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**Destination Management in Mountain
Areas: the Role of Tourism Consortium
in Promotion Strategies.
The Monterosa Case Study**

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To my family,
To my loved ones
and to me.

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Introduction

In recent times, the contributions of scholars and operators aimed at supporting, by virtue of different disciplinary approaches, the implementation of aggregative forms in the tourism sector have multiplied.

The goal of this paper is to investigate the role played by the management of the tourist destination and on how a well-played governance can have positive return effects on the competitiveness and image of the same destination and on the individual companies operating on it. In fact, the growing competition, that characterizes the sector, today has shifted from companies to territories; in relation to this, the latter have recently been defined as real competitive subjects, to whom, more and more frequently, the same company logics are applied. Consequently, the importance of the whole (destination) with respect to its individual components (companies), has made clear the strong link that the competitive positioning of the destination exerts on the strategy and performance of the individual companies operating in it. In this scenario, it is evident that the strengthening of the superordinate government activities of tourist destinations (metamanagement) constitutes the necessary prerequisite for the pursuit of more solid conditions of balance and competitiveness.

Specifically, the study was divided into four chapters, of which the first two illustrate the forms and logic behind the superordinate government of tourist destinations, while the last two aim to analyze an experience started in the Aosta Valley area, the Monterosa district, to design the most suitable governance for the integrated tourism development of the territory.

In particular, the first chapter is aimed at the conceptual framework and the study of the classification schemes of business combinations, as well as the examination of the main aspects related to the application of the network organizational model in the tourism sector. Subsequently, the chapter proposes to make some terminological clarifications useful for the adequate delimitation of the object and the extension of the meaning to be attributed to the concept of tourist destination, with the subsequent analysis of the main

theoretical reference models. The tourist destination, in the economic-business perspective of this work, is intended as a set of activities and factors of attraction which, located within a defined space, are able to propose an articulated and integrated offer, i.e. a system of specific and distinctive tourist hospitality that enhances local resources and culture. In this sense, the destination is not simply a geographical space but, on the contrary, a managed place, where a strategic approach and a clear managerial vision can be found.

The second chapter focuses on the theme of the government of the tourist destination, referring to the forms and logic of governance that allow the full exploitation of local resources and attractions, taking into account both the specificities within the reality investigated and the relative socio-environmental context of reference. Specifically, the chapter underlines the growing importance of the development of superordinate forms of government of tourist destinations (metamanagement), which have the specific task of strategically coordinating the variety of resources and operators detectable in the local network. This aspect is therefore linked to the theme of Destination Management, defined as the set of management activities of the elements making up a local system of tourist offer and which mainly deals with the internal relations at the destination and the definition of the configuration of the offer.

Finally, the last two chapters aim to investigate the current tourist organization of the Monterosa area and compare it with other mountain realities in order to verify the presence, within this context, of an orientation to systemic logic in the management of the destination, precisely in terms of metamanagement and to create a general model of behavior to be applied to less praiseworthy cases. The work immediately saw a detailed analysis of the Monterosa destination, in fact, the three valleys that compose it were empirically analyzed and for each of them the territorial, economic, cultural, historical, receptive aspects and tourist flows in the decade 2009-2019 were studied in order to have a general overview of the destination taken in the study. Subsequently, the analysis involved the interview of 30 Consortiums/Agencies/Bodies that deal with the management of the destinations. It is important to underline that were examined the main mountain destinations that possessed some geographical/territorial/organizational features similar to that of Monterosa. Of the selected sample, only 16 signed up to participate in the interview. The interview took place in a telephone conversation addressed to the selected subjects and in which questions were asked on the basis of a flexible and non-standardized scheme that made it possible to investigate a series of topics. The interviews were accompanied by a desk analysis made on those criteria, the

information was found on the official websites of the destinations and in regional and national databases in order to incorporate the missing data. Finally, once the data were obtained, the research ended with a de-briefing section in which, with the help of tables and matrices, it was possible to identify a series of variables that would allow to see to what the minor and superior performances of each consortium are related to and on the basis of this trying to find a behavior model to apply to the research subject, the Consorzio Turistico Val d'Ayas Monterosa.

Finally, the work ends with the discussion of the data found, the creation of the behavior model and some final considerations regarding possible solutions to be made in the development and enhancement processes of the tourist destination being studied.

Chapter 1

Tourist districts and destinations

1.1 The importance of the territory

Over the years, the study of the territory by economists has made it possible to conceive space in a different way, assuming the features of the territory as a strategic factor of development opportunities. The territory is therefore a place where social, economic and institutional relations intensify (Garofoli, 1991). The interest in the role of the territory in the context of economic development has in fact grown. Tourism, for example, represents an important factor in the processes of economic development when it is an integrated element in the territorial dimension, it is expressed through processes of integration and social and political cooperation. The local system model is therefore fundamental, as can be seen from the experience of the industrial district, also for tourism. The territory known as "a place where culture, history and institutions shared by local operators are settled, functions as a relational and communicative frame, capable of integrating thousands of decentralized and interdependent intelligences which, interacting with each other, give rise to an aggregate behavior not only organized, but efficient. So efficient as to be competitive in many sectors of the modern economy" (Rullani, 2001, p. 6). The strategic management of territories in a territorial marketing perspective has, for some years, been increasingly important in the national and international scientific community as well as among the institutional subjects responsible for local development policies. Among the phenomena most capable of impacting the economy of a territory, tourism has for several years assumed such an appreciable dimension as to make the theme of destination management particularly relevant (Franch, 2010).

1.2 A brief overview on industrial district

The conception of the territory over the years has changed considerably, starting from the neoclassical theory, is possible to observe how the dimensions of space and time are almost never taken into consideration. In fact, this model considers a world formed by a flat, homogeneous space in which transport costs and economies of scale are zero. It is assumed that in such a context the economic activities in equilibrium are distributed uniformly over the territory and therefore a world made up of small self-sufficient villages (Krugman, 1995). Contrary to what is assumed by neoclassical theory, this model does not coincide with reality where the space component becomes central in economic analysis as economic activities and resources are unevenly distributed on it. In this context, Camagni (1980) states that space understood as geographical distance is replaced by territory or relational space, a place where common cognitive models operate and tacit knowledge is created and transmitted (Bathelt, Malmberg & Maskell, 2004). Therefore, the territory is no longer considered as a component but as an alternative way of looking at the economic process and its attention, also linked to the concept of local development, has led to different approaches. The evolution that the territory component, as a fundamental resource at the base of every productive activity, as well as in the tourism to which the research work is oriented, can be briefly retraced through economic theories. Starting from the territorial element, the lines of study that have analyzed the different organizational forms of the territory over time and all united by the relative economic advantage are:

- The neoclassical theory; the territory, implicitly or explicitly, is considered homogeneous and the territorial distribution of economic activities occurs through transport costs: the only variable capable of influencing the positioning choices and costs of products is the distance between producers and consumers (Viesti, 2000);
- The theories of the Fifties – Sixties; with the polarization and the models of unbalanced development, this variable also begins to be taken into consideration, there is a rediscovery of the territory;
- The theories of the Seventies; consecrate the importance of the territory; and together with the social component, it is introduced alongside the economic variables in endogenous development models of Marshallian inspiration, focusing on the Italian reality of the Industrial Districts (DI) with all the debates that have taken place over time;

- The theories proposed by the “New” Economic Geography; the territory becomes a unit of investigation and division of economic and social factors.

In the field of studies concerning the development of the territory, the concept of agglomeration economy takes on an increasingly important value (Malmberg & Maskell, 2002). Economic theory has long recognized that agglomeration economies are able to improve the productivity of firms and favor the processes of territorial concentration of productive activity (Marshall, 1920).

The first concepts of agglomeration economies can be traced back to Marshall (1920) and Weber and Friedrich (1929). Starting from these thoughts, authors such as Malmberg et al. (2000), Malmberg & Maskell, 2002, have tried to define economies of scale as those external economies from which a company can obtain benefits from being located in the same place where there is the presence of one or more companies.

In the wake of the pioneering studies of Marshall and Weber and as analyzed by Malmberg, Sölvell, Zander (1996), the theory of agglomeration evolved in response to three main empirical observations:

- a large proportion of industrial goods are produced worldwide in a small number of highly concentrated industrial regions;
- enterprises belonging to the same sector, or enterprises in any case interconnected in some way, tend to be located in proximity to each other, and therefore to form local concentrations of activities;
- both of these processes tend to last over time as the agglomeration process, once started, tends to be cumulative.

