

HERITAGE AND TOURISM: THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL ISSUES

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It is a common opinion that culture and tourism are strictly complementary activities because of the positive externalities that culture generates on tourism. In this paper, we aim at evaluating this common opinion. Firstly, we explore the concept of cultural tourism and the different definitions provided in the literature; secondly, we show the role that cultural tourism can play in Italy and particularly in Sicily, reporting the main results of some empirical studies, and finally we analyse the related policy implications. From this point of view, it is worth exploring how different institutional arrangements are able to deal with the vertical and horizontal fragmentation of competencies and to offer solutions for the governance of the interaction of the different actors (public, private, no profit) in order to enhance the above mentioned positive externalities.

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JEL Classification: L83, M1, O1

INTRODUCTION

It is a common opinion that culture and tourism are strictly complementary activities, that is, the improvements in the cultural sector would generate positive externalities on the tourism sector.

The concept of cultural tourism is elusive. Currently, very different definitions of cultural tourism are available going from a very strict one, that identifies cultural tourism with the visitors of museum and archaeological sites, to a very large one that is not able to distinguish cultural tourism from any other tourism experience (ICOMOS, 2002). Both of these definitions are not satisfying to capture the peculiarities of this kind of tourism: to our purposes, for cultural tourism we mainly refer



to the former definition, though including not only tangible but also intangible heritage.

As Bonet (2003) outlines, cultural tourism has recently developed as a consequence of the evolution of the tourist industry, facing the saturation of the previous model, based on a limited number of tourist attractions (sunny beaches or big cities) and pointing toward the exploitation of a more competitive market. Cultural destinations may attract a wide range of tourist demand, offering a motivation to choose a site or to spend more time in it.

From the macroeconomic point of view, great attention is paid to the potential beneficial economic effects of tourism on economic growth, measured both in terms of income and employment. However, these effects cannot be taken for granted, crucially depending, among the other things, on the links established between the tourist sector and the local economy, so that tourist expenditure can produce its multiplier effects (evidence is contradictory; see, for instance, Sequeira and Campos, 2005, and Bellini et al., 2007). The potential economic effects produced by cultural tourists might be even greater, provided that their demand seems to be more individually oriented and locally based and, as some surveys show (e.g. Centro Studi Europa Inform, 2004), they spend on average more than other tourists, though caution should be used in such quantitative evaluations. Alongside the potential benefits, the costs of tourism – in terms of its sustainability and of its effects on the maintenance of cultural diversity – cannot be disregarded (Streeten, 2006). The crucial issue is to find “the right balance between encouraging the expansion of cultural tourism and safeguarding heritage sites and monuments by keeping the volume of tourists to heritage travel destination areas to within optimum sustainable limits” (Europa Nostra, 2006).

In this paper, we aim at evaluating to what extent these externalities arise, considering some peculiar aspects of cultural tourism in Italy and some empirical pieces of evidence concerning selected tourism destinations in Sicily where tangible and intangible cultural endowment plays a relevant role.

The quantitative dimension of cultural tourism in Italy is described reporting the official data supplied by the Italian Statistics Office (ISTAT), that registers the tourism flows in art cities. We report the empirical evidence on the selected Sicilian tourism destinations and we focus on the role of cultural tourism in lessening seasonality.

Eventually, we derive some policy implications for the governance of the cultural sector, using Sicily as a case study.

CULTURAL TOURISM IN ITALY: SOME DATA

Available data show that cultural tourism – e.g. people consuming cultural services while travelling (though culture was not necessarily the primary motivation for travelling) – is an increasing world phenomenon. According to Europa Nostra (2006), more than 50% of tourism in Europe is driven by cultural heritage. Different surveys (e.g., Centro Studi Europa Inform, 2004) show that cultural tourists are well educated, with income above the average and less oriented, than the general tourist, toward organised forms of tourism. There is also a tendency toward a “dispersion of visitors among different cultural attraction types in the destination, and in particular a shift from ‘heritage’ attractions towards ‘arts’ attractions.” (Geser, 2007).

Recent analyses (Touring Club Italia, 2007a and De Carlo and Dubini, 2008) outline some characteristics of cultural tourism in Italy, in line with international trends.

Official statistics provided by the Italian Statistical Office (ISTAT) show that in 2005, more than 29 million out of 88 million of arrivals (33.5% of the total) were registered in the arts cities. Therefore, in terms of arrivals, cultural tourism has the highest market share, better than the seaside tourism (22.8%); in terms of overnight stays, cultural tourism has the second market share (24.3%), behind the seaside tourism (31.6%) (Touring Club Italia, 2007a). The share of foreign tourists is higher in the arts cities (33.5%) than in the seaside destinations (23.9%).

