

Introduction: The Need for Innovation in Tourism Destination Governance

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“To invent you need a good imagination and a pile of junk”
Thomas A. Edison

For too long tourism has worshiped a Fordian archetype of mass production and mass consumption. It is now time for a paradigm shift. The conference *CIT2013 Innovation in Tourism and Hospitality* has contributed to this end.

Growth is deeply imbedded in our contemporary culture. For over two hundred years, at least in Western Europe and North America, development has been synonymous with growth --measured in physical capital, most recently in GDP terms. Naturally, tourism has been immersed in that mind set as the activity changed from an artisanal mode of operations to mass tourism.

And this tourism business approach has gone beyond other contemporary economic thinking. Even at a time when considerations of limits to growth have troubled mainstream economics, tourism conventional thinking and its main international representative agencies have expressed satisfaction at the resilience of this activity, able to increase its demand by over 4% a year on the average, doubling world GDP expansion rates.

Not that tourism initiatives are impervious to the concept of sustainability. In fact much lip-service is paid to the concept of sustainable tourism. However, the fact is that tourism is an energy-intensive activity, and that it uses abundant natural and physical capital resources with limited concern for the renewability of its ways and means.

This *de facto* light-hearted attitude towards climate change, resource depletion, and environmental and cultural impacts in general is often justified with arguments for development. Tourism is creating employment and increasing incomes; it brings much sought-after wellbeing to rural areas and backward regions; there must be therefore nothing wrong in sacrificing some natural and traditional social capital at the altar of *development*.

Except that the argument is biased. Tourism initiatives may certainly bring investment; and, certainly, investments are the only bridge to the future. But the future should belong to the communities involved, and not only to the investors, or the financial magnates behind them. Nothing in the present tourism business paradigm guarantees that investments will be geared to community development--in terms of improved institutional performance, human capital, conservation of natural resources, and the inherently needed infrastructures and services.

Then, of course there is the issue of competitiveness, with its implications of higher (labour) productivity and innovation. Tourism is a global activity and destinations must compete against each other and be simultaneously sustainable. And, in this set-up, much is demanded of knowledge management instruments applied to the problems of contemporary society and also of tourism. The tools of knowledge management, research, education and training, and innovation (i.e.: the generation, dissemination and application of knowledge), are to technically solve the dilemmas of growth and sustainability.

These dilemmas are serious. Sustainable growth is indubitably an oxymoron, but de-growth produces the very undesirable effects of poverty and, worse still, social rupture, as witnessed in economic depressions. To aggravate the situation and make it even more challenging, labour productivity is highly sought after. It has brought about wellbeing, and is not going to be given up readily. But full employment is incompatible with ever-increasing labour productivity unless higher rates of growth are achieved...

There is no easy way out. Growth of physical capital simply cannot continue forever in a limited planet. But to reduce human productivity and/or keep human resources idle, unemployed, are in themselves contradictory with the accepted purpose of most social institutions, and with the concept of development. Somehow the implications of the present business paradigm have to be made explicit. Then, the need for a paradigm shift –also in tourism—becomes evident, in spite of *business as usual* and short-term interests of the power structure.

It is in this context that the CIT2013 Conference was planned and carried out. The necessary paradigmatic change is essential at enterprise level, but becomes unfeasible if tourism destinations, clusters, do not shift gears. The Conference dealt with both aspects of the same reality.

Governmental institutions such as the European Commission, the World Tourism Organization, the Government of Spain, the Government of the Community of Valencia, and the municipal governments of the cities of Valencia and Benidorm expressed their viewpoints and policy rationale from a macro-economic perspective. Other public and private organizations such as the University of Valencia, Legacoop (Lega Nazionale delle Cooperative e Mutue of Italy), the Federación de Hostelería de Valencia, and Amadeus contributed from their standpoints. Then, a distinguished group of experts and researchers, from academia and the trade, presented papers dealing with specific areas of innovation, both of macro and micro scope.

The academic journal *Papers de Turisme* is now publishing the *CIT2013 Papers and Proceedings* in this special issue, containing fifteen selected academic contributions and ten institutional statements, as well as the resulting “Declaration of Valencia on Tourism Innovation”, produced at the Conference and approved by the attending delegates.

Gratitude must be expressed here to the many people contributing to these *Papers and Proceedings*, explicitly and implicitly. My associate editors in the volume, Dr. Mercedes Aznar, Victoria Gómez and Inma Mora have played invaluable roles in the

review process, as well as Carlos Gómez, Amparo López and Amparo Vallés at Florida U. in the Organising Committee for the Conference. The Director of *Papers de Turisme*, Javier Solsona, and his Assistant Director, Pilar Goñi, have also been key in the production of this volume.

The Conference would not have been possible without the pro-active engagement of Empar Martínez, Managing Director of Florida Universitària, and the institution she leads, totally committed to organizing and hosting the event. Of course, Dr. Danutė Rasimavičienė, President of the SPACE network and Dean of the Vilnius University of Applied Sciences in Lithuania, was a powerful source of inspiration, jointly with Regitze Sparre, Secretary General of SPACE. In addition, my fellow Trustees at the Ulysses Foundation, Dr. David Airey, Dr. Erik Cohen, Dr. Chris Cooper, who personally participated in the sessions, Dr. Kaye Chon, Dr. Don Hawkins, Dr. Jafar Jafari, Dr. Brent Ritchie, and Dr. Pauline Sheldon provided with their usual encouragement, advice and support. Mercedes Carreño and Inés Galindo, also from the Foundation, helped at all times, and Ms Carreño was able to attend personally and participate very actively. Roz Deming has continued her outstanding support of many years to all the Foundation programmes.

Many other colleagues in the Scientific Committee have been advising both the Conference and these *Papers and Proceedings*. They have also acted as blind reviewers and referees for the academic papers submitted, and are listed in the corresponding sections.

Many authorities from the participating institutions have also assisted in the Conference outcomes. I would like to underline the dedication and full commitment of Jan Eric Frydman, Head of Unit for Tourism at the European Commission. Judge Frydman attended all sessions of the Conference and actively participated in them.

Last, but definitely not least, my special thanks to Rocío García for the detailed preparations and assistance to produce this volume.

Tourism must be re-invented and deeply transformed in the coming years. In the building of the new paradigm we will need, to paraphrase Edison, “a good imagination to build afresh from several piles of junk”. It is our hope that the *CIT2013 Innovation in Tourism and Hospitality* has helped in this quest, and that the present volume is a witness of the endeavour.

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Editor

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