Traditionally, agglomerations occur through two mechanisms. The first concerns the production costs that can be reduced by the possibility of sharing some resources such as social and physical infrastructures. The second mechanism concerns the transport and transaction costs that can decrease through greater interaction between suppliers and customers positioned side by side. In other words, the presence of the company in an agglomeration is to improve its performance by reducing the costs for the common sharing of tangible and intangible assets. Furthermore, agglomeration economies are believed to arise because costs are reduced or revenues are increased, or both, of firms that take part in local transactions (Malmberg et al., 2000). In turn, agglomeration economies can be distinguished into urbanization economies and localization economies (Camagni 1980; Malmberg et al., 2000; Malmberg & Maskell, 2002). The term urbanization

economy refers to those advantages that are generated in a typically urban environment and that are established among all the companies and industries concentrated in the single context. These advantages lead to the formation of core industrial regions and metropolitan regions (Malmberg & Maskell, 2002 citing Hoover, 1937; Dicken and Lloyd, 1990). Localization economies, on the other hand, are those specific economies that concern companies engaged in similar activities or interrelated activities, which lead to the emergence of spatial agglomeration of related companies such as industrial districts or localized industrial clusters (Malmberg et al., 2000).

The study on territorial concentration leads to an in-depth study of the intellectual foundations of the presence of a multiplicity of economic conditions that can be defined as external economies (Viesti, 2000) as advantages that companies obtain in positioning themselves in the same vicinity (Calvosa, 2009). These economies are built through mechanisms in which the relationships between companies, institutions and infrastructural equipment, present in a specific territorial area, generate economies of scale and variety, for example: the development of labor markets with generic or specialized skills, the sharing of infrastructures or other localized externalities (Malmberg, Sölvell & Zander, 1996). The concept of district and its distinctive characteristics can be found in the famous book IV, chapter X, of the "Principales of Economics" in which Marshall (1920) with the term industrial district, indicates "particular groupings of a significant number of small and medium-sized enterprises of a similar nature specialized in a given sector of the manufacturing industry".

The district to which Marshall refers often has mono sectoral characteristics; however, this does not mean that the agglomerated firms are equal from the production point of view. According to the author, the analysis of the advantages of localization in a specialized industry takes place, even if not explicitly, at various levels:

- Horizontal: when dealing with companies located on the same phase of a certain production process;
- Vertical: when dealing with companies located on connected phases or branches of the same process;
- Lateral: when companies are specialized in the production of different species of the same class of products;

- Diagonal: when the agglomeration of companies of the previous types with auxiliary companies, of an industrial nature (for example, the development and maintenance of machinery) or of other nature (transport, commercial or financial companies) is considered.

Marshall's theory, on the functioning of small business clusters, starts from the examination of two different areas present in the English context: the metallurgical district of Sheffield and the textile district of Lancashire, demonstrating that the advantages obtained by large companies can also be realized for agglomerations of small and medium-sized enterprises located on the same territory. Marshall (1920) defines these advantages as "external economies", as opposed to the "internal" ones and therefore dependent on the resources of the individual companies, their organization and the efficiency of their administration deriving from the company size, i.e. from the increase of the production scale. Among the main mechanisms that produce this type of externalities, also called "MAR externalities" by the works of Marshall, Arrow and Romer (Gleaser et al., 1992), the theory identifies: technological spillovers and the availability of a specialized workforce. The first mechanism is based on the idea that geographical proximity and informal contacts facilitate the transmission of knowledge between companies and workers (Bronzini, 2003). The rapid spread of knowledge among companies concentrated in space, thanks also to the effect of the mobility of the workforce, would favor innovative processes, driving the growth of productivity (Bathelt, Malmberg & Maskell, 2004). The second mechanism is based on the advantages of creating a local market for skilled workers. Both businesses and workers would be attracted to these areas; the former due to the availability of an abundant supply of specialized work, the latter because the number of companies reduces the risk of being unemployed (Bronzini, 2003). In fact, this process increases the labor supply and benefits companies that pay a lower wage to workers.

A second type of advantage deriving from the agglomeration of companies belonging to the same sector is represented by the positive externalities that are generated within the industrial districts linked to the specific characteristics of the district areas. In the district, the firms are specialized in different stages of production and are linked together by intense sub-supply relationships: this division of labor is one of the peculiar aspects of the districts that favor the efficiency of the entire local production system (Marshall, 1920).

A further distinctive element of the district areas is represented by the close link between the productive fabric and the social fabric. Within the district areas, agents share

the same social values; this sharing favors collaborative relationships between companies and workers and ultimately enhances the efficiency of the production system. In fact, in the districts the processes of innovation and the adoption of new technologies are favored by the rapid circulation of information and by strong competition, but also by collaboration between companies (Pyke et al., 1990; Signorini, 2000 cited by Bronzini, 2003). The industrial districts therefore become places of knowledge accumulation thanks to the widespread presence of companies and innovative subjects involved in the same production. Knowledge that is effectively dispersed within the territory through imitation processes and which allow small companies to increase know-how at low cost (Tripodi, 2014). These knowledge learning mechanisms have thus made it possible to develop entrepreneurial and technical productive skills. The former refers to "being an entrepreneur", in fact, having subjects involved in entrepreneurial activities nearby has allowed the start of new activities, developing a marked propensity for risk in the subjects. The latter, on the other hand, refer to mere technical and production skills which, starting from highly experienced subjects, have spread throughout the territory (Tripodi, 2014).

The geographic analysis of district aggregation phenomena is certainly connected to the processes of territorial re-composition, known as the political process with which institutions tend to change their organization in space. In fact, the district can be the tool for effective territorial planning (Dallari, 2007), since it is based on the overlap between the economic and social dimensions. They are therefore a model that can also be applied to rapidly growing economic contexts and sectors, such as the tourism and leisure industry, especially if the advantages linked to territorial promotion are taken into consideration through the new community financing instruments. In fact, it is possible to identify strong similarities between the geographical consistency of industrial districts and that of any tourist districts or local systems of tourist offer, due in particular to the concentrations in restricted geographical contexts, of companies and organizations in the same sector and complementary or auxiliary sectors.

Can the economic, or rather territorial, success of the Italian ID lead to the same policies in the tourism field? It seems intuitive to give a positive answer on the basis of scientific literature, legislation and a series of policies starting right from the third millennium.

1.3 Touristic District

1.3.1 Introduction

Today, tourism is one of the sectors with the highest potential for expansion on a global scale. Due to its growth and the fact that it is a product that can be consumed locally, it fulfills the prevailing role of being a local development strategy (Ferreira & Estevao, 2009). In fact, Iordache, Ciochină and Asandei (2010) consider tourism as a stimulating variable for the improvement of development; not only for the plurality of effects it has on the reference areas, but also for the presence of a natural, human and material potential. An example of this is the evolution of communication and transport infrastructures which has reduced travel times and costs or, the increased number of business and social trips: holidays and long weekends, have accelerated the growth process of tourism and internationalization (Cunha & Cunha, 2005).

The importance of tourism does not end only on a national scale; at the regional level it becomes an essential tool for economic growth and for regional development itself (Ferreira & Estevao, 2009). According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2004), tourism favors local development, as it creates jobs, increases workers' income and stimulates capital investment through new business opportunities, which results in the creation of new organizations, including SMEs (Small Medium Enterprises), among other benefits. To raise awareness of the role played by tourism, it is necessary for the public administrations of the sector to develop partnerships with other sectors; moreover, he stresses that the lack of commitment of the public administration can represent an obstacle to local development through tourism. According to Timpano (2002), the intervention of the public authority is essential to pre-order the development of the entire territory through tourism.

One of the main characteristics of tourism is the mutual influence of the consumption of the tourist product with its local context. In most economic activities, it is the product that reaches the consumer, but when it comes to tourism, it is the opposite, namely that the consumer is looking for tourist services. Due to this peculiarity, tourism has a strong impact on local development and, from this point of view, local development and tourism are linked together because they take place where the activity is explained, always respecting the environmental and socio-cultural characteristics (Cunha, Cunha, 2005). Local development is linked to the integration of the territory and space variables, as it seems to refer to a concrete and well-defined spatial context that is identified with the region or micro-region (Alberto, 2008 cited by Ferreira, Estevao, 2009). Alongside

these elements, Cunha and Cunha (2005) indicate three components of local development that derive from tourism: society, the environment and the economy, which are also integrated and mutually consolidated in the context. In addition, tourism is an activity that can stimulate others that are transversally connected to it. The improvement of travel-related facilities (food, lodging, travel agencies, entertainment, crafts), as well as the development of infrastructure (roads, airports, energy) (Cunha & Cunha, 2005) and the influence of services (businesses, health, leisure), contribute to increasing the size of the economic sectors elected to meet the demand for tourism.

For research studies and practice what represents one of the most popular concepts of local and regional development, according to Bergman and Feser (1999), are the districts. According to Jackson and Murphy (2006), clusters represent significant forces for tourism development, especially where they have established themselves as active organizations or destination associations. However, organizations, to exploit the expectations of cluster theory, need to go beyond short-term horizons and marketing, to prepare local industry for the future.

