



**URBAN COMPETITIVENESS, CULTURE
AND TOURISM. CRITICAL ASPECTS IN
ROME PLANNING EXPERIENCE**

Roberta Gemmiti

Working paper n. 92

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ABSTRACT

In the era of globalization, the competition between cities increasingly results in projects and plans aimed at enhancing tourism and culture through tangible and intangible measures. This is a new relationship between the city/tourism/culture, which is partly explained by the big transformations that occurred in these areas. Tourism is important in the economy of this millennium, especially in the cultural segment, which is now highly fragmented and finds in the city the most appropriate context for its development.

Culture is one of the most important economic sector representing, at the same time, all the amenities that make a city attractive. Despite its widespread practice, the use of cultural tourism projects for the enhancement of urban competitiveness has many controversial aspects.

The paper presents the experience of Rome, which in the last twenty years has chosen a development model based on tourism and culture. One of the most relevant impacts of this planning approach is that of the spatial selectivity of measures that, aiming at the valorization of tourism resources only, may bring about new imbalances in the current level and potential of development of the urban/metropolitan territory of Rome.

Keywords: tourism; culture; competitive cities; Rome

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1. Introduction

Cities are at the centre of a new relationship linking them to the sectors of culture and creative industries, tourism and cultural tourism. The promotion of these sectors, in fact, seems to represent the most common answer to the urban economic and labour crises and to the stronger competition between cities in the global era.

More and more often we learn of new architectural symbols, new buildings as theme parks or special museums, new cultural events, about to be realized in more or less important urban contexts (Landry and Bianchini, 1995; Porter and Shaw, 2009), with the aim of attracting touristic flows or promoting culture, but more specifically of re-launching cities' image and attractiveness.

The global urban competitiveness, namely that set of policies that cities put in place to attract international investments, as well as human and financial resources, is now widely achieved through tourism and culture.

The explanation of this new and stronger relationship is to be found in some processes of transformation of the economy that have made culture and tourism two of the most important 'new urban economies' (McNeil and While, 2001; Scott, 2001; Hall, 2000), but even a means through which cities redesign their own image and improve their attractiveness level.



First, we are witnessing a process of culturization of the society (Richards, 2001) or of general convergence between urban economy and culture dominions (Scott, 2001). It is a general process overcoming the Fordist production system, already envisaged by Keynes at least seventy years ago (Hall, 2000), in which firms, in order to be competitive, must differentiate their products by transforming them into experiences for consumers (Amin and Thrift, 2002). Thus, culture and creativity become key components for the development and competitiveness of enterprises and territories, on the one hand, because the sectors producing goods and services with a high cultural and symbolic content are more competitive (from entertainment to the achievement of social status), and, on the other hand, because culture itself is moreover seen as a marketable good in its different expressions, e.g. performing arts, media, entertainment (Scott, 2001).

Such process of differentiation of goods and services has highly affected tourism with a strong demand for originality, uniqueness, and individuality of the experience: tourism has turned into a mass phenomenon, constituting by new and innovative components, and cultural tourism has become one of the most complex, differentiated and growing components of international flows (Smith, 2003; Urry, 2001; WTO-ETC, 2005).

Second, we are witnessing a strong combination between tourism and culture. According to Evans, it is with tourism that branded arts and entertainment share



common characteristics, since resorts and destinations have long been branded and pre-packaged (2003: 418). Therefore, tourism and culture become the starting point for the success of development programs and revitalization plans to enhance the image and boost citizen's pride (Richards, 2001: 3), as well as the combination of amenities that represent the competitive advantage of the city (Clark *et al.*, 2002; Lim, 1993; Zukin, 1995; Fainstein *et al.*, 2003).

Finally, all this is linked to the need of cities to develop their own creative industry as their competitive strength depends on their ability to generate product innovation. Hence, tourism, culture, and creativity are the leading sectors of the urban economy, but also the tools that, if included in projects and plans, increase the capacity of cities to attract resources (human and financial) necessary for their development.

Given the widespread practice of cities to promote development through plans and projects based on tourism, culture and creativity to attract external resources, a large critical literature is available.

