public buildings and then passes them over to private management for the implementation of the scattered hotel, allowing the latter to increase the capacity of accommodation through the use of other private properties. In other words, alongside the private initiatives we can often find mixed initiatives that foresee the concourse of both public and private participants; a form of partnership that further qualifies this form of scattered hospitality, making it an instrument of social cohesion as well as economic development¹⁹.

The Bethlehem experience – This type of hospitality – even if in varying forms and only rarely ascribable to the model of community hotel – has had a discreet diffusion in Italy²⁰ due to both the attention that it has received in the various regions from a legislative and financial point of view²¹, and to the existence, as mentioned above, of hundreds of historic centres that, despite their attractive potential, had and still have a serious depopulation problem with the resulting availability of a considerable number of unoccupied heritage buildings. Similar conditions can be found in many other Countries in the Mediterranean area and it is feasible to presume that the community hotel could be an exportable model that could also contribute beyond our borders to the recovery and tourism valorisation of the historic centres, thus preserving their authenticity. It is not by chance that the pilot initiative of the project *Future of Our Past* (FOP), previously mentioned, was set up during the creation of a community hotel in the heart of one of the symbol cities of the Euro-Mediterranean region, a reference point for the entire Christian world, but also an example of cohabitation between different cultures and religions: Bethlehem. An ambitious project originating in the intent to contribute to the recovery and valorisation of a historic centre that, despite its development around the Basilica of the Nativity – the church commissioned



Fig. 4 a and 4b Accommodation centre.

by queen Helen in the place where Jesus is believed to have been born – has remained mostly at the margins of the tourism development and presents some extremely deteriorated areas.

During 2015, the Dar al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture, Palestinian partner in the FOP project, launched a public call for tender to select the buildings for the scattered hotel. The call was preceded by an informative event to which all the citizens were invited and in which all the aims of the FOP project were illustrated and the need to recover the historic centre with the active participation of the local community was highlighted, focusing on a model of tourism development both sustainable and participative.

The call invited applications from the owners of the buildings in the historic centre who wished to contribute with their own property to the creation of the scattered hotel; the call also specified that on conferring their property to the scattered hotel, the owners would benefit in that the cost of restructuring would be totally covered and, once paid off, they would receive financial returns commensurate to the touristic use of the building.

The applications were then evaluated by a group of experts who, using various parameters (the overall state of the building; the historic-architectonic valence of the building; its position in the historic centre and the quality of the urban context) selected which buildings to acquire. Once this phase was completed and the contracts with the owners were signed, the go ahead was given for the restructuring work which is due to finish by the end of October this year.

Contextually, other buildings were also acquired that had no need of restructuring and whose respective owners had decided to confer to the scattered hotel in view of a financial return deriving from their touristic use.

The two missions in Palestine undertaken by the Italian Geographic Society, lead partner in the FOP project – carried out with the intent of promoting the involvement of other Palestinian municipalities and that involved the local partner, the Dar al-Kalima University College, and the European University Centre for Cultural Heritage, another active participant in the project – have had an important effect of sensitization in the region of Bethlehem and

in the rest of the Palestinian territories, enough to convince the network of the Most Beautiful Villages of Palestine, founded on the example of our national network of the Borghi più Belli d'Italia, to adhere to the project. In particular, with reference to the Governor of Bethlehem, the Municipalities of Beit-Sahour and Battir have offered for touristic use some already restructured properties in their respective historic centres; Beit-Sahour is next to the council of Bethlehem and Battir is only a few kilometres away and was awarded recognition in 2014 as World Heritage for its cultural landscape with its terracing and wise use of the water resources.

Seeing as the scattered hotel must have a hospitality capacity distributed over an area with a maximum radius of 200-300 metres and – taking into account the considerations presented so far – inside the perimeter of the historic centre, Bethlehem's hotel could not have regional dimensions and so they are starting to consider constituting a regional network of scattered hotels and are hypothesizing a centralized management. This would certainly be an efficient solution from a commercial aspect, also considering the fact that we are dealing with adjacent municipalities and that the total area is only a few kilometres from Jerusalem and together constitute the heart of the Holy Land and consequently the destination of a highly notable tourist flow.

