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ASTRES

CALL FOR PAPERS

International Symposium

11th edition of the AsTRES multidisciplinary symposium

Tourism agility in times of crisis : replication, acceleration, reinvention... ?

8th to 10th November 2022

Côte d'Azur University - NICE

The goal of this conference is to characterize the "agile" elements of tourism through a multidisciplinary approach. This term originally has two meanings: The first involves lightness and flexibility in body movements, while the second relates to intellectual alertness. As argued by Thomas Paris (2020), these are the definitions which are relevant to tourism. Agile qualities such as these would enable the sector to cope with crises and periods of uncertainty. The term agile was introduced to the English-speaking business world in 1991 by James Martin, who, based on a vision of the continuous upgrade of computer technology, proposed a method of rapid application development. The iterative, incremental and adaptive structure of this method is a basis for current agile approaches, which are particularly useful in times of crisis.

The current pandemic is not the first depression that tourism has gone through. However, with one billion fewer international arrivals, the World Tourism Organization called 2020 the "*worst year in tourism history*"[1]. Other crises have hit this sector hard, with a decrease or even a complete cessation of activity for long periods (the Long Depression of the last decades of the nineteenth century in Europe, the stock market crash of 1929, the world wars, etc.). The magnitude of these crises, sometimes unpredictable (Dubuc, 2020), has often led to the proclamation that tourism afterwards would not be like before. The hope placed in a transformed tourism of the future seems symptomatic of the contemporary "tourismophobia" that reigns among elites, notably through the criticism of "mass tourism", which can be considered as an attempt to delegitimize popular tastes and practices (Equipe MIT, 2002). It shows, however, the need for using the now versatile communication media in a different way. Yesterday's tourism, which was far from perfect, is regarded with dismay in favor of an ideal tourism, with tourists who travel nearby, use soft modes of transport, engage in "sports tourism" or "cultural tourism" and behave ethically or responsibly, masking a blatant "social racism" (Bourdieu, 1979), which forgets that tourism is today one of the components of well-being in our societies, even if it still only involves, on a world scale, a minority of the population.

Nevertheless, this crisis is occurring in a period of climate change, for which tourism, and in particular the transport associated with it, is partly responsible (Delaplace, 2021). A study by Australian, Chinese and Indonesian researchers, published in 2018 in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, showed that the "carbon footprint" of global tourism is considerable. According to their calculations, tourist activity is responsible for about 8% of humanity's total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This percentage is three times higher than previous assessments, which ranged from 2.5 % to 3 %. For comparison, maritime transport represents 3 % of global CO2 emissions (Lenzen et al, 2018). In terms of France, the leading destination for international tourist arrivals before covid-19, tourism-related emissions represented 11 % of the national GHG emissions total, while contributing 7.4 % of GDP for the year 2018 (ADEME, 2021).

In order to make tourism more environmentally friendly, it is particularly necessary to examine its role with regard to the preservation of natural and cultural heritage. An emphasis on creative and integrative tourism can help avoid a concentration of travelers in hotspots while involving local people. Visitors can also be involved in cultural experiences that reflect the identity of the region, in a process of co-creation shared by inhabitants and tourists. Tourists thus become co-producers, when they engage with the information provided to them and give it added value (Esnault, Zeiliger and al., 2006).

1. "2020: worst year in tourism history with 1 billion fewer international arrivals", UNWTO, January 28, 2021, https://www.unwto.org/news/2020-worst-year-in-tourism-history-with-1-billion-fewer-international-arrivals

It is worthwhile to consider the local environment and new ways of approaching space and time, heritage and individual and collective identities, and the cultivation of sustainable development based on a pedagogy of belonging and commitment; these approaches may be able to constructively resolve the tensions between identity and otherness, between globality and locality, two pairs of forces characteristic of globalization (Sauvé, 2007).

In addition, e-tourism can, with the creation of quality digital content, help reduce visitor density (the rapid increase of digital heritage projects in China, online broadcast of live shows such as at the Metropolitan Opera, or even events like fashion weeks in Milan and London). With digitalization, will tourism change paradigm and evolve from an approach centered on standardization, towards a system favoring innovation and "tailor-made" events ? The integration of digital technology creates a new dynamic, as well as a structural and cultural change (Blanc, 2016). This development involves a real shift in the balance of power from the group to the individual (Debos, 2014).