In general, it has been said that investment in culture and creativity resembles a 'call to action' or a 'paradigmatic shift' (Chatterton, 2000: 392) which any city can put into practice as an image-enhancement tool (Judd and Fainstein, 1999; Selby, 2004). In the specific area of tourism, Richards and Wilson have argued 'nothing succeeds like success' and cities have become able to 'borrow' ideas from other



cities, especially from those which represent global models of culture-led urban development (Baltimore for its waterfront, Bilbao for its iconic museum, York for its historic past, Barcelona for the event-led regeneration). The result is a tendency to homogenization of tourist spaces, particularly in cities, which is not positive neither for competitiveness nor for the impact on residents. (Augé, 1995; Ritzer e Liska, 1997; Judd, 2003; Richard e Wilson, 2006), and the production of homogenous and convergent landscape which looks as the necessary infrastructure of any International city (Sassen, 2008).

If we look at the effects that such policy choices really produce on the development of the city and on the quality of life of its citizens, the relevant literature seems to be even more uncertain. Actually, there is still considerable uncertainty about the overall results of policy makers and planning decisions on 'flagship projects', in the form of large events or iconic buildings. For instance, there is doubt on the effects brought about by big events to the urban economy, as shown in recent studies in the 'European Capital of Culture' project (European Commission, 2004; WTO-ETC, 2005).

The economic output of cultural-led strategies is beginning to be really uncertain even in the construction of iconic structures. The so-called McGuggenheim phenomenon, that is the diffusion of new symbols of post-modernity such as museums, thematic spaces, towers, statues, bridges, is starting to



produce negative effects. Some of these iconic structures are suffering from financial problems, maybe due to the loss of their distinctive qualities (Richards and Wilson, 2006).

If the economic effects are indefinite, there is even greater uncertainty about the repercussions of a big event on the different components of an urban system, such as functional assets, the social-spatial system, the natural environment, the landscape and resident identity. Most research on event impacts tend to privilege the economic dimension of the effects, even though this is a limited part of the full range of impacts.

Recently, a literature has been created on specific case studies on the negative effects produced by culture and creativity-led urban projects. In fact, studies have been diffused on how big events, used as a real spatial planning tool (Michailidis, 2007), can have a significant negative impact on the city, even in cases when the image and economic feedback is generally positive. For example, although Barcelona is an example of best practice in promoting itself, it has received criticism in the fact that culture is promoted as an economic sector rather than as a key factor for the promotion of the city's values and identity (Monclús, 2000; 2003; Balibrea, 2001). Some experiences of re-branding and marketing cities, for example, have led to a real distortion of the urban landscape, in the effort to achieve consistency in the 'stories' told about the city by the brand (Kavaratzis, 2004).



Landscape impacts often happen where new iconic structures are produced, spaces for local communities are modified and/or subtracted, the centre is re-launched at the expense of the periphery, and interventions are made on the social-spatial balance with a strong impact on the sense of identity that the landscape gives to citizens (Beriatos and Gospodini, 2004; Sassen, 2008).

From a general perspective, it has been stressed that the use of culture in order to renew urban economic growth can lead to significant social and spatial distortions (Miles and Paddison, 2005); and this is true when the strategy is targeted at developing its commercial aspect, investing in products with a high symbolic content, and when culture is employed as a way of increasing entertainment and experience opportunities, thus becoming more competitive on a global scale by acting through the 'shop window' of tourism.

The aim of this paper is to contribute to the critical literature on urban policies aimed at competitiveness through tourism and culture-led projects, presenting the planning experience carried out in Rome (Italy) over the last twenty years.

Like many other cities, Rome had to face problems of economic transition, global competition, institutional re-articulation, and reduction of state funding and development measures. The strategy chosen, first with the New Master Plan (NMP) and recently with a brand new Strategic Development Plan (SDP), has been to focus almost exclusively on tourism and culture.



The goal is to raise the image and competitiveness of the city, which is nearly exclusively intended to promote only a few production segments and very specific urban spaces. The experience of Rome is, therefore, an emblematic case of a major simplification of the economic, social and environmental processes in place in the city, with obvious risks of negative effects and increase of imbalances within the urban area (Chatterton, 2000).

2. The revitalisation of the city of Rome through tourism

Rome is a city rather particular both in terms of settlement and functions (see Table 1). The Municipality of Rome (NUTs5 level) covers a very wide territory, with large areas not yet urbanized away from a traditionally compact historic center, where the most important functions of the city are performed. Such functions are mainly of national relevance and typical of a State Capital.