1.3.2 Touristic District

The tourism industry is conceived as a set of small and medium-sized enterprises offering complementary products. At first glance, effective similarities can be detected both from a spatial and structural point of view between an industrial district and a tourist destination. However, little has been done to pursue the study of tourist destinations along these lines (Hjalager, 1999). Therefore, the theories and the concept of district have been used mainly in the industrial sector; the trend is still dominant, although in recent times, the service sector, and as part of it the tourism and transport industry, is increasing its potential in the future (Jackson and Murphy, 2006). Hjalager (1999), trying to give a reason why the studies on tourism had not deepened the theme of the districts also in this field, cites the reasons proposed by Hall and Page in their work of (1999), which summarize in three explanations: first, tourism could be considered a sector consisting mainly of services to be connected to economic activities; second, the sector is complex and vague; and third, it is based on leisure and entertainment, perhaps not considered "serious".

Michael E. Porter put a reference to the application of the cluster or district in the tourism sector. In his words (1998b, p. 81) «[...] a host of linkages among cluster members result in a whole greater than the sum of its parts. In a typical tourism cluster, the quality of a visitor's experience depends not only on the appeal of the primary

attraction but also on the quality and efficiency of complementary businesses such as hotels, restaurants, shopping outlets, and transportation facilities. Because members of the cluster are mutually dependent, good performance by one can boost the success of the others». In practice, the importance of the elements that belong to a tourist cluster is recalled, saying that the satisfaction of tourists does not depend only on the main attractiveness of the place, but also on the quality and efficiency of related activities such as hotels, restaurants, commercial centers and transport. For Cunha and Cunha (2005), the parts of an agglomeration actually depend on each other; a bad performance of one part can compromise the success of the others. All this means that those who act in the tourism sector and in the transport industry have the opportunity to increase their skills by working together. Working together in an integrated system, capable of creating synergies, new products and services, supports the development of economies of scale, which can be critical to competitiveness (Nordin, 2003).

With regard to the practical use of districts in tourism, this possibility appears on the horizon with Porter (1998b) with the example of the wine cluster in California, where there is the complementary association of tourism and food components with the production of wine. Novelli et al. (2006), admit that the purpose of tourism clusters or clusters is to bring small and medium-sized businesses, which generally operate alone, to collaborate and build a successful tourism product in the region. Therefore, the tourist districts are the result of the co-localization of complementary companies, which are not necessarily involved in the same sector, but which can benefit from a previously formed network of belonging and dynamic collaborations. For Estevão and Ferreira (2009) the tourist district is a geographic concentration of interconnected enterprises and institutions in tourism activities. This includes suppliers, services, governments, institutions, universities and competitors (Capone, 2008).

The work of Hajalager (1999) highlights the disadvantages and benefits of tourist districts well compared with industrial ones: the interdependencies between the companies belonging to the industrial districts are also present in the tourism sector. The difference is the presence of the public sector in governance structures in the tourism sector; the presence of flexible firms; the coexistence of two important forces: cooperation and competition; trust and collaboration; the support of public policies in the culture of the community. The distinctive features of the tourist districts can be summarized as follows:

- territorial context characterized by the presence of small and medium-sized enterprises that share a fairly homogeneous system of values;

- it is a complex system: there is a mixture of resources and skills related to the work of multiple actors involved; the integration link of the tourism system with the territory and with the existence of easily accessible resources is emphasized (Sainaghi, 2004);
- it is a place where there is the coexistence of social and economic communities (i.e., the local labor market area) (Capone, 2008);
- it was born as a specialized system: the human, material and intangible resources present, if on the one hand they represent obstacles to mobility between the different forms of tourism, on the other hand they favor authentic positions of advantage due to the fact that they represent a single element (Sainaghi, 2004);
- the wealth creation activity is characterized by a main and stable industry (tourism) and complementary (auxiliary) businesses; the main tourism production processes are carried out within the local system and carried out by the resident community (Capone, 2008).

The tourist district can be understood as a type of local tourism system where «the thickening of economic and social relations is particularly strong and there are all the typical elements of the social community relating to trust and social capital» (Capone, 2008).

1.4 Local Tourism System (LTS)

A good basis for the study of local tourism systems, looking at the economic literature, turned out to be the notion of Industrial District (ID) (Maulet, 2006). In fact, the model of industrial districts examines the development of the industrial sector taking into consideration the territorial component rather than the sectorial or business component (Becattini, 2000). The importance of the territory is not limited only to the industrial production context but is also relevant for the development of the tertiary sector which includes tourism (Della Lucia, 2007). Some scholars have tried to extend the district theory to concrete cases of tourism (Maulet, 2006 on a specific tourist destination; Della Lucia, 2007 on a particular region and Capone and Boix, 2005 on an entire national territory) (Lazzeretti & Capone, 2008). Capone and Boix (2005) point out that the district theory can be a key to understanding a local system as a cluster of small and medium-sized enterprises embedded with the local community in a territory. The local tourism

system could, therefore, assume all the connotations of industrial districts «as an interpretative model and an ideal type of local development of an embedded system of tourism businesses capable of generating wealth and employment and enhancing local resources by granting the advantages of territorial models such as, for example: the approach of the Porter clusters and the industrial district ».

«The specificity of the framework of the industrial districts for tourism is to identify the profile of a local tourist system, considering the destination as a whole» (Maulet, 2006). The theory of tourist districts is based on the same logic as industrial ones whose key to success for the development of production processes lies in the economic, social and cultural resources in a well-defined geographical area and in areas characterized by high standards of concentration and specialization; thus, in the tourist districts the competitiveness of a destination arises from the interaction of numerous variables: first of all the territory with its culture and traditions; tourism companies involved in the production process of tourist services and infrastructures capable of guaranteeing their usability (Romei, 2008). Formal recognition of local tourism systems by the Italian legislator took place through art. 5 of the Framework Law of 29 March 2001 n. 135: "Reform of the national tourism legislation".

Art. 5 (paragraph 1): Local Tourist Systems are considered «homogeneous or integrated tourist contexts, including territorial areas also belonging to different Regions, characterized by the integrated offer of cultural, environmental and tourist attractions, including the typical products of agriculture and local crafts, or by the widespread presence of single or associated companies ».

The territorial contexts referred to in paragraph 1 of art. 5 do not have in common the character of homogeneity, as they can also be integrated; the novelty introduced by the law has as its goal "the territorial rebalancing of depressed areas both in terms of economic development and employment". It is important to emphasize that the reform considers the strategic role of tourism also through increased competition from the national, regional and local tourism system (Marranghello, 2002).

(paragraph 2): "Local authorities or private entities, single or associated, promote local tourist systems through forms of consultation with functional entities and with trade associations that contribute to the formation of the tourist offer, as well as with public entities and interested individuals".

From paragraph 2 it is clear that the implementation of the LTS must be of the bottom

- up type in order to achieve the involvement and collaboration of local stakeholders, public or private, involved in a local tourism system. All this to try to move away from the top - down logic that has already characterized the models of tourism organization in the past, where the regions autonomously, through the enactment of their own regional laws, have determined the relevant tourist contexts to establish the Tourist Promotion Agencies (APT) (De Salvo, 2007).

(paragraph 3): "in the context of their programming functions and to favor the integration between tourism policies and territorial governance and economic development policies, the Regions shall, pursuant to Chapter V of Title II of Part I of the text single of the laws on the organization of local authorities, approved by legislative decree 18 August 2000, n. 267, and of title II, chapter III, of the legislative decree 31 March 1998, n. 112, to recognize the local tourist systems referred to in this article".

Paragraph 3 confirms the unique and relevant role of the Regions in defining tourism policies. Law no. 135/2001, with the establishment of the LTS, tries to "propose a new logic of tourism organization", in which the LTSs represent a "concrete tool that allows the full use of the wealth present in local contexts as real levers of a broad process of socio-economic development" (Palumbo, 2007).

The goal is to encourage the use of the systemic approach in the analysis and management of the territory, considering the features of the tourism sector. To achieve this, there is an implicit reference to the industrial district model. It is precisely in the legislative text that we can see «the attempt to repeat the success of the industrial districts also in the tourism sector» (De Angelis & Marotta, 2004). The national legislator does nothing but "translate the guidelines of an already consolidated socio-economic process into concrete tools, which in the tourism sector aims to exploit the opportunities offered by the sector through the enhancement of local systems and networks" (Giannone, 2004).