In the face of difficulties and uncertainty, measures have and will continue to be taken to ensure certain businesses do not collapse and disappear. National and local authorities assist the tourist industry, particularly by granting economic aid (Fialaire, 2018). Companies are adopting innovative measures and strategies in response to a profoundly destabilized environment and tourists whose behavior has also changed (temporarily or permanently?). The common denominator of stakeholders in tourist destinations is agility. Agility requires a different way of thinking – i.e., with a real synergy – about the means and purposes of communication between tourism professionals, regional authorities, citizens and visitors. This is all the more important given that the public authorities wish to "perpetuate the temporary" by adopting agile structures (Kerleo, 2020) in order to boost "local tourism" (Pellegrin-Romeggio, 2020). This buzz phrase seems like an oxymoron, because tourism by definition involves going away, but it fits well with the moral question that is emerging: Is it right or wrong to travel? After the crisis, will it be possible to defend an economy of leisure and tourism, and therefore of "unnecessary" transportation? One may question the "greenwashing" strategy behind the promotion of "local tourism" / "staycations", or teleworking, which could be valuable for some tourist, coastal and winter sports resorts. The pandemic of recent times has only highlighted a phenomenon that began several decades ago, coinciding with the metropolitanization of tourist sites and the development of the residential or presential economy (Davezies, 2008). Crans-Montana or Zermatt in Switzerland are good examples. These ski resorts, whose lifts have been closed, have changed their target market in order to welcome people who work remotely. Will this strategy persist? Will we see an increasingly marked shift away from tourism towards complex mobilities combining work and leisure, described by Pierre Veltz (2017) as "heliotropism and residential hedonism"?

In the context of tourism, crisis situations lead to a series of questions relating to :

> past experiences:

A historical perspective is necessary when approaching the current crisis, because in general, the tourist places that have endured are places that have been able to evolve. The Côte d'Azur is a good example, since almost everything has changed between the nineteenth century and today (society, seasonality, accommodation, etc.), but tourists are still here, despite predictions of a decline for more than a century and a half. The past experience of a multitude of destinations is invaluable for reflecting on the moment we are living in. But while there is no future without a past, the future is never a repetition of the past. It is necessary, therefore, to be very mindful of the current situation and the need to rapidly adapt to a changing context, while at the same time not give in to the illusion of a radical metamorphosis and a sense of "nothing will be like before". How can we model the evolution of tourist destinations, considering them as products (Butler, 1980) or showing the mechanism of the rise in urbanity of tourist places, in a way that takes into account global crises (Equipe MIT, 2011)?

> destinations-based actions:

How do destinations evolve, how do they become adaptable and resilient in the face of the challenges posed by the current rapid transformations, from behavioral changes to concerns about climate change and the transition to a low carbon economy? In this dynamic, each tourist destination follows its own evolving process. Therefore, it is essential to understand the capacity of destinations to anticipate, prepare for, react to and recover from every critical moment through a continuous and complex process in which all participants contribute in a dynamic that includes societal change.

Hard hit by the pandemic crisis, many tourist, event and conference venues are confronted «with the challenge of having to differentiate themselves strategically (...) to attract opportunities» (Thomas, Faye, Berry, 2020). With the massive expansion of virtual and hybrid events, new questions arise, for example, what business model(s) (Falk and Hagsten, 2021), what communication, what impact on event territories? Digitalization, accelerated by the pandemic crisis, opens up new potential for the development of events, but what about face-to-face meetings and exchanges between individuals and communities? Are we witnessing a paradigm shift? At the same time, the use of social media and social network-based communication (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) is growing at all scales (Kemps, 2021). It is therefore important to understand the strategies implemented by the various public and private actors and the image Internet users have of them (Christofle, Papetti and Fournier, 2019).

"Partnerships" and regional actions are being established: "influencers", "podcasts", "de-marketing", and so on, especially for vulnerable regions. The introduction of artificial intelligence and data (Guetchouli et al., 2020) can provide greater agility in offering products better suited to consumer demand, including responsible tourism (Mandal, Dubey, 2020). However, it should be kept in mind that crisis exit scenarios do not exclude a phenomenon of «revenge touris» where the forced immobility of tourists during periods of lockdown can lead, by a compensatory effect, to a very rapid and very strong recovery in tourist travel.