More complicated is the question of management. The objective is to entrust the management of the scattered hotel to the Dar al-Kalima University College that has already had considerable experience in hospitality services; though it is in fact experience made in the ambit of student hospitality. However, the need to involve the local community more actively, and in particular private participants, leads us to hypothesize the creation of a model of enlarged governance which will include, alongside the university college, private entrepreneurs and the Municipality of Bethlehem; this latter both as the representative of widespread interests, and as a guarantor of a more efficient coordination between the scattered hotel and the other components of the local tourism offer. At the moment the most accredited solution seems to be to initially invest in College management, supported by a guiding and controlling body including representatives of the property owners and the municipalities; a body to which the College will have to refer for strategic decisions and for a periodic feedback on the management activities and on the social objectives achieved.

From a logistic point of view the community hotel will have a welcoming centre in the heart of the old city complete with a conference room and multi-media areas for their customers and for the whole local tourist system. In fact, the project includes the objective to create a visitors' centre open to all tourists who intend to visit the historic centre and, therefore, in support of the whole system of local offer, and also to ensure an increase in the territorial introits from the hospitality structure and the project in its entirety. It is early days of course to come to any conclusions on the initiative but it is certain that the project has every

probability of becoming a best practice initiative in the ambit of policies for sustainable development in the historic centres of the Mediterranean area.

Conclusions – the Bethlehem experience, above all considering the context in which it has developed, shows how important the involvement of the local community is; how important it is, on one hand, to bring the interests of the residents to the centre of tourism planning and policies for cultural valorisation, and, on the other, to make them an active subject, capable of concretely contributing to the process of valorisation of their territory. In particular, the creation of a scattered hotel, if integrated into a wider project of participation, seems to be an efficient initiative, capable of generating real participation of the local community and reinforcing social cohesion. This model of scattered hospitality not only allows the recovery of the built heritage of the historic centres by increasing its tourism attractiveness, but also recuperates the sense of community through the development of shared activities, open to the contribution of the residents. Because of the emulative effects that it has had on the surrounding areas (see *supra*) even before its official opening due at the end of this year – in the month of November 2016 and, already under planning, the organization of an educational tour for European tourism intermediaries – the community hotel in Bethlehem is a candidate as an example of virtuous sustainable hospitality. An example of how an experience matured in the Italian historic centres can become an opportunity for development for all the cities in the Mediterranean area that, despite their potential for attractiveness, have remained outside the development of tourism or they have only marginally been touched by it, often suffering situations of abandonment and deterioration.

Notes

¹Predatory tourism assumes the characteristics of “topophagia” in that it phagocytizes the *place* as a spatial ambit endowed with a distinctive identity (Magnaghi A. (2000), *Il Progetto locale*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino).

²Pollice F. e Urso G. (2014), Turismo vs. globalitarismo, in Turco A. (a cura di), *Filiere etiche del turismo. Territori della vacanza tra valori, politiche e mercati*, Unicopli, Milano. For some people, tourism development in developing countries is tantamount to a form of colonialism (Cfr. M. Hall. H Tucker (eds.), *Tourism and Postcolonialism: Contested Discourses, Identities and Representations*, Routledge, London, 2004.

³Moreover we are dealing with principles set down in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism for a responsible tourism, Resolution adopted by the Assembly of the United Nations on 21 December 2001.

(http://www.ontit.it/opencms/export/sites/default/ont/it/documenti/files/ONT_2001-12-21_02289.pdf).

⁴Zoppi M. (2007), *Beni culturali e comunità locali*, Electa, Milano.

⁵For empowerment and local community involvement see Zimmerman M.A. (1998), “Empowerment e partecipazione della comunità”, in *Psicologia di Comunità*, Sipco, n.1/1999; while for the relationship between territorial empowerment and tourism development see Costa N. (2008), *La città ospitale. Come avviare un sistema turistico locale di successo*, Bruno Mondadori, Milano; Pollice F. (2002), *Territori del Turismo*, Franco Angeli, Milano.

⁶For an analysis of the role of the local communities in the valorization of cultural heritage see Oosterbeek L., Pollice F. (Eds) (2014), *Cultural Heritage and Local Development. Local Communities Through Heritage awareness And Global Understanding*, Coll. Archeologia, Storia e Cultura, n.6, Appendice a: Territori della Cultura n. 18.