In general, the strengths of Law no. 135/2001, concern: the will of the legislator to enhance and implement the territorial systemic perspective on a global scale including the regional one, where mutual public and private collaboration must be the bearer of new proposals; and the need to transmit some basic aspects of the district logic of competition cooperation to the tourism sector (Palumbo, 2007). Cooperation between the public and private sectors must be central not only in the planning phase of local tourism systems, but also in the process of development and operation of the system (Trunfio, 2008). Dall'Ara (2004) talks about the local tourism system as an operating system:

- System: understood as a set of activities integrated with each other and with the territory;
- Tourism: concerns the field of action of the system, that is, a network of tourist realities that have in common a territory, products and a set of public and private components that combine to form tourism products;
- Local: refers to a territorially delimited context and by an offer. "The system tends to aggregate local tourism and territorial businesses".

According to Candela and Figini, (2005) Local Tourism Systems represent an economic policy tool for tourism aimed at the development of the local territory as a whole; where the identification of the territorial area goes beyond the margins of a single regional, municipal and provincial reality. The birth of the STL is dictated by the need for coordination of the various stakeholders involved, with particular regard to companies that offer goods and services including the tourism product. According to Dallara (2002) any context can become a Local Tourist System as long as it is able to highlight the uniqueness and particularities of its historical, artistic, cultural and environmental endowment; this heritage, once valued, safeguarded, requalified in order to make it known through marketing and communication actions and, once made accessible, plays a role of attraction for visitors and tourists from external systems. The constituent components of a local system with a tourist vocation looked at from a socio, economic and territorial perspective are (Dallara, 2002):

- Socio-economic structure that refers to the physical, demographic, geographical and economic characteristics of the system;
- External and agglomeration economies;
- System performance that considers the growth of the productive, social and demographic system, the birth rate of entrepreneurs, the positioning of companies from the outside. For tourism aspects: national and non-national arrivals and presences, temporal trends;
- Public, private and community strategies that are concretized in the policies implemented at the various levels stated;
- Strengths or weaknesses, opportunities or threats;
- Local governance.

According to DeAngelis and Marotta (2004), however, the legislation leaves some perplexities, in particular it leaves three critical aspects open and susceptible to different interpretations:

- The definition of the identification criteria;
- The role of STLs in the management of local tourism development;
- The recognition procedures.

The national legislator has not provided for a path for the establishment and identification of LTSs, but above all it has not indicated what the territorial area of reference should be to hypothesize the creation of the systems; it has only defined general principles that are not binding on local actors in the identification and activation procedure. In fact, the geographical units can be composed of the presence of several Municipalities, or of an entire Region or of important parts of the territory of one or more neighboring Regions (Golinelli, 2007; Trunfio, 2008). It is therefore possible to hypothesize the presence of very large local tourist systems, of an infra-regional type, in such a way as to create common governance systems among the different tourist groups in a vision of openness to welcome the flow of information coming from which facilitates the passage of knowledge and stimulates learning processes (De Salvo, 2007).

In conclusion, the reform, introducing the LTS, pushes the search for elements that can help to specify the geographical nature of these tourist entities (Giannone, 2002). Furthermore, as Golinelli (2007) points out to us, affixing the LTS label to a territorial context, with regard to its tourism potential, is not a necessary and sufficient condition to identify a systemic development. Beyond the name used to designate a territory, (instead of LTS, the practice brings us to the knowledge of: Local System of Tourist Offer (SLOT), Tourist District, Local Action Group (GAL) or Integrated Territorial Project (PIT)), to define the level of systemic development of a geographical area will be the total ability of all the actors involved to “package” a global tourist experience.

1.4.1 LTSs opportunities

Dall’Ara (2004) provides some answers to the question. First of all, there is the possibility for a tourist destination to face the growing and heterogeneous demand by proposing, in the marketing logic, offers that are not just the sum of tourist services. What interests tourists is to live a unique and unforgettable experience; therefore he is looking

for a destination, a place that allows him to experience it. Quality and inner well-being represent a new norm of the modern traveler, which leads to reflect on the strategies to be implemented in the area (Dallari, 2007). There is talk of the so-called Total Leisure Experience (TLE), a tourist consumption behavior that requires satisfying not only the knowledge of the destination of attraction, but also satisfying the use of the free time available (De Salvo, 2007). The term refers to a territorial accommodation that is able to give full satisfaction not only to the motivation that pushes the tourist towards a specific basic attraction (such as: nature, adventure, a particular event, culture, food and wine), but also the use of one's free time (accommodation, catering, typical products) (Aci - Censis, 2001; Dallari, 2007). But, if all this is not detected by the tourist, there is a risk of making the context obvious and unappetizing. Tourism scholars tend to emphasize the importance of the authenticity of the tourist experience, which must not, however, affect the authenticity and values of the place chosen as a holiday destination. Other LTS opportunities are: the possibility of improving the tourist planning of the territory; the integration of territories that have a different pace of development over time, and that can collaborate to create a new offer capable of extending the average stays of tourists. The LTSs are considered a possibility for the competition of weaker goals (Dall'Ara, 2004).

As regards the purposes of the LTS, (paragraph 4) of art. 5 of Law no. 135/2001, confirms the central role of the Italian Regions in defining the methods and the structure for granting the financing of the LTS creation projects proposed by public or private operators, which aim to:

- support activities and processes of aggregation and integration between tourism businesses, including in a cooperative, consortium and affiliation form;
- implement inter-sectoral and infrastructural interventions necessary for the qualification of the tourist offer and the urban and territorial requalification of the places with high intensity of tourist / hospitality settlements;
- support the technological innovation of tourist information and reception offices, with particular regard to the promotion of standards of services for tourists;
- support the redevelopment of tourism businesses, with priority for the adjustments due to safety regulations, for the classification and standardization of tourist services, with particular reference to the development of quality, ecological and quality certification brands, and of product, as well as to protect the image of the local tourist product;

- promote the telematic marketing of typical tourist projects, for the optimization of their marketing in Italy and abroad.

1.5 Tourist Destination

The concept of a tourist destination is linked to the concept of a tourist district. The tourist destination indicates the visitor's final destination, his travel goal, the physical place where the products that the consumer will purchase are located. The definition of Candela and Figini (2010), talk about a set of activities and attractive factors which, located in a defined space (site, locality, area), which are able to propose an articulated and integrated tourist offer, represent a specific and distinctive tourist hospitality system that enhances resources and culture. It represents the territory in which the needs of demand and the choice of supply meet. All the elements of the tourist product meet in the offer, all the businesses that deal with accommodation and hospitality are located, the primary attractions and all the facilities that the visitor needs, and a large part of the tourist demand is expressed. In other words, the destination is the pivot on which all the systemic elements of tourism converge. The recent regulatory intervention in the field of tourism (Law No.135 of 2001) has favored the regions in identifying agglomerations of tourist services on their territory according to the approach of local systems and this political intent can be read as an institutional effort aimed at providing an efficient strategic tool capable of initiating innovative processes of endogenous development of the territory. This desire for innovation also responds to the increasingly pressing requests for the protection and safeguarding of the local milieu and for greater attention to those resources which, such as culture, arts, monuments and traditions, are not renewable.

The term tourist destination, although it is in common use today in literature, indicates a concept that, both in theory and in operational practice, is still far from assuming a unique meaning. With regard to this definition, it is not uncommon to find the denominations area, locality, place, region, district used as synonyms of the term destination; in some cases, it represents a place where tourist products are offered and made; in others, the perceptual dimension of the concept of destination is privileged by potential and actual users; in still other cases, the two reading perspectives are superimposed, considering destination a place that is reputable as such from the point of view of producers and consumers. It could therefore be argued that, although starting from the common

recognition that the main component of the destination is the tourist product, interpretations differ when it comes to establishing whether the perspective of demand or that of supply should be prevalent. By analyzing the different definitions that have been proposed over time, it is possible to see how they are characterized by a constant reference to: a well-defined geographical space; an offer (a product) that arises from the setting up of a set of resources, structures, activities and public and private operators existing and operating in the destination area; a market (segments of demand) and, therefore, to the management of tourist flows towards the place considered (Tamma, 2002). According to the business economic analysis perspective, a destination cannot be traced simply to a place, a location or, finally, to an area or geographical-territorial location with well-defined administrative boundaries; rather, the tourist destination is to be understood, as will be seen below, as a set of activities and factors of attraction which, located in a defined space, are able to propose an articulated and integrated tourist offer that enhances local resources and culture. Any definition has a conventional nature and therefore the problem is not so much that of arriving at a single definition, but rather than making explicit the point of view one assumes. Therefore, below, the various contributions on the concept of tourist destination are presented following the traditional distribution into contributions in the demand-offer perspective.

