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## THE ROLE OF THE MARINA SYSTEM AS A TERRITORIAL SYSTEM GATEWAY

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**Słowa kluczowe:** transport morski, przewozy pasażerskie, infrastruktura portowa

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### Conceptual overview

The systemic managerial logic used both in literary elaboration of the Local Systems of Tourist Offer (SLOT) and in the „Destination Management” is more than ever necessary in the study of the forms of local development (which, in this paper, will be confined to the systemic management of a cruise-ship port), which include three basic dimensions: the product, the project and the land. The generality and richness of this scheme make it possible to compare port areas which are very different from each other, i.e. by different forms and stages of development.<sup>1</sup>

This strategic managerial approach for the study of tourism development, in this research, however, is only limited to the cruise development inside a tourist „destination” and, more specifically to the various forms of „governance” present in a tourist port. The systemic approach refers to the ability of different harbours to present themselves as tourist port systems able to offer a series of services integrated with each other even if not always belonging to a single territory as is the case with the ports of Messina and Catania.

Once the systematic nature of the initial concept is established, we need to understand “the system”, which qualifies it, and try to describe and interpret all the different elements that are part of it, discover its operation in terms of links and type of links among the different actors that compose it.

Subsequently, there is the problem of when it is possible to speak of a mere „system” or, in most cases, of simple forms of collaboration.

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<sup>1</sup> S. Sciarelli (a cura di): *Il Management dei Sistemi Turistici Locali, strategie e strumenti per la governance*, Giappichelli editore, Torino 2007.

Finally, once you have found the systemic reality, it will be necessary to go back to the links, relationships and interdependencies among the different actors in the cruise industry in order to better understand the different forms of administration. Another theoretical approach is carried out by some Italian scholars who have attempted to define the relationship between „business and local” with the conceptual matrix of the total system life (ASV).<sup>2</sup>

In this conceptual view, the system comes from a structure that is represented by a set of components and relationships between components, which virtually expresses the ability to achieve results by an emergent behaviour towards an end.

In particular, the systemic nature of the structure is responsible for identifying the various objectives to be pursued as the roles attributed to the various components that are part of the structure and identifying and understanding the different relationships created between the components at both unit and systemic level. The study of these factors is born from the need to look at the different contexts in a different way, not as individuals but at a systemic level, in fact.

In 2001, in fact, the Italian Framework Law on Tourism 135/2001, set up local tourism systems (STL), which, even now, have not led to a full understanding of the different modes of identification, implementation and management. These uncertainties have generated, unfortunately, the creation of some STLs that, in fact, are not properly working.

Of course, the existence of STLs or, more commonly, the presence on the territory of a systemic logic approach for the management of a „destination” is determined by the presence of at least two of the following three variables: product, project, territory.

In these tourist systems, for the purposes of a strategic local development, a fundamental role is played by both private entities (representing the main development „bottom up” type model) and the authorities and local institutions (public) that encourage, on the contrary, „top down” paths.

Various studies showed that on the Italian territory there are many and various different systems of territory „governance”, some of them characterized by more spontaneous relationships, and others by more rigid forms but almost always guided by a „pivot”.

### **A systemic optics for developing the „destination”**

Figure 1 shows the growth of passenger movements, considering the amount of traffic loading-unloading and transit, from 2000 to 2010 in 17 major Italian cruise stopovers which are listed below in a descending order (Civitavecchia, Naples, Venice, Genoa, Livorno, Savona, Bari, Palermo, Messina, Catania, Olbia, Cagliari, Ancona, Salerno, La Spezia, Portoferraio, Trieste). However, this is underestimated data compared to the totality of the cruise movement in Italian ports, which does not include figures relating to what today are considered as smaller areas in the Italian cruise geography but considering the significant

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<sup>2</sup> G.M. Golinelli: *L'approccio sistemico al governo dell'impresa*, Vol. I° – L'impresa sistema vitale, Cedam, Padova 2000.

investments and programs they will be able to take a prominent position (among them the ports of Ravenna, Sorrento and Portofino which handle a total of about 150,000 passengers).

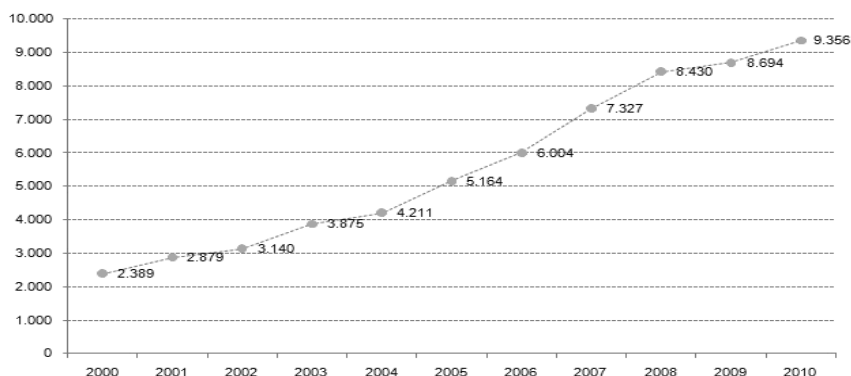


Figure 1. Overall trend in passenger traffic 2000–2010 in the main Italian ports (in thousands)

Source: elaborazione ONT su dati Risposte Turismo – Autorit  portuali.