⁷Cfr. Minca C. (1996), *Spazi effimeri*, Cedam, Padova; Cohen E. (1988), “Authenticity and commoditization in tourism”, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 15(3), 1988, pp. 371-386.

⁸The ENPI CBCMED European programme is an initiative of multilateral cross-border cooperation funded by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. The main objective of the Programme is to promote a process of harmonious and sustainable

cooperation in the Mediterranean area by tackling the common problems and valorising the endogenous potential of the area. The Programme contributes to the economic, social, environmental and cultural development of the Mediterranean region through the financing of projects of cooperation. Currently, the following 14 countries participate in the Programme: Cyprus, Egypt, France, Jordan, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Palestine, Portugal, Spain, Syria (participation currently suspended) and Tunisia. The Authority for shared management is the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (Italy). The official languages for the Programme are Arabic, English and French (www.enpicbmed.eu).

⁹See Ara G. (2014), *Manuale dell'albergo diffuso. L'idea, la gestione, il marketing dell'ospitalità diffusa*, Franco Angeli, Milano.

¹⁰Ibidem.

¹¹Paniccia P. (2011), "Nuovi fermenti di sviluppo sostenibile nel turismo: l'esempio dell'albergo diffuso. Tra borghi storici, residenze d'epoca e antichi casali", *Electronic Journal Management*, n.1, pp.1-26.

¹²Pollice F. (2005), "Il ruolo dell'identità territoriale nei processi di sviluppo locale", in *Boll. Soc. Geogr. Ital.*, vol.X, n.1, 2005, pp.75-92.

¹³Availability can be total or partial depending on how much of the property is conferred – usually one or more rooms with annexed services and independent access – or the whole building. Moreover, the owner can reserve the right to use for a certain period of the year, renouncing, in this case, to his share of the income (see *Ultra*).

¹⁴Cfr. Pollice F. e Spagnuolo F. (2009), "Branding, identità e competitività", in *Geotema*, n.37, pp.49-56.

¹⁵Magnaghi A. (2000), *op cit.*

¹⁶Environmental awareness of the local communities is inextricably linked to the affective investment of the residents and to the fact that the sense of belonging to a community nearly always has its territory as its substantial reference point.

¹⁷Seismic events that have been registered over the last decades along our Apennines have highlighted a risk factor in non restructured buildings that are often in conditions of total ruin and a threat to contingent buildings.

¹⁸Much of the tourism in the smaller historic centres of our Country – but the phenomenon is also present in other countries that have experienced intense emigration processes in their past – is represented by the so called "return tourism" or "homecoming tourism" that can be identified in the demand generated by the migrants and their descendents animated by the desire to visit their native towns and, often, to feel part of their original community. This demand, therefore, constitutes an important opportunity for tourism development in our Country, above all if you consider – with an estimate from CISET, the University Ca' Foscari in Venice, in a study dedicated to this form of tourism – that there are 80 million people of Italian origin potentially interested in spending their holidays in their native regions. The community hotel with its particular characteristics could be an excellent solution for hospitality for this kind of demand.

¹⁹Social cohesion is a fundamental condition for the promotion of sustainable development in territories because it creates the necessary conditions for building synergic relations between the local participants and reinforces the processes of accumulation of social capital (Putnam R. (1993), *La tradizione civica delle regioni italiane*, Mondadori, Milano).

²⁰If we limit our analysis to the wider typology of scattered hotel, the National Association for Scattered Hotels counts about 90 structures adhering to the scheme and estimates that the total number of these structures in our Country could be about a hundred units. Abroad, however, there are no more than about ten similar experiences (www.albergodiffusi.it). See also: Dall'Ara G. e Di Bernardo S. (2014), Lo scenario dell'Albergo Diffuso in Italia, in *Rapporto Turismo Italiano, XIX edizione*.

²¹Nearly every Italian region has a regulation concerning the scattered hotel – the first formal recognition was in Sardinia – but very few have been endowed with regulations for implementation; an oversight that in many cases has limited its diffusion and led to the creation of hospitality that cannot always be ascribed to the category of scattered hotel.