1.5.1 The point of view of the demand

Adopting the demand perspective, the destination is defined as "a geographical context (place, district, small village, nation) chosen by the tourist or segment of tourists as the destination of their trip, which includes all the necessary structures of the stay related to accommodation, food and recreation». (Bierger, 1998). The author further states that destinations can be defined as "a vast set of articulated and integrated services for certain segments of tourists" and that, in order to guarantee functional unity, "it is necessary to perform various collaborative tasks, which can be derive directly from the peculiar characteristics of the tourist product" (Bierger, 1998). Therefore, according to the author, a place becomes a destination only when it is capable of interacting with tourist demand, that is when a set of anthropic and artificial products, services and attractions capable of attracting tourist flows that see in it is the destination of your vacation. Starting from the assumption that the tourist destination should show itself to the tourist as a territorial reality with a single, homogeneous and coherent image, the demand perspective is based on the idea that the geographical boundaries of the destination must be defined mainly in relation to:

- the breadth of needs and requirements of which the tourist demand is the bearer in a more or less conscious way (Sainaghi, 2005);
- the way in which the tourist demand is actually living and perceiving one's holiday experience (Laesser, 2003).

Tourists live and perceive a global and comprehensive experience that summarizes all the attractions, goods, services and experiences they have enjoyed and benefited from during their stay in the destination. This is equivalent to saying that the tourist evaluates the destination product in its entirety. For this reason, the concept of destination is often associated with that of a global tourist product, understood as "the whole set of factors of attraction (goods, services, information, resources of the natural and social environment) in which the tourist translates into based on one's motivations, one's culture and value system, on information and experience, on one's personality and on the socio-economic conditions in which one's specific demand is found" (Tamma & Rispoli, 2003).

Still in the perspective of the question, for Manente and Cerato (2000), the concept of destination can take on multiple meanings; it can be interpreted from a geographical, economic, sociological or business point of view. Each actor of the destination (operators, visitors, the local population) has a perception of it, the result of the image conveyed and of what is perceived, of the stimuli and influences received from the socio-economic and cultural environment in which they live and work, needs and expectations, past experiences, purchasing and consumption behavior. Therefore, according to the authors, understanding the destination system implies, first of all, understanding, rationalizing, organizing the roles and actions of local actors, the links between them, the interactions, understanding how the individual products and services of each of them contribute to the creation of overall experience that the tourist experiences in the destination. Again, for Martini, destination is a broader concept than that of locality "a locality in fact becomes a destination only through the interaction with tourist demand, when it becomes a destination that is positioned within the preferences of tourists, being perceived as a place where certain attractive factors are available" (Martini, 2005). Lastly, Pechlaner (1999) qualifies destinations as "spatially defined competitive entities, understood as products or a complex and integrated set of products that the tourist, or the customer, considers as decisive in the context of their stay". Alongside the geographical space chosen by the tourist as a destination for his trip, the specific interest of a particular tourist or segment is becoming increasingly important for the purpose of

choosing the destination, as well as the articulated and integrated sets of specific products.

In summary, the common denominator for these scholars is the experience of the tourist who, by selecting and combining the elements most suited to him that will make up the holiday, defines the destination. Therefore, according to the demand perspective, the geographical place does not coincide with the destination but, on the contrary, is only one of the factors that make it up; in this perspective, the study of Destination Management focuses on identifying the characteristics of the demand segments, on analyzing the motivations and behaviors of tourists and on a correct assessment of the degree of knowledge of previous loyalty that tourists themselves demonstrate respect for the destination product as a whole.

1.5.2 The point of view of the offer

Adopting the offer perspective, the concept of destination corresponds to that of locality understood as the set of complementary and interconnected products, services and tourist experiences, created and/or organized by a plurality of producers who carry out their activities directly or indirectly of tourist value, in a specific territory in order to respond to their current and/or potential reference demand, in a proactive rather than reactive/adaptive way. Starting from this perspective, Tamma (2002) states that the destination should be studied not only as a place defined according to geographical and administrative criteria, but as a local system of tourist offer (SLOT) (Della Corte, 2000). In this sense, the destination is not simply a geographical space but, on the contrary, a managed place, where a strategic approach and a clear managerial vision can be found. The concept of an offer system, therefore, identifies and describes the actors, and the relationships between them, involved in a specific tourist product; if it is considered that the global tourism product requested by a customer is made up of a more or less vast set of attractive factors, from the point of view of the offer, the tourism product supplied can only be defined as the symmetrical set of factors of attractiveness that are created and/or organized by an aggregate of operators to respond to the demand of the current or potential user (Tamma, 2000). To fully understand the perspective of the offer it is necessary to present the way in which the various authors approach the management policies of a tourist destination and thus solve the problem of decision-making coordination between a plurality of public and private subjects, each responsible for one or more than the resources and attractions that make up and define the destination supply system (Laws, 1995). In this regard, the contributions of the business economic literature

believe that the supply system of a destination can correspond, on the basis of the different coordination and integration methods found between operators and their resources, to one of the following models (Tamma, 2002):

- fragmentation;
- leadership;
- integration.

The supply system is fragmented when a low level of integration can be found between the operators and their resources. In this case, the enhancement of the offer takes place, therefore, mainly by demand or by isolated companies operating independently (point-to-point). On the other hand, leadership occurs when the offer finds access to the market mainly by companies (for example, tour operators or incoming agencies) that take on the role of leader in the creation and promotion of the tourist offer of the destination by subtracting in this way, part of the strategic autonomy and added value to local operators (package). Finally, the integration model is characterized by the possibility of identifying, among local operators, medium-long term collaborative and, therefore, integration behaviors (networks).

In this perspective, most of the Destination Management scholars agree with the idea that the attractiveness and competition of a destination grows as the level of integration and inter-organizational coordination between the various operators involved in various capacities increases or not directly, in the development of the tourist offer. In the wake of this consideration, the idea is becoming increasingly concrete according to which the optimal situation is found where the tourist destination is expressly conceived and managed as a governed inter-customs network, i.e. a network in which the presence of a "lead organization" (the metamanagement body) which has the specific task of strategically coordinating the variety of resources and operators detectable in the locality. The metamanagement body, architect and control room of the destination, should in fact foresee the participation of the main representatives of the categories of public and private operators who are, for various reasons, participating in the development and promotion of the offer system destination. This body therefore represents that organizational form and that integration tool which, ex-ante respect, favor the emergence from the structure of the territory of an offer system, the destination, which is competitive with respect to that of competing tourist resorts and, therefore, capable of attracting tourist flows compatible with their survival needs (Golinelli, 2007). In conclusion, according to the authors who take the point of view of the offer, the unity of the

tourism product cannot be separated from the joint action of the operators present in that particular geographical space.

1.5.3 The holistic perspective

In this scenario, some scholars believe that "the most comprehensive approach seems to be that which explicitly declares the multiplicity of points of view in the definition of destination and attempts to combine the delimitation of the geographical space and the product contents, the perspective of demand and offer (Della Corte, 2009). In the first place, according to Della Corte (2009), the destination «is configured as a complex tourist product, from the point of view of demand; but it is also a form of complex offer, created by the joint and coordinated efforts of the various subjects involved to promote the tourist resort as a whole ». Also, according to Furlan (2007), the destination «indicates the visitor's final destination, his / her travel goal, the physical place where the products that the consumer will buy are located. However, the term destination, in tourism management, also expresses the concept of the organization of the offer, that is, the organized set of local services and attractions ". Finally, Pencarelli (2001) defines the destination as «the complex of tourism businesses and resources (environmental, historical, cultural, landscape, etc.) located within homogeneous areas from a territorial, social, economic, cultural point of view, with tendentially uniform connotations from the point of view of supply and served demand. The tourist destination thus represents a homogeneous territorial pole (locality) with a vocation for the production-supply of one or more tourist products ».

It therefore identifies a territorial area with fleeting boundaries, but sufficiently shared by supply and demand, which is characterized by one or more factors of attraction perceived as differentiated by tourists from other destinations in the choice of where to spend the holiday and which they are jointly proposed to the market by the district players (Pencarelli & Splendiani, 2008). In a subsequent work, moreover, Pencarelli (2001) tried to relate the concept of the district with the concepts of tourist experience and the concept of a vital system; from this, it emerged that "the tourist destination is the place where the activities aimed at using and combining the various elements of the operational structure (input of resources and skills) suitable for preparing the offer of complex tourist products (output) are carried out , built by producers or self-composed by tourists, using as support a more or less integrated mix (bundling) of commodities, goods, services, experiences and transformations ». According to this approach, it is only by jointly using the two defining and analysis perspectives that we can arrive at

the definition of a destination product. In fact, the concept of destination is presented, as can be seen from the following model, as an open construct that is conceived, defined and implemented with the help of the tourist and all the companies and public-private organizations operating on the offer.

With respect to the three perspectives of analysis identified by the literature: demand, supply and holistic, the perspective adopted below is the holistic one, due to the centrality of the concept of interaction between subjects and the importance of the coordination activities between the individual actors for the purpose of creating a product system consistent with the needs and expectations of the segments served.