These years our country has witnessed a renewed interest in port development, where a port chain has been created, consisting of many actors. In particular, as a result of several changes in the cruise industry, both in relation to demand and supply, the cruise product has been turning into a product consisting of a core, formed itself by a “multidestination” trip on board a ship where you can receive hotel and tourist services related to activities that vary depending on the type of service that the cruisers want to buy in order to make the cruise more enjoyable.

The word “cruise product” in fact is usually called „the concept, design and implementation of hotel and tourism services provided on board a ship that moves among several ports in order to combine to the life on board, more and more similar to the life in a large hotel or a resort, stops for sightseeing and excursions in different countries and locations reached by the itinerary<sup>3</sup>.

It is, therefore, an „expanded cruise product” consisting of a series of elements, ranging from more tangible to less tangible products such as: transfer activities to/from the ports; catering; entertainment activities on board; activities organized by incoming enterprises, dealing with the excursions to be made on the land; style, hospitality and atmosphere. It is the realization of a complex product, to which more companies contribute, and with which the „cruise operator” starts trading transactions of different intensity and shape.

<sup>3</sup> M. Rispoli, M. Tamma: *Le imprese alberghiere*, Cedam, Padova 1996.

That is why even the marina facilities operating in the cruise business have undergone profound changes in both structural and strategic and organizational domains.

Although an articulated and complex cruise, it comes to the customer as a form of package, a number of actors contribute to its realization; in fact they are united by „business-to-business” trade, each of them able to add value in a chain of which the solution is, in fact, a marketable output to the customer.

In strategic terms, this involves the development of a port chain requiring a decisive involvement of local actors in a systemic perspective. The reason for all this excitement is essentially to be found in the intense interest in recent years in the stretch of water of the Mediterranean (Fig. 2) and, therefore, the port areas located in it.

Porto	2000	2009	2010	Var. % 2010/2000	Var. % 2010/2009
Civitavecchia	392.103	1.803.674	1.945.223	396,1	7,8
Venezia	337.475	1.417.395	1.617.011	379,1	14,1
Napoli	405.639	1.298.045	1.139.319	180,9	-12,2
Genova	407.974	652.758	860.290	110,9	31,8
Livorno	228.996	801.486	822.554	259,2	2,6
Savona	120.071	708.419	780.680	550,2	10,2
Bari	60.660	570.204	507.714	737,0	-11,0
Palermo	157.092	471.276	394.885	151,4	-16,2
Messina	126.023	252.046	374.441	197,1	48,6
Catania	42.616	183.249	250.384	487,5	36,6
Olbia	43.376	234.230	184.623	325,6	-21,2
Cagliari	39.491	110.575	159.753	304,5	44,5
Ancona**	-	-	135.858	-	-
Salerno**	-	-	98.815	-	-
La Spezia**	-	-	44.874	-	-
Portoferraio	27.684	13.842	24.473	-11,6	76,8
Trieste**	-	-	15.577	-	-

\* Passenger traffic - the number of boarding-landings and transits to ports.

\*\* Data not available Fonte: elaborazione ONT su dati Risposte Turismo – Autorit  portuali.

Figure 2. Major Italian cruise port – passenger traffic 2000–2010

Source: Based on data ONT Risposte Turismo – Port Authorities.

Several studies have analysed factors contributing to the development of port facilities and, in particular, the decision-making role of some figures in the systemic port development. This is a reflection to deepen the discussion about the evolution of relationships, both among the different actors in the port chain and between ports and urban planning. This is where the need for new port „policy” that, compared to the environmental context, changes because of strategic innovative and different choices. Ports, in fact, are now living a series of management problems that show, more and more, the need for application of instruments typical of management and business strategies even in these complex realities.

In addition, these problems reveal a growing need for collaboration, not only by local institutions, but also by private parties who agree in thinking the port system as a key player for the urban and regional development of a major cruise destination.

Several Italian and foreign ports are moving towards this direction. Once they have considered the importance that a port can have in terms of tourism, they have directed their investments to structural and organizational changes, reviewing their strategies and implementing a development of new strategic and business plans. The busy port activities, which include all commercial, industrial and professional activities within the port area, are directly related to the multiple functions of the port itself.

### The marinas as gateways of territorial systems

Based on the foregoing, we can say that, at present, marinas are the undisputed protagonists of a process of development and evolution (Fig. 3), which is leading them, from where you can do simple port, to mere multifunctional centres where you can get a set of port services, able to meet the diverse needs of the demand (both as a cruise line and as end users), taking into account the socio-economic context where it operates.



Figure 3. The growth of the main Italian cruise ports, cruise passenger handling, 2000–2010 and 2009–2010

Source: Risposte Turismo, “Il traffico crocieristico in Italia nel 2010”.

The marinas, therefore, may play a significant role in tourist flows towards a „destination”, both in quantitative (Fig. 4) and qualitative terms, at a national and international level, particularly to cruise traffic, of course.