> marketing and management practices:

This context of crisis raises the question of the agility of tourist organizations, both private and public. Indeed, the changes generated by the search for the "right distance" are forcing tourism stakeholders to reinvent their management practices and, in particular, marketing. As Briant et al. (2020) observed, "the natural ways of welcoming tourists are being abandoned in favor of all kinds of digital and mobile applications, sometimes with avatars that act as guides". The new strategy seems to be based on connected, local and participatory tourism. Some recent work highlights new theories linking marketing and agility (Kalaignanam et al., 2021). Homburg, Theel, and Hohenberg (2020) identify agile marketing as a key dimension of marketing excellence. They conceptualize it as a strategic way for companies to grow through marketing actions with streamlined structures and processes, as well as rapid decision-making and learning by trial and error. Based on this definition, the concepts of adaptability, speed and iteration can be used to understand agile marketing. In addition, marketing in both the public and private sector is now strongly localized; from cities and regions associated with regional brands (#ilovenice; #cotedazurfrance; # onatousbesoindesud...) to citizen ambassadors able to make the destination "shine" as well as accentuate its attractiveness both in terms of its image and lifestyle. Such an approach is a valuable contribution to the development of tourist communication that can no longer be limited to the three standard ways of presenting a destination – lived, desired, or perceived.

> communication techniques:

How is the sustainable development of organizations communicated? What constitutes "eco-citizen" communication and heritage preservation in so-called sustainable communities? Information and Communication Technology (ICT) brings together communication in, through and from local communities aimed at establishing links between them in order to resolve crises and promote social and regional alliances (De Certeau, 2004).
This context calls for new forms of communication and new mediation practices. Questions linked to sustainable development and eco-citizenship (Roesch, 2003) thus appear at the heart of questions of sociability and cultural mediation.
At the same time, a fundamental research issue is related to digitalization and the study of socio-digital devices (Pélissier et al. 2015). It also specifically addresses the major impact of information and communication technologies and the opportunities and risks they generate, particularly in terms of the communication system. The development of the Internet, especially social media networks, coincides with a renewed need for interactivity that is strongly evident among individuals. Customers and tourists increasingly express themselves by commenting, recommending, criticizing and "playing" with brands while listening to each other and trusting each other more and more. At the same time, innovations shared between designers and users are tending to shift more and more towards the end users (Musso, Ponthou, Seulliet, 2007). Consumers therefore expect companies and their brands to be more respectful and relevant to their daily lives. ICT thus makes it possible to better understand and anticipate the impact of digital technology on the behavior of tourists as well as other stakeholders in this sector. Through increased digitalization, tourism communication must be more and more agile, but also more responsible, particularly in educating and raising awareness of the need to preserve the heritage of the tourist destination concerned.

> publics policies:

National and local authorities can undertake two types of public action (Thoenig, 2014). The first type involves physically identifiable practices: verification, construction, maintenance of infrastructure, allocation of subsidies, etc. The second type operates in a more intangible way via regulations, communications, discourse, etc., which can limit or even eliminate situations such as “overtourism” and “undertourism”, or by generating positive externalities, for example, access to airports, or securing certain tourist areas. This explains why public administrations concerned with tourism are now supporting this sector of activity (Spindler, 2016). This trend in favor of memorable experiential value for tourists and a respect for stakeholders is currently supported, even driven, by Destination Management Organizations (DMO). These organizations, in collaboration with public authorities, steer collective actions in their regions, at least some of which may be considered “alternative tourism” (Botti, Le Roy, 2021).