1.5.4 Types of destination

In order to arrive at a clear delimitation of the meaning of a tourist destination, it is considered appropriate below to reflect about the different types that have been identified over time in the literature. First of all, Ejarque (2003) proposes three types of destination:

- **Widespread:** when there is no integration between the products and tourist attractions, since there is no coordination or collaboration between the service producers;
- **Dipendent:** which occurs, on the other hand, in the presence of mature destinations in which external operators (for example, tour operators) manage the creation and promotion of tourist packages and, therefore, the resources of the territory;
- **Integrated:** which is characterized, finally, by the existence of a group of local actors linked by relationships with specific rules and organized to achieve a common and shared goal.

Martini (2005), on the other hand, groups the different forms of destination into two:

- **Corporate destinations,** i.e. those places in which the tourist offer is designed, managed and promoted on the market with a typically procedural and marketing-oriented logic by a management company, which directly owns or controls through contractual agreements the factors of attractiveness that the destination is able to express on the market;
- **Community destinations,** or places that, taken together, and through the interaction of the activities of multiple local players, are proposed on the tourism market through a specific brand.

While, in the first case, it is mostly hetero-governed destinations, in the second, the systemic dimension is the crucial element for the elaboration of a tourism development strategy. The need to differentiate the diverse tourism systems in relation to the degree of integration and sharing between the different components and the role played by the governing body is also clarified by the vital systemic approach through the degree of completion of the tourism system. In this sense, Nigro and Trunfio (2002) affirm that destinations can manifest themselves according to three configurations that allow us to identify:

- embryonic tourism systems: characterized by the aggregation within the same territorial area, of components of equipment and systems without, however, there being a decision-maker in charge of coordinating and directing the actions on the system itself. For this reason, in some cases, the lack of convergence between decisions and actions leads to the prevalence of an individual logic that could, at the same time, trigger crisis processes for the tourism system as a whole;
- tourism systems under construction: characterized, on the contrary, by the presence of a decision-maker who has the role of promoting and enhancing the tourism system pursued through the exercise of functions of direction and coordination of the activities of the components present in the operating structure;
- completed vital tourism systems: in which, finally, there is the presence of a governing body with full powers of direction, coordination and control expressed through the definition of a territorial development strategy and the role to be attributed to the endowment and systemic components.

Strategic coherence and the possibility of implementing coordinated behaviors aimed at a shared purpose are, without doubt, a qualifying factor in the competitive capacity of a tourism system. However, these components are present to varying degrees according to the degree of completion of the system itself. According to Della Corte (2013), however, there may be:

- Tourist locations already known, characterized by an organized and more or less integrated offer, in which it may be appropriate to carry out joint promotional operations for further development of the area;
- Locations for which, on the other hand, a redevelopment plan of the local offer becomes necessary in order to improve the quality standards of the services and, therefore, allow an adequate strategic repositioning of the destination;

- Locations, finally, in which it is necessary to intervene with the design and launch of local supply systems in areas of new enhancement.

In all the cases outlined, Della Corte (2013) affirms, "a correct and effective tourism policy is needed, which identifies the attractive factors on which to focus for the enhancement or development of the destination and evaluates the resources and skills, both small business level and in terms of common synergies, identifying the strategic potential that can be generated». Also Pencarelli (2001), with reference to the concept of destination, identifies two district typologies, underlining that "as awareness, trust and collaboration grow and the appearance of strategic metamanagers, tourist districts evolve from spontaneous and casual forms (random district) to more aware forms, more organizationally structured and more governed in a unitary logic (districts in the strict sense). Vice versa, and symmetrically, as the trust, the propensity to collaborate and to find modalities of unitary government diminish, the districts in the proper sense can dissolve and return to spontaneous forms, devoid of elements of structure and unitary governance». Moreover, the districts in the strict sense of which Pencarelli (2001) speaks, can take shape through two different relational structures: the network and the constellation. More precisely, the network presents intentionally collaborative and mutually trusting logics, as well as an equal configuration, in the sense that only horizontal connections exist between the subjects, which requires the convergence of common wills. Even the constellation, like the network, presents intentionally collaborative and mutually trusting logics, but with a configuration of the offer characterized by greater asymmetry among the participants, in the sense that in it there is a subject who is in a differentiated position with respect to others from a functional point of view. This subject acts as a guide or coordinator of the constellation, carrying out strategic governance functions and effectively guiding the basic choices of the aggregation, otherwise defined jointly with reciprocal interactions. Therefore, from what has been said so far, it is clear that the tourist destination is not something given, constant and unchanging over time but, on the contrary, almost like any other product, it is characterized by the presence of its own cycle of life. According to Butler's model (1980), destinations are characterized by a life cycle with clearly recognizable phases: exploration, development, maturity, decline. These phases are, moreover, identified over time based on the degree of exploitation of resources and the development of economic and social phenomena related to the intensification of tourist flows:

- in the first phase (exploration), there are few tourists who want to know the place

for its cultural or natural characteristics and live in contact with the local population. Their presence is limited; therefore, it does not involve changes in the pre-existing physical and social structures, and tourism does not yet have significant impacts (in economic and social terms) on the territory;

- in the development phase, tourism activity grows consistently, also as a result of interventions by companies and external operators that replace and add to the activities of residents. This phase involves significant changes and transformations in the physical, economic and social environment;
- in the maturity (or consolidation) phase, the local economy is now specialized in tourism, but the growth rate of tourist presences, which still, however, continue to increase, begins to slow down. For this reason, promotional expenses increase in order to expand the market share of the resort;
- in the phase of decline, finally, new locations take over, the location is no longer up to par with its competitors and, if anything, it only manages to accommodate less interesting market segments.

As an alternative to decline, a kind of renewal is possible for the locality that can be stimulated by creating new structures, which attract new segments, or by enhancing natural or cultural resources that were previously neglected (Della Corte, 2013).

Ultimately, as demonstrated by the numerous definitions proposed, the precise identification of what a tourist destination is affected by many methodological, strategic and operational problems that often prevent the activation of physiological development paths of territorial systems with a tourist vocation.

1.5.5 The network of actors of a destination

Another factor that contributes to increasing the complexity inherent in the tourist destination is represented both by the different types of actors involved, each of which has its own distinct needs and interests, and by the different categories of relations of exchange, competition and association between them. establish. The development of a destination is, indeed, linked to the collaboration and integration between the numerous strategic subjects operating in the territory. With regard to the types of actors, those most involved in this process are (Della Corte, 2013):

- the tourism industry in the strict sense, made up of companies responsible for the

production and provision of central and peripheral services purchased by the customer such as, for example, hotel and non-hotel accommodation operators, restaurateurs, managers of particular attractions, on which the development of the local tourism system strongly depends;

- local administrators, who appear to be fundamental pillars in the development of the territory due to their ability to influence the fate of the locality;
- the entrepreneurial fabric, mainly represented by micro and small enterprises which, in order to survive, are obliged to provide an adequate response to the problems of national and international productivity and competitiveness;
- the local population, increasingly attentive and demanding with respect to the quality of life and, therefore, less and less willing to accept compromises in terms of livability for the influx of tourists;
- tourists, who certainly play a fundamental role as, through their purchasing behavior, they influence the form and management model of the supply system;
- other actors, who, even if not directly involved in tourism, are very often called upon to support the fate of the sector and, in general, of the local business fabric, such as banks and financial institutions.

According to a classification provided by Presenza (2007), the main tourism stakeholders of a territorial system can be distinguished on the basis of:

- their spatial location, in internal and external stakeholders;
- their degree of impact on the competitiveness of the system, in primary and secondary stakeholders

According to this classification, revised in the table below (Fig.1.1), the main actors of a tourist destination are substantially the tourist operators, for example hoteliers (main internal and direct stakeholders), on whom the fate of the local system to which they belong certainly depends; on the other hand, among the main indirect internal stakeholders, we find those subjects who, depending on their ability to influence the conditions of the locality, can play a fundamental role in the development of the territory such as trade associations or tourism departments. Always considering the destination from the inside, it is possible to identify a series of actors who, although not directly involved in the sector, can still affect its development: this is the case, for example, of

	Stakeholder interni		Stakeholder esterni
	Diretti	Indiretti	
Stakeholder Principali	operatori alberghieri; operatori extra-alberghieri; operatori dell'intrattenimento (ristoratori, org. eventi, noleggio); enti di promozione turistica; consorzi turistici.	associazioni di categoria locali; assessorato locale al turismo; patti territoriali/ accordi di programma.	turisti; tour operator; enti di promozione; associazioni turistiche/ culturali (CRAL).
Stakeholder Secondari	assessorati (altri settori); camere di commercio; industrie dell'indotto/settori collegati università ed enti di ricerca; associazioni ambientaliste locali; società pubbliche di gestione finanza pubblica; banche/istituti finanziari; parchi e riserve naturali; residenti; società di certificazione; operatori di polizia.		amministrazioni pubbliche (anche UE); associazione ambientaliste; industria dell'indotto/ settori collegati; opinion leader; società pubbliche; società di certificazione.