In the period 2000-2005, the stays of tourists in the arts cities increased about 10 per cent while the stays of tourists in the seaside destinations declined (-2.7%) even if, in 2005, the average stay in the seaside destinations (5.5 days) is still higher than in the arts cities (2.9 days); the overall tourism stays increased by about 3%. A peculiar feature is that cultural tourists not only visit the "superstar" arts cities (Rome, Florence, Venice, Naples), the ones that any tourist first coming in Italy cannot miss, but also the “minor” arts cities that are spread all over the country, where "minor" stands for small size and worse accessibility but no value judgement on their cultural endowment is implied.

In the period 2000-2005, tourist presence, as measured by stays, in both superstar and minor art cities increased (respectively by +11% and 8%) and, except in 2005, the rate of growth is higher in the minor arts cities than in the superstars (De Carlo and Dubini, 2008). Foreign tourists are more concentrated in the superstars while domestic tourists prefer the minor ones though this tendency is slowly changing; foreign presence in the “minor” arts cities increased more than in the superstar cities (+

22.7% and +12.8%). 40% of foreign tourists expenditure is in the superstar arts cities while the other 60% is in the minor ones.

The increasing domestic and foreign demand towards the minor arts cities has some policy implications which will be investigated.

An additional aspect of the cultural destinations has to be considered; namely their role in reducing the seasonality in tourism flows.

THE ECONOMIC RELEVANCE OF SEASONALITY IN TOURISM

Seasonality is a physiological feature of tourism that sometimes can assume pathological dimension. It can be defined as "the temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism, which may be expressed in terms of dimensions of such elements as numbers of visitors, expenditure of visitors, traffic on highways and other forms of transportation, employment and admissions to attractions" (Butler, 2001).

Seasonality is affected by causes that are out of the control of the decision-makers (natural causes, such as climatic factors) and causes that are partially controlled by decision-makers (institutional causes, such as school holidays schedule, planning and scheduling of festival and cultural events); the role of individual preferences cannot be either totally disregarded (bandwagon effects, persistence of habits) (Lundtorp et al., 2001).

Moreover, the patterns of seasonality of a tourism destination is not stable but it can change over time according to the life cycle of the destination: new tourism destinations differ from mature tourism destinations (Rossellò Nadal et al, 2004).

From an economic point of view, seasonality has relevant effects on local economic systems as far as transport, traffic, public service congestion and labour market are concerned and generates private and social costs.

All the economic agents in the tourism sector pay a private cost: the producers receive a more volatile and lower return on their investments; the workers suffer because of the seasonal demand of labour and long periods of unemployment; the final consumers –both tourist and residents– pay higher prices for any kind of good and service in the peak season.

The social costs of seasonality concern: the peak season congestion of local public utilities, such as water supply, waste management and transportation; the unsustainable pressure of tourism that can overcome the carrying capacity of the tourism destination and cause irreversible intra-generational and inter-generational damages.

Therefore, it would be important for policy-makers: (i) determining the optimal degree of seasonality, on the grounds of a preliminary analysis of the carrying capacity of the local destinations (through Benefit- Cost-Analysis or Environmental Impact Valuation as Candela and Castellani, 2007 suggest); (ii) promoting different types of tourism such as cultural tourism that could help lessening seasonality.

THE SEASONALITY IN SOME SELECTED DESTINATIONS IN SICILY

It is a common assumption that cultural tourism is less seasonal than other forms of tourism; in this section we try to evaluate such an assumption using Sicily as a case study.

We base on an analysis on some selected destinations in Sicily (see Cuccia and Rizzo, 2011). The destinations have been selected on the basis of both their geographical location and cultural and natural endowment assuming that these features determine the type of tourism that they potentially attract.

The selected destinations are: Agrigento, Siracusa, Taormina, Piazza Armerina, Caltagirone and the Aeolian Islands. Particularly, apart from Taormina, that is an international tourism destination known for its cultural heritage as well as for its seaside, all the other destinations are included in the World Heritage List (WHL) and therefore they are top cultural and natural destinations. However, Agrigento and Siracusa are located near the sea while Piazza Armerina and Caltagirone are located in the inner Sicily and their tourism attractiveness depend only on cultural heritage; Aeolian Islands, that are also included in the WHL as a natural site, can be considered an extreme case of "pure" sun and sea destination for their geographical location.