Traditionally, the city provides services related to the public administration and thrives on retail trade, national and international tourism thanks to its invaluable cultural heritage. It has never been a real industrial city, except for the presence of small and medium-sized enterprises and the recent development of a few spaces for high-tech industry.



Rome does not have an international exposure in terms of trade of goods and services or Foreign Direct Investment, and the sectors proving its international relations are tourism and the media industry (Taylor, 2005).

The city has always been an important destination for international cultural and religious tourist flows, and for many decades such role has been almost unintentional as did not require specific planning measures given the importance of the amenities provided. From the 1990s, starting from the World Football Championship, local institutions tried to start a new programme of development for both the city and tourism, taking advantage of some important events taking place at that time.

However, on the occasion of the World Football Championship, a lack of a clear model of planning of the event was observed. The building of huge football facilities was linked to the renewal of peripheral and degraded areas, but what could have been a chance for renovation and urban upgrading unfortunately turned into extensive underutilization and deterioration of the facilities. This first failure verified the need for a better understanding of the city-tourism relationship and its transformation into territorial development policy and governance.

In the early 1990s, the launching of the New Master Plan opened a new phase of the city-tourism relationship, granting wide opportunities to the sector, notwithstanding the lack of assessment of Rome's vocation and identity. The



tourism demand was not clearly measured and, notwithstanding the information from studies on Roman tourism, the demand was not correlated with a real policy supply. Moreover, the only stakeholders involved in decision-making were tour operators and hoteliers who hardly proposed the renovation of the buildings.

From 1996 onwards, tourism was strongly associated with the New Master Plan, especially on the occasion of the 2000 Jubilee, with particular reference to the following sectors: infrastructure and accessibility; 'green' facilities, parks and natural environments (with local farmhouse holiday development projects); service sector development in public facilities and, more recently, in culture and entertainment, including distinctive landmarks and big commercial spaces in the peri-urban fringe. The role of tourism in the NMP was linked to local development, converging like other economic sectors to achieve an important goal of the plan: to reduce the gap between the centre and the periphery by producing a polycentric spatial model for the city and the metropolitan region. According to the Master Plan Report, the main guideline is the decentralization of the offer opportunities and a better interrelation between the different parts of the city.

In actual fact, in a decentralizing 'top-down' process grounded in twenty local administrative districts, the Plan localizes a similar mix of functions in selected areas; tourism, in the form of accommodation structures, is for the larger part developed in peripheral or semi-peripheral areas and almost always associated with



big commercial areas, public and private office buildings, and residential spaces. The functional decentralization is moreover strictly related to the strengthening of the accessibility system, the true pillar of the development model.

In truth, many of the preliminary studies on Roman tourism show the real tourism potential of each sub-system, in terms of the available resources and the possible development of traditional and alternative forms of tourism. But the planning approach, the chosen mixture of functional elements, the localization of new accommodation facilities and investments in the cultural and symbolic economy of the city reveal the essential aim of the Plan: to design a new cultural and tourist city in which the sole development opportunity for the peripheral areas is to house the symbols of the city's new image, and to offer new cultural and tourism facilities.

2.1 New icons for a new image

These strategic aims for the city have been largely achieved in the fifteen years of the New Master Plan's development process, through a whole series of activities of relevant impact, accomplished through instruments such as the Planning Agreement and Project Financing.



In the NMP, the city has been divided into different intervention zones, from center to periphery: i) the historic city; ii) the consolidated city; iii) the city in restructuring; iv) the city in transformation.

On these zones, the plan identifies measures through the so-called Central Places, which are categorized into three hierarchical typologies: the Local (more than 60), the Urban (10), and the Metropolitan (8).

The Local Central Places are not relevant to the aim of this paper, because the NMP substantially provides for little improvement in the viability and residential quality of life. Actually, it is through the Urban and Metropolitan Central Places that the plan sets up the strategy of re-launching a city's image and competitiveness. The majority of the Urban and Metropolitan Central Places are built close to, and outside, Rome's ring road (Grande Raccordo Anulare, GRA), and most of them are on the right side of the Tiber River (that cross the city from north to south). The projects involve mainly accommodation facilities, new architectural symbols, new functional spaces for commerce (shopping malls and wholesale dealers), new suburban residential areas.

Accommodation is mainly created through mega-hotels located in Metropolitan Central Places around the GRA, from the east side of the city going to the sea following the Tiber. The relationship between tourism, culture, the creative atmosphere and the dynamic economic image of the city are reflected also in city



projects which are not specifically for tourism, carried out both in the city centre and along route to the sea.