Figure 1.1: Stakeholder of the tourist destination

related industries or, even, of residents, as their degree of hospitality can greatly affect the overall quality of the destination itself. Among the stakeholders classified by the author as external, on the other hand, we find listed various subjects who in various ways act on the destination; among all, the fundamental role is mainly played by the tourist and his purchasing choices. In addition to the previously proposed classification, Della Corte (2013) proposes a further category defined as adversary stakeholders which includes all those actors opposed to initiatives at a systemic level; this is the case, for example, of operators who, at the local level, hold positions of oligopoly and who, due to entrepreneurial myopia and marked individualism, could interpret a systemic development of the area as a threat.

On the basis of this approach, however, the actors previously identified, whether they are operators, residents, customers or government bodies, play a fundamental role in defining the future of their territory; they can promote self-organization processes that tend to the definition of an overall territorial offer and the activation of development processes. The purpose of these processes lies in increasing the skills of each individual participant through a more effective dissemination of knowledge on processes, services and products, as well as on the innovations contained therein. It is therefore a question

of enhancing oneself by increasing the attractiveness of one's own settlement, or rather the territory.

Chapter 2

Destination Management

2.1 The governance of tourist destination

Having dealt with issues of a definitional nature, at this point it is appropriate to turn attention to the examination of the numerous problems that arise when dealing with the management of the tourist destination. In terms of tourist destinations, it is known that the term governance reflects a concept with a complex meaning, capable of expressing both the form and logic of the systemic governance of a territory with a potential tourist vocation (Airoldi & Forestieri, 1998). While the form of government draws attention to the principle of organization and unity of a system of actors that sees, in the tourism sector, the necessary interaction of subjects who express divergent interests and purposes, the logic of the same seems rather to concern the complex of methods and tools by which to link a specific combination of resources, subjects and actions to the achievement of a shared objective of tourism development of an area.

Whatever the perspective with which the destination is defined, the problem of management arises as a problem of coordination of decisions; therefore, whether the question of knowledge of the segments of demand to be attracted prevails, or whether the methods of composition of the offer become central, it is in any case a question of identifying the mechanisms that facilitate the taking of shared decisions, taking into account the plurality of decision-making levels existing in a local system (as previously highlighted, by the individual hotel operator, to consortium between companies, to APTs, to commercial operators, to public institutions). The management of a destination therefore requires,

starting from the wealth of resources and territorial skills, the overcoming of competitive logic, the achievement of agreements between the actors, public and private, entrepreneurs and not, local and national, to create a shared vision and stimulate the participation of all those subjects in the overall design of the destination (Sicca, 2000). In this sense, the development strategy of a destination, considering the taking of political decisions that are the responsibility of the government bodies, is expressed through a governance action that involves resident businesses and organizations, through four main lines of action:

- the issuance of rules and regulations, which can guide the action of local actors;
- direct interventions on the territory, which guide its vocation and define the stock of available resources;
- the establishment of bodies that act as a pivot for the development of the destination and that also operate through the involvement of other actors, carrying out activities to promote the territory, defining strategic territorial projects with relative financial support;
- stimulating and supporting the creation of business combinations (sectorial or supply chain) and local authorities dedicated to their management through which to enhance local productions (Martini, 2005).

According to this perspective, governance coincides with the operational concept of coordination and with the different forms of organization of political power and decision-making power. The concept can therefore be used as a solution that aims to overcome the hierarchical models of political direction, to encourage the emergence of horizontal and cooperative relations between public bodies and companies, between public and private organizations. From the perspective of governance, in fact, the cooperation networks between the subjects are characterized by a high interdependence between public and private actors, by continuous interactions between the network participants due to the need to exchange information and resources and to build together the objectives by sharing some basic rules. It is, therefore, what some authors have defined as a reticular approach to governance, whose characterizing aspects are the presence of self-organizational dynamics, the overcoming of hierarchical relationships and the combination of top-down and bottom-up models (Stoker & Mossberger, 1994).

Before moving on to analyze, more in depth, the forms and logic of government of a destination, it is good to highlight how the development of any strategy at a territorial

level requires some precautions related to the profound differences that distinguish the territory from a company, for which strategic planning is a well-defined process in terms of objectives, resources, responsibilities and tasks. In fact, in the case of the territory, it occurs that the political and administrative governing body, while wishing to assume a logic of governance, does not directly control the resources necessary for the pursuit of a strategy; in addition, the relationship between the governance body and local actors is based on trust, involvement and a system of incentives that can be activated to guide decision-making by companies and organizations that operate in it. Therefore, the steering and governance mechanisms are much less stable. Finally, it must be considered that, unlike the company that has clear boundaries both from a legal and institutional point of view, a territory has, in many cases, variable boundaries, linked not only to the administrative structure, but also to the type of decisions taken and proximity to neighboring territories on which the effects fall. For all these reasons, that will be detailed later in the text, it is difficult to hypothesize the replication in the territory of the usual management models, without taking into account:

- the need to intervene on an institutional level, giving shape to a structure that promotes government action, operating according to a logic of metamanagement;
- the need to consider a logic of strategic action that refers to the principles of the stakeholder approach and the management of a network of activities whose strategies, although independent, converge towards common objectives;
- the need to consider the mechanisms through which to generate the involvement and participation of local actors in systemic territorial strategies, through appropriate top-down and bottom-up action modalities and, subsequently, to direct their behavior through a system of rules and incentives (Martini, 2005).

Therefore, starting from the lines traced up to now, it can certainly be affirmed that the management of a tourist destination implies the search for consensus, cooperation and synergy between its actors, in terms of participation in the definition and development of strategies, objectives and actions.

2.1.1 The forms of government of a destination

The question of the forms of government of a tourist destination seems to be closely connected with the definition, the classification used and the degree of hierarchy that governs the territory. Therefore, is not possible to expect to define a priori which model

ensures greater efficiency and effectiveness in the governance of a tourist destination; in fact, the scholars who have tried their hand at identifying the different forms of government of the destinations indicate different hypotheses oscillating between spontaneous forms and systemic self-regulation to strongly hierarchical forms, with a well-identified strategic and managerial center of gravity. The extreme breadth and heterogeneity of the target audiences and, therefore, of the subjectivities involved in the systemic dynamics can also pose problems of compatibility between the different interests to be composed, for which the territorial governing body is called upon to assign priority to certain interests compared to others, to the benefit of the overall functionality of the value creation process. It is clear that, in the case of fragmented tourist destinations, it is much more complex to conceive destination management interventions that can express a unitary governance of the offer, while in the event that cooperation prevails or leaders emerge, it is easier to identify the destination managers and to adopt unified destination management strategies (Brunetti, 2002). In this regard, Martini (2005) emphasizes the existence of two basic models of territorial planning:

- authoritarian models of government (defined as corporate), which envy a structurally simple governing body, made up of few subjectivities. The strengths of the model are the speed and clarity of the government action, while the main weakness is the risk of inadequacy and cognitive dissonance;
- negotiated or participated governance models (defined as community-type), which are, instead, the result of bargaining processes. The strengths of the model are the completeness of the contextualization prior to taking the decision, while the weaknesses are the slowness and the risk of dispersion of the direction impulse.

Furthermore, the process of formation of the governing body appears very important, also for the purpose of its legitimacy, which can be of the following type:

- top-down: the governing body designs a certain level of specialization, forming, where appropriate, organizational units responsible for the pursuit of certain objectives (Martini, 2005);
- bottom-up: these processes come, instead, from some local actors, who perceive the need for an integration function and promote self-organization processes (Golinelli, 2002).

Therefore, the composite nature of the governing body derives from the complexity of the decisions relating to the territory due, essentially, to the collective interest to be protected and the large number of subjects involved who often express divergent interests

and purposes. In the course of the discussion, however, the concept of the vital systemic approach was reiterated according to which, in order to speak of a vital territorial system, the existence of a subject, definable as a governing body or transducer, is necessary as a catalyst of the interests of the various subjects belonging to a given territory, or of a super partes subject who, equipped with dynamic skills, is able to coordinate and direct the various initiatives towards a common systemic purpose capable of conforming the multiplicity of interests and ensure real survival paths (Nigro & Trunfio, 2003). In this sense, the literature has proposed three operational decision-making conditions that identify as many types of territorial governance body (Nigro & Trunfio, 2003) as shown graphically in fig. 2.1:

- the authorizing body, generally of an institutional nature, who is called to define the overall territorial development strategy and, for this reason, has a broad but shallow vision of the territory, with little detailed knowledge of the components (for example, municipal administration, the Province and its departments, the Region and its departments or national and international organizations and their bodies). This subject must maintain an overview of the components, as it is called to define the survival and development paths of the territory;
- the coordinator, of a mixed public-private type, who plays a decisive role in the design of the physical structure of the territory, based on its specific components, and of the consequent expanded structure, by virtue of a more detailed vision of the structural equipment and of external opportunities/threats. In fact, it is up to it to enhance the resources and skills of the territory to transform them into factors of competitiveness. The coordinator evaluates the scenario in which the territory is inserted, the threats and opportunities and, based on this, traces the specific lines of action and related alternatives. Due to its position within territorial planning, this subject also acts as a mediator between the authorizing body and the proposer. For example, the Chambers of Commerce, the local tourist companies, the Foundations;
- the proponent, who is responsible for the definition and implementation of the individual projects that fall within the lines of development defined at the higher levels and has an instrumental focus, usually having a private and non-territorial nature (Think, for example, of businesses, citizens' committees, trade organizations, non-profit organizations, etc.).