We analyse ISTAT monthly data, over the period January 1998 to December 2006, concerning tourist presence in the above mentioned Sicilian destinations, and compare them with regional and national data.

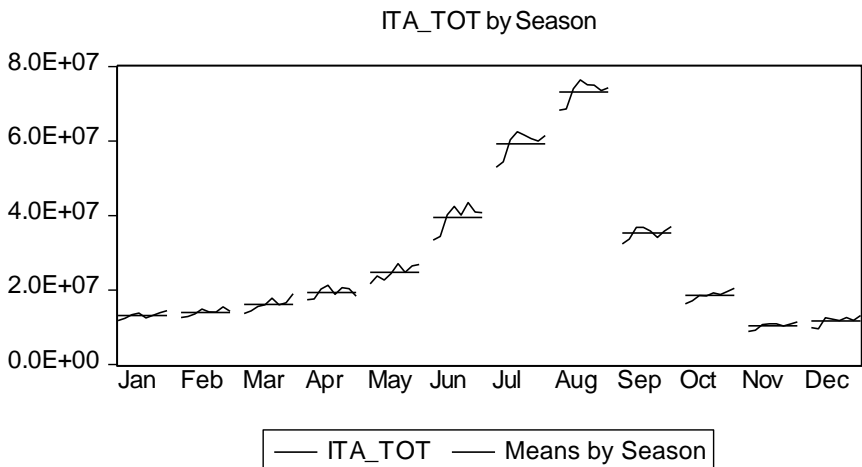
There are significant differences among the selected destinations as far as tourism flows dimension and accommodation infrastructures are concerned: Taormina, Siracusa, Agrigento together with the Aeolian Islands register a larger average monthly presence and accommodation capacity than Caltagirone and Piazza Armerina; Taormina has the largest tourism flow and the highest share of foreign tourism flows that are usually less seasonal than the domestic one, because of the different institutional framework that influences their holiday plans (and this will help to explain some features emerging in the following analysis).

Moreover, even if over the period 2000-2006, the dimension of hotels and extra hotel accommodation has been increasing, because of Regional governments support to the tourism industry, the difference in terms of accommodation capacity among the destinations considered persists. For instance, the number of beds in hotels almost doubled in Siracusa and Piazza Armerina, respectively from 2,549 beds in 2000 to 4,965 in 2006 and from 185 beds in 2000 to 461 in 2006. However, Piazza Armerina has a limited accommodation capacity yet.

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

In the literature on seasonality in tourism, many measures have been considered (see e.g. Lundtorp, 2001). We mainly consider two classes of measures: descriptive statistics indicators (seasonality ratio, seasonality intensity, Gini index, etc.) and time-series property and regression analysis. This latter class considers the presence of tourists in each month of the years analysed as the combination of trend, cycle, seasonal and residual components.

Figure 1a Month-year graph of the presence in Italy

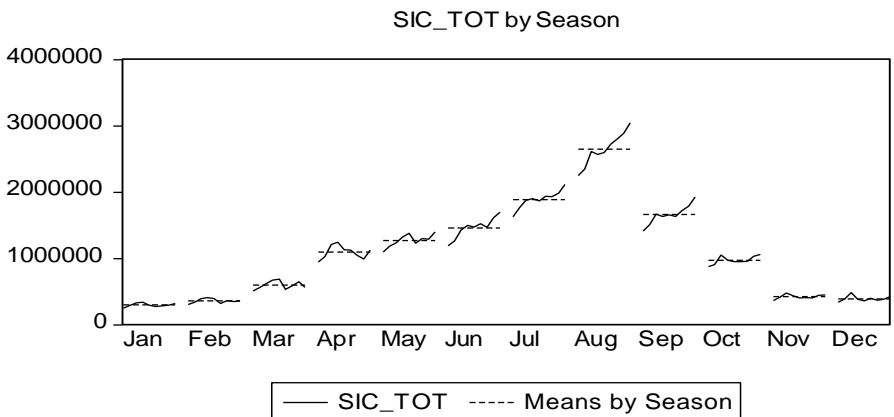


Note: E+07 means 10,000,000.

To disentangle these components, different procedures are available. Cuccia and Rizzo (2011) analyse the monthly data of the overnight stays

in the selected Sicilian destinations and compare the results with the analogous regional and national seasonal data in the considered period 1998-2006 using, among the available procedures, Census X-12 ARIMA program, provided by U.S. Census Bureau. In this paper, we report the graph representation of the series at hand (see Figures 1 and 2).