Many Urban Projects, introduced by Law no. 396/90 and subsequently implemented into the Master Plan Technical Regulations, have been carried out in these areas. Through significant landmarks, often projected by 'Star Architects', the Plan designed a new cultural and economic city core and periphery (see Figure 2). The new tourism and cultural core begins in the north and includes the Foro Italico sports complex, which was built in the 1930s and re-launched in the 1960s on the occasion of the Olympic Games. In 2002, the Italian architect Renzo Piano built the new Auditorium (Park of Music) very close to this area. Again in the area of the Foro Italico many of the sports venues and facilities for the 2009 World Swimming Championships were placed.

From the Foro Italico, which increasingly stands out for being a sports and entertainment area, it is possible cross the Tiber River using the newly built "Music Bridge" (190 meters, designed by the architectural firm that built the Dome in London) to reach the new MAXXI Museum set up by Zaha Adid. From here, at short distance, it is easy to reach the historic centre with its important historical-artistic architectural heritage.

At short distance from the Colosseum and Circus Maximus, the NMP has planned the transformation of a very large and disused productive area (Ostiense,



its General Markets and old Slaughter House) into a cultural tourism one which has now become a new cultural centre.

This area has been perceived as a cultural cluster for young people (a sort of Italian Covent Garden) for entertainment and the performing arts; besides new University facilities and public offices, it will also hold a Centre for Sciences (Città della Scienza), a new bridge (Ponte della Scienza), a new Contemporary Art Museum, a Gastronomic Centre (Città del Gusto), a new Multi-Media Library, a public Museum and many other small initiatives.

From this new cultural area in a few minutes it is possible to reach the EUR district, which was founded in the 1920s and since then intended to play the role of modern and representative district of the city.

Then, the NMP developed a different axis of cultural tourism, which is more addressed to targeted visitors and business travelers. From EUR towards the sea and particularly towards the city's International Airport (Fiumicino), NMP has planned and partially implemented a number of new functions and symbols mainly in peripheral areas, previously natural or rural.

The new project for EUR consists of a Congress Centre by Massimiliano Fuksas, the Finance Towers by Renzo Piano and Daniel Libeskind, and a big shopping-mall completed by Fuksas. In this area, defined as Rome's new Business District, cultural tourism leads the way to business tourism, which includes the



entire way to the sea and to Fiumicino Airport. The new Trade Fair of about 186 000 square metres was located in this area. The Plan foresees the realization of two Towers by Franco Purini for housing and accommodation facilities, and close to the airport, a skyscraper of almost a hundred metres will ‘mark’ the entrance into Rome. A substantial part of the rural or green areas of Rome (the so called Agro Romano) houses these new architectural symbols, together with shopping malls, an outlet and one million of square meters allotted to wholesale retailer (so called Commercency).

2.2 The New Strategic Development Plan

The preparation of the New Master Plan for the city of Rome was concluded in 2008, and the Municipal Council, chaired by Mayor Veltroni, was replaced by the current one.

The approach taken by the Rome’s new Municipal Tourism Board is quite similar to the previous model of urban development. Certainly, it is too early to evaluate the planning approach adopted by a Board which has been leading the city for only three years. However, some remarks on the vision of Rome can be made. As already mentioned above, the NMP promoted the urban core as main cultural and tourism amenity, creating the necessary infrastructures and facilities to support



peri-urban areas. This approach contributed to strengthen the gap between the centre and the periphery, as it has denied the suburban area the opportunity to develop in an endogenous and autonomous manner that would have valorized the diversity between the two areas. In addition, new buildings for residential and economic purposes had strong impacts in terms of soil consumption, loss of environmental and identity values in previously rural areas.

In the new vision of Rome, proposed by the present local government, the core is the only component almost exclusively promoted, aiming at the strengthening of the axis Foro Italico / EUR district already described above. The periphery is not considered as urban space to be promoted and developed, but only as area to be regenerated and equipped with essential services following a very traditional planning approach.

On the contrary, the core is promoted as the top resource to be valorized for Rome's candidacy for hosting the next Olympic Games, and it is at the centre of a new, and first for Rome, Strategic Development Plan (SDP). Even on this occasion, tourism plays a key role for the economic and territorial development of the city. According to the vision emerging from the documents prepared by a group of experts formed to outline the objectives and measures for the city (Commissione per il Futuro di Roma Capitale, 2009), Rome will become a polycentric city, based on culture and knowledge, a dynamic city, especially in the sectors of tourism,



entertainment and leisure economy, as well as a cohesive and supportive, competitive and international city.