> *influence and lobbying:*

The current pandemic is exacerbating the competition between tourist destinations. It forces them to be agile and to implement influencing strategies previously little developed. This is where lobbying comes in (Clamen, 2005; De Bruycker, 2019) and its strategic scope, both nationally and internationally (Van Schendelen, 2013). Agility can then consist in using direct lobbying - grasstop lobbying - (McGrath, 2005) in order to influence the decision-making processes inherent in tourism policies - including the offering of financial incentives or support through more favorable legislation. It can also be a matter of generating and spreading favorable perceptions of tourists towards a particular region by using indirect lobbying - grassroots lobbying (Barry, 2000). Finally, lobbying is undergoing profound changes in that it is also becoming cyber-lobbying (Descheemaekere, 2007), or pure lobbying (Lorenzani, 2014) by seeking maximum visibility via the Internet, where traditional practices remain more muted. Lobbying is increasingly seen as an indispensable form of democratic practice and a legitimate component of the new contours of political will, in tourism as in many other fields.
The question that follows is how do the most agile tourist regions use these lobbying strategies to gain the power of influence and benefit from the best conditions for a dynamic recovery? What are the winning lobbying strategies and innovative influencing techniques to adopt in order to increase leadership, build a reputation and gain notoriety? How will lobbying prove to be a new agile marketing practice applied to tourism?

> *legal dimension:*

The legal dimension can involve two aspects. The first aspect relates to health, with two pitfalls to be avoided: a legal framework that is too restrictive and therefore a deterrent and, conversely, a framework that is too flexible and therefore not protective enough. The need for a health pass, PCR tests, border controls, curfews and closures of places of culture or commerce are all legal factors that protect but are unfavorable to tourism. But remaining as open as possible (as in Zanzibar) is risky for health. The second aspect concerns security. Tourism suffers the consequences of terrorism, which is still active and the more insidious because it is local and “low cost”. But in addition we must consider other types of crime, not so much organized crime as everyday street crime, for which the tourist is easy prey. Terrorism and “ordinary” crime thus form a pair that generates anxiety for tourism stakeholders and public authorities as well as for tourists. As a result, the “security” dimension has taken on increasing importance in the attractiveness of regions for tourism customers. The law is seeking to address these questions and to establish the appropriate standards and procedures.

> health concerns:

How do new tourism practices emerge in the post-epidemic context and tend to supplement or replace old forms? The link between tourism and health dates back to Antiquity when the veneration of water and its therapeutic qualities was at the origin of the first forms of travel (Lohore, 2018). More recently, practices combining tourism and health have become a way of escaping from the unhealthy environment of everyday life (Lohore, 2018). Spa towns have thus evolved into vacation spots and transformed into tourist destinations, and travel to them has transformed into a tourist experience (Gardner, 2009; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010). Currently, the thermal spa market, mainly made up of seniors, is weakened by the economic conditions of retirees and decreases in the coverage of the health care system, while body maintenance has become a real market linked to physical norms of "being beautiful and healthy" (Queval, 2008). The challenge is to take care of one's body to improve its appearance: nutrition, jogging, body care, cosmetics, aquagym, balneo- and thalassotherapy, bodybuilding, medicine, cosmetic surgery and so on (Boltanski, 1974; Le Breton et al., 2013). From this perspective, post-covid travelers will be looking for a tourist experience that is both unique and maximizes their sense of well-being (Tan et al., 2014). The effects of the health crisis seem to have amplified the demand for transversal practices which combine the discovery of a destination with physical and well-being activities for preventive health purposes, especially since taking care of yourself and your body is valued by the current consumer culture (Featherstone et al., 1991). Digital technology plays a major role in trips that combine sports and health, which require a detailed knowledge of the location, in-depth information for the tourists, and specific monitoring of the state of health during and after the trip.

These questions, and many others, can be addressed through different theoretical frameworks, and all disciplinary approaches are relevant to this conference.

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1/ The Abstract can be written in French or in English.
2/ The document must contain the title (in bold and centralized), the name of the author (and co-authors if necessary) in capital letters, with institutional affiliations and contact details (email).
3/ The abstract must be written in Word or a similar program, and include **approximately 800 words excluding bibliographic references** ; the margins are normal (2.5 cm at the top and at the bottom on the sides). The font should be Times New Roman, size 12, line spacing 1 and justified.
4/ The text must contain an introduction presenting the object of the communication, its problematic, the theoretical framework in which it fits, the methodology, the discussion of the expected results, some bibliographical references and 5 keywords.

Paper proposals should be submitted to :
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CALENDAR

> 30th June 2022 : deadline for submission of abstracts
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The selected articles will be valued in scientific journals, the names of which will be specified later.

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