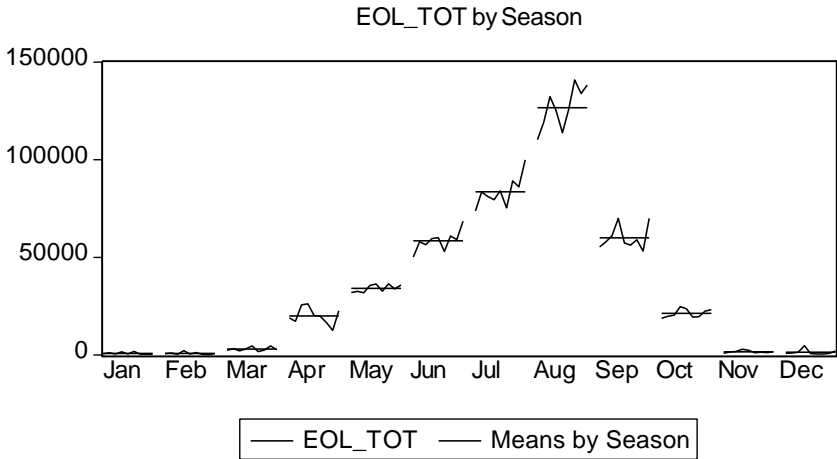
Figure1b Month-year graph of the presence in Sicily



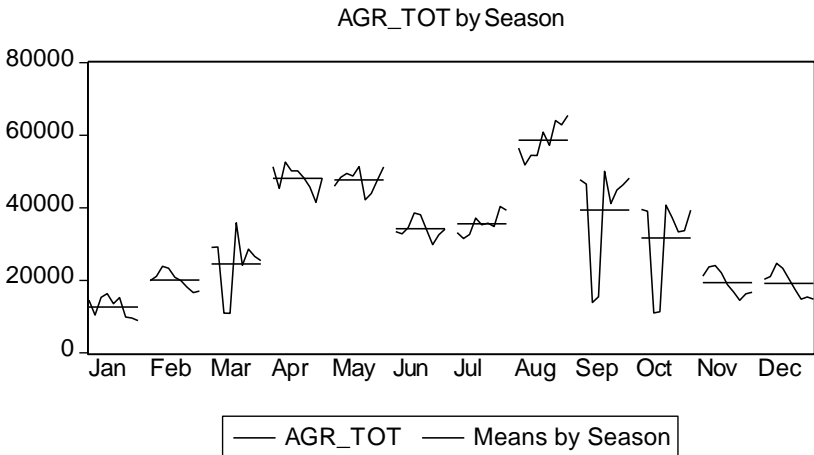
Cuccia and Rizzo (2011) show that Italy and Sicily have quite similar seasonality in tourism, with a peak in summer season, that seems to be a little bit less important in Sicily than in Italy; the difference between the peak summer season and the shoulder seasons (spring and autumn) is smaller in Sicily than in Italy. However, seasonality is stable in Italy and increasing in Sicily as we can see in the monthly trend over the considered period (see Fig.1a and Fig.1b).