Tourism is seen as a sector to be diversified investing in the youth, congress, religious, cruise and maritime, environmental, theme park, and marine sectors. The need to spatially specialize the tourism demand, strengthening, for the time being, only the cluster of business tourism, which extends from EUR to the new Fiera di Roma (Rome's Fair Centre) up to the international airport is also clearly and extensively debated. Lastly, tourism and culture are considered sectors to be revitalized through big and small events to make the supply more innovative and different from that traditionally associated with cultural heritage.

Besides the numerous projects conceived (Stravato, 2010) which will be at the basis of the Strategic Development Plan of Rome, some measures are already being implemented. Among these, it is worth underlying the strengthening of the core areas as tourism and cultural amenities. In view of the River Park for the 2020 Olympic Games, the area of the Foro Italico continues to hold its strategic role in the tourist function of the city to a larger extent than in the case of the NPRG; the EUR district comes out further strengthened through impact measures such as the creation of a new Formula 1 track, golf courses, water park built under the artificial lake already existing, some new skyscrapers, and the new convention centre designed by Fuksas. Finally, Rome will redevelop its waterfront (Lungomare di



Ostia) with the aim to diversify Rome's tourism, recovering the ancient glory and attracting visitors from all over the world.

3. A concentrated and selective development

The first general criticism of Rome's development model regards the fact that urban planners seem to want to develop a model of the city that they *would like to have* instead of the city they *do have*, copying successful experiences from abroad and investing in the supply-side with the hope of fostering demand.

As said, the planning approach adopted for the city of Rome over the last twenty years focused on tourism and culture as the only sectors to invest in implementing a very restrictive policy in terms of resources and urban spaces to enhance. The result was a more marked difference between the core areas and the peripheral ones, which lacked any incentive for local development (Gemmiti, 2008).

The feeling is therefore to have a very large city with a strong internal diversity, which, however, is neutralized to promote only some areas with outstanding resources, namely the most attractive ones at international level and the most appropriate to convey a new image of the city. Unfortunately, these areas extend on



a very narrow portion of the city, which, however, is considered to be sufficient to promote the urban development of the future.

If you examine the potential for tourism of Rome at different geographic scales of analysis, this kind of “mistake” is well evident.

By using the traditional spatial indicators on a large scale (Nuts-3; Nuts-5), Rome without doubt gives the impression of being a dynamic region with an important tourism sector, notwithstanding a whole set of competitiveness aspects that need to be improved.

In the tourism sector, Rome has a good accommodation capacity, larger than London (104 000) and not far behind Paris (over 154 000); considering all forms of accommodation, the city offers a good density (per 100 000 people) of accommodation structures, ranking second to London (88.2) and beating Paris (72.4). As far as tourism flows are concerned, Rome attracts considerable national and international arrival rates (9% of the worldwide total), although not comparable with London (35%) and Paris (19%). The resources that Rome possesses and which explain a high tourism performance are known worldwide; above all, regarding its huge traditional cultural resources, in view of the fact that the old town center of Rome was granted the status of World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1980, with a wealth of registered sites and monuments larger than those of London and Paris.



Apart from being a World Heritage site, Rome also has a rich patrimony of museums, with 32 of the 193 National Museums throughout Italy. From the point of view of culture, Rome is considerably dynamic, in fact the city offers over 25 000 theatre shows every year, in comparison with 12 000 in Milan and 5 000 in Naples; local government has invested a substantial amount in the last decade, for example funding from the Town Hall increased by over 40% from 2001 to 2005.

In recent years, local government investments have promoted a tourism offer which is still strongly linked to the historical artistic value of the city centre, also in the attempt to lengthen the average tourism stay. The average stay in Rome, in fact, is definitely inferior compared to London, where visitors stay for about 6.5 days, but very similar to other European capital cities where the average is less than 3 days. The numerous cultural projects, with the creation of many architectural symbols, and big and small events (the International Film Festival, not yet launched, and the ‘Nuit Blanche’) were created also with the aim of prolonging tourism stays in the city.