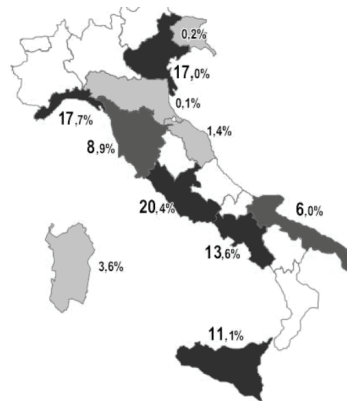


Figure 4. Breakdown by region of the Italian cruise traffic in 2010.

Source: Risposte Turismo, "Il traffico crocieristico in Italia nel 2010".

Compared to the original concept of the harbour, over time, and especially increasing the cruise demand, different types of port have been created, each of them with their own characteristics and needs: the ports used for a simple stopover, ports as centres of services and ports becoming part of the context of a tourist destination.

In particular, ports used for the simple stopover are port structures which have the sole function of accommodating the ship during the short periods of rest, for the stopover routines. Within these areas, you can find a series of small essential services related to the operations of boarding/disembarking, raw materials supply (catering and bunkering) and repair services. Ports as service centres are much more modern than the previous ones and cater not only for the „cruise operator”, but also for tourists, thus becoming a place where you can get a number of ancillary services ensuring for the tourist who chooses to sail from that port a range of higher quality services. The ports that become part of the context of a tourist destination, although still not very successful, represent the last „step” in the development of the port areas in system approach. It is, in fact, a place where the services designated are not only aimed at the „cruise operator” and tourists but even the entire context where it is located and then also at residents. The port itself becomes „an integrated tourist product”, which is governed by fostering the links between the different structures of marinas, between the ports and their hinterland.

It is, therefore, a system of infrastructure, services, communication and organizational schemes that promote competitiveness and cooperation. The port management is going, therefore, to system solutions that can ensure greater competitiveness and quality in the port performance. The port then becomes a complex and articulated reality that must be organized and operated in company optics.

Nowadays, the port management requires a number of complex and interrelated activities, that are the result of cooperation between the different port actors involved in cruise business (Port Authority, economic actors, local institutions and other public and private entities, etc.) and having the common goal of creating value for the cruisers, by activating commercial and tourism related revenues for the area where the port is located.

Nowadays, marinas have taken on a different role than in the past; they are no longer, in fact, simple areas where property and equipment related to industrial processing was concentrated but they are a complex „gateway” of territorial systems.

## Conclusions

In order to improve the port supply, the port must accelerate the relational process with the surrounding territory, so that it could be considered as a strategic factor for becoming a port and tourist city.

The different forms of collaboration, whether covenants, agreements, mergers, etc., help to promote a port systemic offer, in which both the cities where ports are located, and the neighbouring territories can participate, in order to trigger a system that will lead to the creation of value for the whole system of local tourism and, therefore, not only for cruise and port companies.

The future of the ports is then linked to the port capacity to weave relationships and collaboration with the various „stakeholders”, as representatives of the surrounding area.

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### Summary

The cruise industry is increasingly becoming a sector that attracts huge investments, in which different actors seem to have a growing interest in decisions involving new forms of productive, organizational and working arrangements for the implementation of innovative strategic choices.

Nowadays, the main players in the port sector are only port authorities that may play a role in the development of cruise traffic in ports and tourist flows to the “destination” where they are located both in terms of quantity and quality, at national and international level. In recent years, a belief was prevalent about the strategic importance of marinas for the development of a tourist destination, able to accommodate modern and functional facilities that facilitate accessibility and are able to supply complex tourism-related services to the final customer. The intention is to create the conditions in which the coupling of the cruise sector in a port area is a generator or an opportunity to make sustainable interventions in the territory such as to have those positive multi-field effects over large portions of the port city and surrounding area.

## PORTY JAKO „BRAMY” CENTRÓW TURYSTYCZNYCH

### Streszczenie

Turystyka rejsowa w coraz większym stopniu staje się branżą, która przyciąga duże inwestycje, gdzie różne podmioty, każdego dnia zdają się być coraz bardziej zainteresowane decyzjami dotyczącymi nowych form porozumienia na poziomie produkcji, organizacji i pracy, dla wdrożenia innowacyjnych strategii. Dziś głównymi graczami w sektorze portowym są władze portowe, mogące wpływać na rozwój ruchu rejsowego w portach i napływ turystów do „miejsc przeznaczenia wycieczek”, w których się znajdują, zarówno w ujęciu ilościowym i jakościowym, na poziomie krajowym i międzynarodowym. W ostatnich latach nasiliło się przekonanie o strategicznym znaczeniu portów dla rozwoju celów turystycznych, które są w stanie pomieścić nowoczesne i funkcjonalne i łatwo dostępne obiekty, oferujące klientowi końcowemu kompleksowe usługi turystyczne. Zamiarem jest stworzenie warunków, w których sprzężenie branży wycieczek rejsowych z portami daje możliwość dokonywania trwałych zmian w otoczeniu, aby uzyskać pozytywne efekty współpracy na dużych obszarach miast portowych i okolic.