Figure 2 Month-year graphs on the presence in the six destinations selected

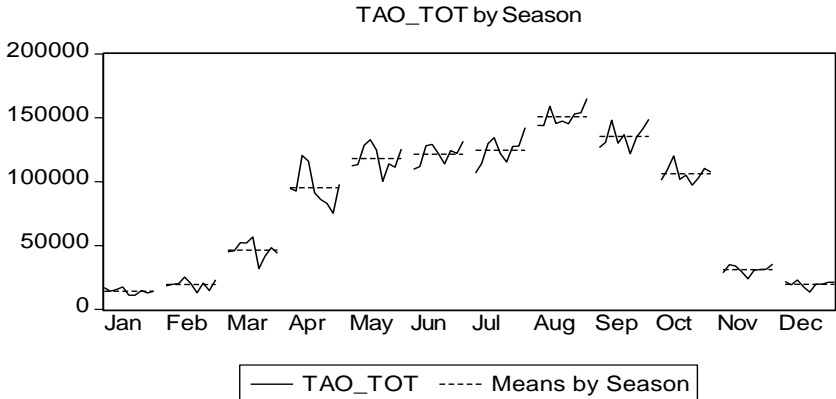
a) Aeolian Islands



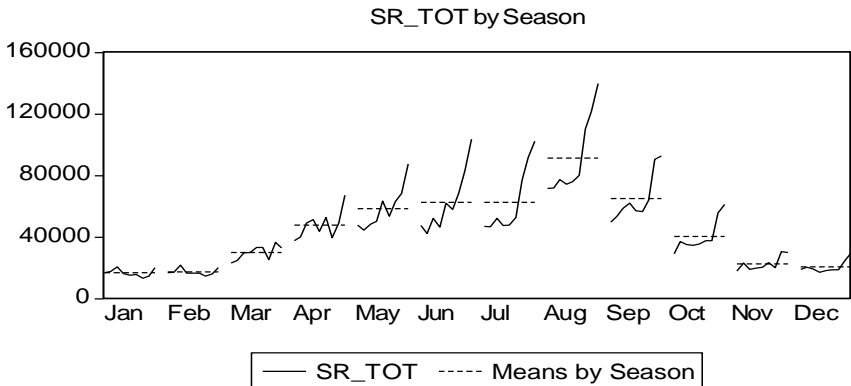
b) Agrigento



c) Taormina



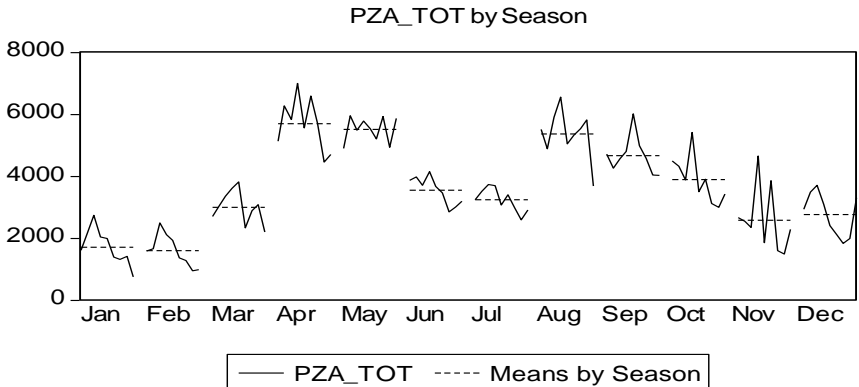
d) Siracusa



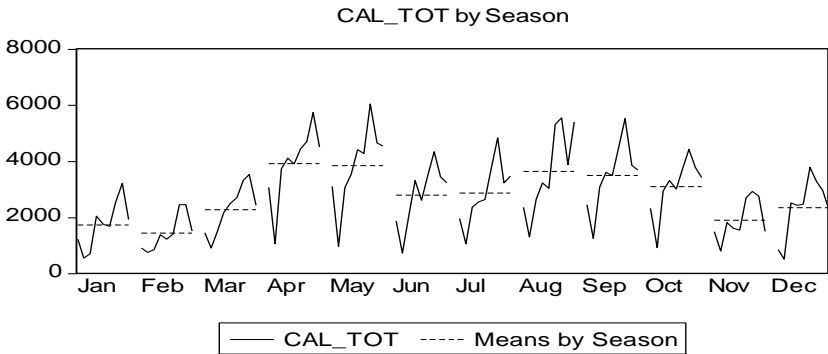
As expected, the Aeolian Islands, extreme case of sun and sea destination, suffer a higher level of seasonality than the other selected destinations, with potentially cultural interest, and than Sicily in general (see Fig.2a.b.c.d.e.f). Among the selected destinations with cultural interest Taormina has the highest seasonality with a pattern similar to the regional one but with a longer length of tourism season that goes from April to October.

Moreover, the difference between the August peak and the other summer and shoulder months is lower in Taormina than in Sicily (see Fig.1b and Fig.2c). A tentative explanation might be the above mentioned high presence of foreign tourists whose flow is less seasonal than the domestic tourism. The seasonal component in Siracusa is increasing, and the seasonality of Piazza Armerina is typical of most cultural sites in Italy and in Sicily, considering its climatic conditions, with the highest peak in April and May. Caltagirone, located in the inner Sicily, well- known not only for its tangible cultural capital but also for its intangible cultural capital (an ancient tradition of artistic ceramics) has the lowest seasonality and the dynamics of the seasonal factors over the period is rather stable (see Fig.2.f).

e) Piazza Armerina



f) Caltagirone



SEASONALITY AND CULTURAL TOURISM

Some conclusions on the relation between cultural tourism and seasonality come from the empirical study mentioned above.