Alongside traditional tourism, Rome is also currently living a dynamic moment on the economic and social scale, and has functions that are typical of global cities, in that it can also attract tourism flows that are not essentially for holidays. According to a recent research (ESPON, 2006), Rome is classified as a metropolitan growth area (MEGA), that is a city that for mass, competitiveness,



connectivity, and knowledge, ranks second to the two European global nodes of London and Paris. The favorable climate and the heavy investments in the tourism sector have started attracting superior functions: for example, the Congressional Tourism Exchange, after twenty years of being held in Florence, has been held in Rome for the last two years.

The great potential of Rome on the metropolitan scale (justifying the enormous investments by the NMP in the culture and tourism sector), in relation to the sub-urban scale, has its potential all concentrated in a very restricted area. By applying some of the examined indicators to the sub-urban scale, we can see the image of a central pole with some semi-peripheral or peripheral areas which the Master Plan uses to boost the city center.

In fact, there are many aspects to discuss.

The most important is that of the total tourist arrivals and overnights in the province of Rome in 2006, 81% and almost 84% respectively are located in the central district of the city (that is just 1,1% of the land surface of Rome); moreover, the central district has around 56% of the arrivals and 57% of the overnights. Just two other districts, the XVII and XVIII areas achieve about 5%. Furthermore, according to the 2001 census, around 30% of the overall hotel and catering sector is concentrated within the central district. One must also consider the fact that out of a total of 49 National Museums, 33 are located inside the central district, and more



than half the places authorized for music and various art activities are located inside the central district. Finally, a third of the overall licenses for shows and entertainment, are in the city center.

4. Conclusion

With regards to modern architecture, M. Augé has recently noted how «l'architecture mondiale, dans ses œuvres les plus significatives, semble faire allusion à une société planétaire encore absente. Elle propose les fragments brillants d'une utopie éclatée à la quelle nous aimerions croire, d'une société de la transparence qui n'existe nulle part encore» (Augé, 2007: 2). Something similar seems to be happening in Rome and, probably, in several other cities that have chosen to follow the pre-packaged and most common urban strategies to enhance their competitiveness.

As stated above, the New Master Plan, regarding the tourism and cultural sector, follows two different approaches. The first is to create large accommodation facilities and post-modern symbols in peri-urban areas, both in areas with specific urban functions as well as in areas with no particular character. The most important localization criteria for new huge structures in Rome, such as a multiplex or big



shopping malls continues to be accessibility and easy motorway connections, following traditional criteria but contrary to the recent urban trends (Evans, 2003).

The second aim and approach attempts to localize landmarks mainly inside the city to create two kinds of districts: (i) the cultural district, starting from the Foro Italico, and including the heritage of the historic centre and the new forms of 'edutainment' of the renovated area of Ostiense; and (ii) the business district, stretching from the EUR district to the southern coastline including the new trade fair area.

The most recent planning decisions, as we have seen, strengthen even more the gap between city centre and periphery, largely investing on the first and leaving the second at the centre of the redevelopment issue.

Some simple indicators have been sufficient to show the gap between the city, where planning is focused on, and the spaces where tourism represent a real development potential. In actual fact, the real tourism potential of Rome is restricted to its city centre. Planning has a narrow view of Rome, limited to developing only the center and the axes which stretch from the east, to the south and the south-west. The tourism potential of the center is taken as the central point of the whole development model designed by the planner, where the core is re-launched through traditional and brand new forms of tourism offers; whereas a



large part of the peripheral areas is used to promote Rome's new image, housing new functions, new symbols, and new landscapes (Beriato and Gospodini, 2004).

From a methodological point of view, Rome's experience suggests two types of considerations to be made. Firstly, tourism planning, as far as Rome and Italy in general are concerned, should be based on an analysis of the real and effective development capability of the territory, and not on models of other countries which have completely different contexts and realities. For this reason, the planners fail to identify the true potential development of a metropolitan and urban system together with the social and environmental effects, giving preference to a vision of the city which enhances only particular resources and unique specific areas.

The second methodological suggestion is strictly linked to the former and is related to geographical scales of analysis and planning. In fact, the evidence is that changing geographical scales of analysis have highlighted spatial imbalances and the uneven distribution of tourism resources in Rome. This reveals how both analyses and planning processes need to follow a multi-level and collaborative approach on various scales, above and beyond the local (government) level, in order to carry out objectives leading to better cohesion, competitiveness and sustainability.