In first approximation, we can say that where the cultural heritage does not represent the main attraction of a destination, seasonality does exist.

The almost "compulsory" destinations for tourists in Sicily (Taormina, Siracusa and Agrigento), where very important pieces of Sicilian cultural heritage can be visited, suffer seasonality. Their location on the coast or very close to the sea attracts tourists more interested in seaside and bathing than in cultural visits. Even if they have a larger dimension in terms of average monthly tourism flows and in terms of accommodation capacity, the private local operators of the sector seem to be not interested in paying off the high fixed investments in the accommodation capacity that have been recently done, adopting price strategies or promoting common cultural initiatives exploiting the local cultural heritage, that in the case of Siracusa and Agrigento is also protected by Unesco.

Cultural heritage contributes only marginally to reduce seasonality: in Taormina the high season is longer and in Agrigento the peaks are not only in August but also in April and May (see Fig.2b and Fig.2c). Even worse, Siracusa shows an increasing seasonality, the main attractiveness of this destination still being the seaside. In other words, empirical evidence shows that "superstar" heritage does not allow to overcome the problem of seasonality in tourism and the listing of the

World Heritage sites by Unesco is not effective for tourism purposes. Therefore, the analysis on these destinations can also give some indications on the present and vivid debate on the role that the inclusion in the WHL can play in promoting tourism and local development (Yang et al., 2010, Cellini, 2011, Frey and Steiner, 2010).

Seasonality is for sure less relevant in the second group of destinations, including the inner and “minor” (for local size and accommodation capacity) cultural destinations of Piazza Armerina and Caltagirone. However, Piazza Armerina, where another “superstar” cultural heritage is located (“Villa del Casale”), presents a more marked seasonality than Caltagirone: there is an increasing –though not significant– degree of seasonality but the peak months in April and May suggest that its attractiveness is based on culture. Therefore, a tentative conclusion is that “superstar” heritage is less effective in reducing seasonality than “minor” heritage spread in the historical centres of the art cities. Particularly, Caltagirone is characterised as a cultural destination and is in the WHL not for the presence of a single top monument like Villa del Casale in Piazza Armerina but for the Baroque style of the churches and buildings in the historical centre that are vivified by the main traditional artisans production of artistic ceramics and by the temporary cultural events that are organised during the year. Therefore, it is not the presence of a top monument that makes a destination a cultural destination. It is more the mixed of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and the awareness of the local community to possess this unique capital that creates a “cultural atmosphere” and makes a destination a cultural destination.

Moreover, we observe that the inner cultural destinations, that register a lower seasonality, do not benefit from the presence of summer tourists that want to combine beach tourism and cultural tourism. The potential complementarity between different forms of tourism seems to be not fully exploited, a tentative explanation being that there is a lack of coordination between tourism and cultural policies (see below).

Therefore, the increasing tourism role of the “minor” arts cities and especially of the cultural atmosphere has to be taken in account by the policy-makers in the promotion of cultural tourism destinations and can be used as a tool to reduce seasonality.

A POLICY PERSPECTIVE

The above empirical evidence suggests that there is room for government intervention to foster cultural tourism and that the planning

of a series of local initiatives during the year, that can represent different aspects of culture in an anthropological meaning, can generate a positive externality on tourism, reducing the negative impacts of seasonality. In what follows, we try to look at cultural policies in the area of cultural tourism (see Rizzo and Throsby, 2006), using Sicily as a case study. In Sicily, the Regional Government is fully responsible for cultural policies enjoying a wider degree of autonomy than any other Region in Italy (the various dimension of such an autonomy are investigated by Rizzo and Towse, 2002).

To orientate Government action it can be useful to recall some basic facts. Firstly, cultural supply consists of many different resources, requiring different policy measures: built heritage (archaeological sites, museums, historical buildings, etc), ranging from superstar to minor heritage, historical sites (with historical, literary significance), performing arts (theatrical performances, concerts, dance, festivals), visual arts and exhibitions, intangible heritage (traditions, religious practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills).

Secondly, minor art cities play an increasing role but face problems of accessibility, accommodation capacity and financial capacity compared to the superstar art cities which must be considered.

Thirdly, the existence of cultural resources can be considered a necessary but not a sufficient condition for cultural tourism. Cultural heritage can be a powerful input (a resource to foster economic development through adequate forms of cultural tourism) only if cultural heritage as output of a public policy is sustainable, i.e. if policy-makers, being aware of the existing constraints and potentialities, enhance the economic effects of heritage planning cultural initiatives that help to create a "cultural atmosphere" in the destination.

To do so a common and co-ordinate action of policy-makers of different layers of government (regional, provincial and municipal) is needed in different fields: tourism, culture, public works, infrastructures and formation.

In Sicily, the Regional Government has identified "the valorisation of cultural tourism and the inclusion of heritage in an integrated tourist supply" as a strategic area of Regional policy (Regione Siciliana, 2007) as well as the promotion of the minor tourism destinations to overcome seasonality but these general statements are not met by the identification of more specific objectives nor by indicators to measure policy performance.

Indeed, reality goes in the opposite direction: though the aggregate image of Sicily is mainly based on archaeology and arts (49%) and

“Sicilian identity” (18%) its tourist image is still essentially based on the sea as the empirical evidence on the selected destinations confirm (Regione Siciliana, 2001). The consequences for cultural tourism can be easily forecasted: for example, looking at the “superstars”, in the list of the 30 most visited Italian sites and museums, the only one Sicilian entry, Piazza Armerina, is 17th (Touring Club Italia, 2007b).

A tentative explanation could be that in Sicily the supply of cultural heritage services is not designed to be *demand oriented* and to attract visitors. Museums, historical buildings and archaeological sites are publicly owned and mostly run directly by the public sector; an alternative model, widespread in the Anglo-Saxon world, is based on public provision, i.e. on the contracting out of cultural heritage services to private suppliers (for a closer investigation of the implications of the two models for cultural policies, see Peacock and Rizzo, 2008). In Italy, directors/curators enjoy a very scarce managerial autonomy, as far as admission ticket prices or opening hours are concerned, not to speak of personnel management. They are not subjected to any well defined and measurable objective set up by the funding authority (see Pignataro, 2002), and are more inclined to pursue their own objectives, such as prestige and reputation, rather than cultural outputs with educational as well as entertainment content, aimed at attracting visitors. The use of multimedia information systems appears to be very limited and instructions are often scanty. Therefore, the needed co-ordination among all the subjects that can concur to create the cultural atmosphere in the destinations is not easy to organise. However, according to the empirical evidence, this is the only way for cultural heritage to help the tourism sector to lessen seasonality. Indeed, as it happens in Piazza Armerina, there is no evidence of any effort to promote neither a minimum level of cultural experience, developing user friendly services (booking, audio-guide, guided tours, etc.) to induce or to facilitate the visit and/or the overall tourist experience nor to activate any form of community communication to receive feedback and suggestions from the public. This is relevant in the perspective of cultural tourism; in fact, as Greffe (2006) outlines, visitors do not demand only services but an “experience” which implies participation (not just a visit) as well as an active role rather than just “value for money”.

Moreover, the above mentioned institutional features affect the composition of the heritage services supply in the sense of reducing the potential role of private and non-profit actors and, therefore, the overall dimension and the diversification of cultural supply. Private and non-profit actors, in fact, can contribute to the production of cultural heritage

services in many ways, going from the financial support to the donation in kind as expressed by the individual voluntary work employed in the cultural production.

The direct voluntary involvement of the individuals in the production of heritage services can be effective to spread cultural tourism in minor destinations, to manage the heritage in a sustainable way, which is closely routed in the local communities (e.g. retired persons interested in domestic history), and to offer a wide range of cultural products able to meet different types of visitors demand.

The features of the decision-making process and of the actors involved affect the use of regulation to determine the stock of cultural heritage, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, and its capability of becoming a “resource” for local development (Rizzo, 2003). A conservationist stance of the Heritage Authority, that sets restrictions on the use of buildings (i.e., banning performing cultural events) and the way in which restoration and re-use is carried out, might undermine the possibility of restoring and revitalising historical centres and of transforming them into a “resource” for local development. It might be argued that a conservationist stance might be perceived as a “signal” of quality, therefore attracting cultural tourists mainly interested in quality. However, the extent of such an effect, in reality, does not seem strong enough to balance the above mentioned shortcomings and reduces the effectiveness of built heritage to lessen tourism seasonality.

GOVERNANCE ISSUES

The above analysis suggests some governance issues. Many public and private actors are involved in the promotion of a destination basing on its tangible and intangible capital and the dialogue among them is needed to overcome:

- vertical fragmentation (between central vs/ local government);
- horizontal fragmentation (among the actors at each level and among professions).