There are apparent risks emerging from the approach followed in the plans for Rome. Above all, they ignore and neglect resources of great value, such as the many WH sites outside but within the realm of its province and region.

These sites already exist, and do not need building, hence they should be considered a cultural wealth to be inserted in a hypothetical Roman itinerary. For example, Cerveteri and Tarquinia in the North, and the Villas of Tivoli (proclaimed UNESCO World Heritage Sites). Secondly, there are minor resources which have never been detected and may be the object of an already expressed tourist demand, what is more they could be of local interest for the resident population, such as: local parks, historical sites scattered over the region, 20th century buildings of particular interest, as well as other potential or latent creative elements of interest and expression. Thirdly, the risk is the negligence of impact indicators that, from a multi-scale perspective, allow the minimization of the negative outcomes on the socio-economic and environmental systems, which are by themselves pillars of the new cultural system. The negative effects include the impact of tourism on the resident community and the infrastructure system, the increasing loss of the resident population and traditional activities in the historic center, the reduction and overuse of land and open spaces, the decrease of environmental values, and the neglect in responding to the cultural demand of the local community.



To sum up, the development model chosen for Rome diverges from the aim of unity and cohesion, because on the contrary it encourages development opportunities only to a restricted area of the urban system; and it is not really competitive, because it tends to offer cultural and tourism products which are very similar to other cities. Moreover, the planning approach focuses mainly on economic competitiveness and not on a more complex and innovative, territorial, competitive approach.

For Rome, it is time to disregard a development model which continues to have a conflicting approach to the centre-periphery relationship, or facing the challenge of polycentric development only through the decentralization and redistribution of functions.



Table 1 Some indicators of Rome economy and tourism

Land surface	5 352.0 ¹ 1 285.3 ²
Resident population	2 838 047 ³
Population change (%)	1.0 ⁴
<i>per capita</i> GDP	32 200 ⁵
Change in GDP (%)	49.8 ⁶
Employment rate	0.6 ⁷
Change in employment rate	22.8 ⁸
Long term unemployment	2.0 ⁹
Employment rate of older workers	37.6 ¹⁰
Universities Students	16 225 000 ¹¹
Intensity of foreign direct investments	11.5 ¹²
Trade integration of goods	23.4 ¹³
Trade integration of services	19.8 ¹⁴
Hotel and similar establishments	4 601 ¹⁵
Total beds in hotel and similar establishments	177 743 ¹⁶ 83.8 ¹⁷
Arrivals	9 736 377 ¹⁸ 8 315 342 ¹⁹
Overnights	27 036 561 ²⁰ 20 244 694 ²¹
Average lenght of stay	2.7 ²²

¹ ISTAT (Italian National Institute of Statistic): Nuts-3 (2001) Km²;

² ISTAT: Nuts-5 (2001) Km²;

³ ISTAT: Nuts-5 (2008);

⁴ ISTAT: Nuts-5 (2003-2007);

⁵ Eurostat: Nuts-3 (2006) (Euros in pps);

⁶ Eurostat: Nuts-3 (1995-2006);

⁷ ISTAT: Nuts-3 (2006);

⁸ ISTAT: Nuts-3 (1995-2006) percent value, ;

⁹ ISTAT: Nuts-3 (2005) percent value;

¹⁰ ISTAT: Nuts-3 (2005) percent value;

¹¹ MIUR (National Minister of Research and University) (2007), absolute value;

¹² UIC (Italian Office for Change): IDE/GDP(%), Nuts-3 (2006), absolute value;

¹³ ISTAT: (E+I)/GDP, Nuts-3 (2006); ¹⁴ ISTAT: (E+I)/GDP, Nuts-3 (2006);

¹⁵ Eurostat, Nuts-5 (2008), absolute value ; ¹⁶ Eurostat: Nuts-5 (2008) absolute value;

¹⁷ Rome Municipality: Nuts-3 (2006) Ratio between the number of firms and inhabitants (*per* 100 000 people)

¹⁸ ISTAT: Nuts-3 (2008); ¹⁹ Rome Municipality: Nuts-5 (2008);

²⁰ ISTAT: Nuts-3 (2008) ;

²¹ Rome Municipality: Nuts-3 (2008);

²² Rome Municipality : Nuts-3 (2008) (Number of days)



Figure 1 Urban and metropolitan Central Places design: the main directions of tourism and cultural development



Source: author's elaboration



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