The outcome of the decision-making process is affected by the coexistence of different layers of government with overlapping, though different competences, implying the vertical fragmentation of the decision-making process. The existing distribution of functions in Sicily offers an example of the occurrence of such a phenomenon; no institutional links have been established between the Regional heritage authorities and local authorities even though their powers of regulating

heritage conservation have important implications on the cultural tourism policies carried out at local level. To overcome such a situation a greater public participation at local level is needed, so that the benefits and costs of heritage policies can be fully evaluated, and enlarging the role of local communities can offer a possible solution when the intervention of the higher level of government is not motivated by the internalization of spillovers.

Whenever heritage ownership within a city belongs to different actors, the possibility of offering an integrated fruition crucially depends on the degree of coordination within the area; for instance, in Sicily churches play a mayor role in the overall heritage supply but their management is outside the scope of the local public decision-maker and, therefore, unless a coordination is reached (through agreements and/or financial incentives) their fruition might be prevented. In other words, a cultural product cannot be offered and the higher stability of the tourism flows that seems to characterise cultural tourism cannot be pursued.

Overcoming fragmentation is necessary to develop networks and itineraries which turns to be a crucial tool for the enlargement and qualification of supply and enhance minor arts cities where, according to the empirical evidence previously reported, the tourism presence are less seasonal than in the superstar cultural destinations. With respect to Italy, for instance, empirical evidence shows that cultural tourism has not increased everywhere but only where projects of valorisation have been activated based on the enlargement and the qualification of supply (Federculture, 2006); even “superstars” as Paestum in Campania, or the Bronzes of Riace in Calabria by themselves are not suitable to generate a significant cultural tourism development.

Coordination is needed to favour the creation of “nets”, involving also private producers, for instance in the field of performing arts, visual arts, handicrafts - which can be helpful in the attempt to throw light on the history of tourism destinations (Cuccia, 2004). For example, visitors might be offered a “package” including visiting of minor arts cities and/or the attendance at performances which might take place in historical buildings or archaeological sites, exhibitions, ateliers and so on, which has to be planned in advance and adequately publicized.

These policies turn to be easier to promote if decisions are taken by one decision-maker, while transaction costs will be higher if an agreement has to be reached time by time among the different actors. As Cuccia and Rizzo (2011) point out, different solutions can be undertaken: independent public agencies, no-profit foundations, associations of local governments are some of the possible solutions offered by institutional

engineering; on the grounds of the considerations developed above, what matters is the identification of clear objectives and incentives to foster the accountability toward stakeholders.

The allocation of the public resources for cultural initiatives should be planned in advance to maximize the tourism return and each destination will be considered for its specialization. These forms of coordination might be useful to overcome the tendency toward competition at local level, producing overlapping supplies on a very small scale of production, an example being the excess of performing arts in summer.

The institutional features of cultural public institutions in Sicily make not easy to overcome fragmentation and to develop fruitful coordinated strategies; in fact, there is no evidence of any active policy aimed at coordinating the efforts of the regional administration and of the museums' managers for a better distribution of visitors among the different sites, nor to involve other actors to enlarge the scope (Rizzo, 2004).

More room for positive innovative approaches arises in different fields: for instance, in connection with intangible heritage, food & wine routes can be an example. The construction of the cultural identity of a destination, not only for tourism purposes, must be based on the participation of the local community and the Unesco certification of the relevance of a monument or a site is not effective without the involvement of the local public and private actors that directly or indirectly can benefit from it. Tourism and cultural policies should act in a complementary way to design a common project of local development if policy-makers want to mitigate the tourism seasonality through cultural initiatives strictly connected with their built heritage.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper we have analysed the potential role of arts towns to foster cultural tourism and overcome tourism seasonality.

To reach this objective, tourism and cultural policies design requires long term strategic planning. To face such a challenge the promotion of community awareness is widely advocated. As the ICOMOS Charter (1999) outlines, *“The involvement and co-operation of local and/or indigenous community representatives, conservationists, tourism operators, property owners, policy makers, those preparing national development plans and site managers is necessary to achieve a*

sustainable tourism industry and enhance the protection of heritage resources for future generations. in cultural tourism sustainability.”

In particular, as the empirical evidence shows that the tourism flows in the selected destinations in Sicily are less seasonal in the “minor” arts towns, located in the inner Sicily and characterised by a small size and accommodation capacity, complementarities have to be developed between different tourism destinations with the creation of coherent itineraries and institutional arrangements. We have also stressed that overcoming fragmentation of levels of government is necessary to favour the creation of nets, involving private and public producers of tourism and cultural goods and services.

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