The articulation on three decision-making levels has a purely organizational nature

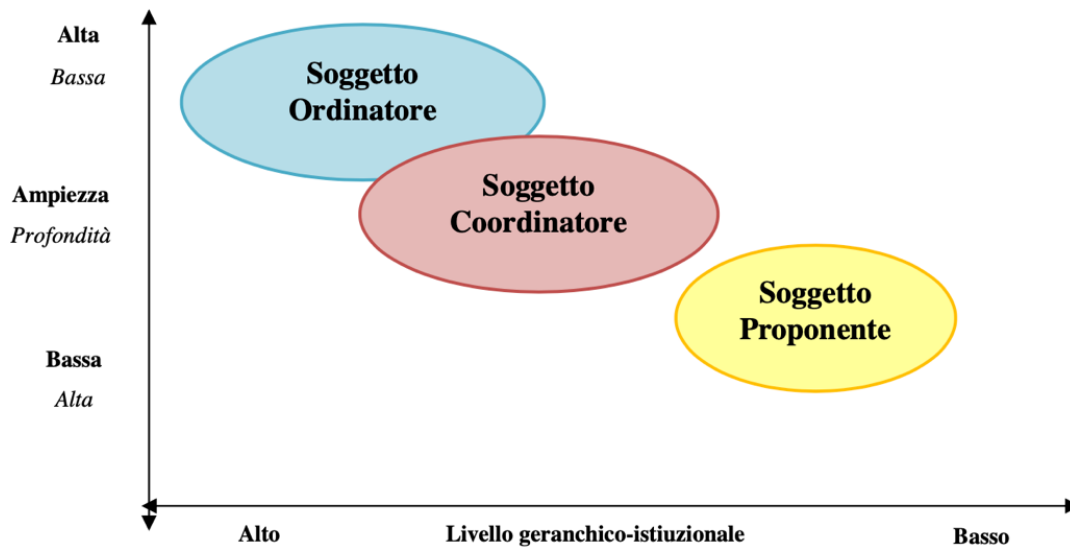


Figure 2.1: The governing bodies of the tourist destination.

as it allows to separate, from the point of view of governance structures, the functions, roles and responsibilities of the various actors. In reality, these are levels of action that can coexist with a single subject or compete with three categories of interacting subjects. Moreover, from the functions that the governing body is called upon to carry out, it is evident that it must denote identifiable characteristics and skills in the entrepreneurship and managerial skills of the subjects in charge of government action. The characters of entrepreneurship, often traceable in natural profiles of the character of a subject, are intended to identify leadership and design skills of a creative and innovative development project, using own capital for its realization. Manageriality, on the other hand, relates to the ability to implement strategic designs and guidelines instrumental to the implementation of the development project, according to criteria of effectiveness, efficiency and economy. In consideration of the specificities of a tourist destination, it is beyond doubt how the presence of such skills can be linked to the preparation of special technostructures composed of different subjects with entrepreneurial skills and managerial qualities. Furthermore, the articulation in different decision-making levels and the necessary presence of both public and private subjects, leads to hypothesize a management model necessarily of a mixed type, entrepreneurial-managerial, where the governance processes are of a participatory type in terms of strong interaction of the political, administrative and technical dimensions both at the decision-making level and at the level

of policy implementation.

On the basis of these considerations, it can therefore certainly be affirmed that the government decisions are fundamental to define a decision-making structure, formally planned, which allows to pursue the generation of value for the various actors who, for various reasons, are involved in tourism destination development processes. In essence, it is a question of activating a so-called metamanagement function within the destination, in the sense of superordinate government, of a higher order, which goes beyond the management of individual organizations and is able to outline a tourism policy to some extent more unitary.

2.1.2 The Italian situation

In Italy there are a number of entities that deal with tourism (which the new PA reform legislation has transferred to the Regions and local authorities), for which tourism promotion is one of their institutional tasks, albeit in the absence common criteria that guarantee its operations on the national territory. In terms of institutional functions and tasks (State and Regions) in the field of tourism promotion, Article 2 of Law N.135 of 29 March 2001 "Reform of national tourism legislation" expressly establishes how the competences are divided in matters of tourism between the State and the Regions; the latter, in turn, recognize, on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity, the role of municipalities and provinces in the corresponding territorial areas, with particular regard to the implementation of intersectoral and infrastructural policies, necessary for the qualification of the tourist offer. Even to private entities, the State and the Regions recognize their contribution to the promotion and development of the tourist offer.

The activity of the consortium is regulated by article 2612 of the Civil Code which regulates the stipulation and definition of tourist consortiums and by the law of 17 May 1983 n.217 which in the matter of regional tourism organization identifies consortium as a non-profit operate on a national level to carry out tourist activities. The regional laws establish the minimum homogeneous requirements and the operating procedures for carrying out the activities, ensuring that the activities themselves are carried out in the respective associative areas.

A systematic examination of the tourism legislation in each region may be useful, considering the different regulatory approaches, also in light of the fact that only recently the Regions are taking on the tendency to collect the matter organically in a

unitary framework. In the first place, tourism skills have rarely been included in the departments or in the directions for economic and productive activities; since the economic vision of tourism has been lacking, the tendency to combine tourism with culture, sport, transport, agriculture, external relations and promotion has prevailed. Secondly, very often the regulations have succeeded and overlapped with the emergence of new phenomena, affirmed with great speed and therefore with the need to dictate rules and certainties for tourists on the one hand, on the other hand to promote and organize very young people without organizational points of reference. This has resulted in an inhomogeneous legal corpus. In addition, the promotional-marketing aspect has clearly shown the different marketing approaches and their evolution not always aligned over time, with the affirmation of the destination, that of the brand, that of the product; the same tools show a differentiation and an evolution in the search for structures more suitable for competition on the markets: from the accommodation companies it has been passed to the Tourist Boards and consortiums, to product clubs, to purpose service companies. Another important issue that is highlighted in this legislative excursus in the Italian regions is the different presence of the relationship between the public and private systems; this undoubtedly also influences the presence in the legal texts of the role of the Chambers of Commerce, bodies that are properly intermediate between public and private. In some cases there is a strong imbalance towards a system marked by the presence of the public, in some cases the role of private individuals and their associative forms is accentuated, in still other cases a balance is sought that puts together an organic relationship of collaboration between the public and private.

Lombardy

The competence lies with the Department of Youth, Sports and Promotion of Tourism Activities. The Regional Law 8 of 14/04/2004 establishes that the Regional Council carries out specific activities for the promotion of tourism, defines the competences of the Municipality and the Province and the activities of competence of the IAT with clarification of the requirements. It is the task of the Region to determine the criteria necessary for the establishment of the IAT and the methods of carrying out the related services. The regional council carries out specific activities for the promotion of tourism. The competences of the Municipality and the Province are also defined. With regard to the IAT structures, the activities of competence, the essential requirements and the initiative of which subjects are set up are reported. The same law defines the tourism system in a manner similar to that of Article 5 of Law No.135 and sets out in detail the purposes

of the tourism system. There is also clarity in the methods of regional recognition of the same, (with precise indication of the evaluation elements) and finally the commitment of the Region to the financial contribution of the infrastructural interventions carried out by the Provinces within the tourist systems is manifest; these are assigned the task of expressing a prior opinion on the projects presented to the Region for funding. It is a very complete and well-coordinated legislation as a whole, which develops the issues of quality and innovation with a broad integration between the public and private systems.

Piedmont

The tourism organization involves the Department of Tourism, Sport, ski lifts, equal opportunities. The L.R. n. 75 of 22/10/1996 provided for the reorganization of the tourism sector through the establishment of local tourism promotion bodies with competences on different homogeneous territories with respect to the tourism product offered and the present environmental reality; Establishes the Piedmont Tourism Promotion Agency, on the initiative of the region and with the help of the provinces and chambers of commerce. For the enhancement of local tourist resources, for information activities and to improve the reception and assistance system for tourists, tourist reception and promotion agencies are set up. These agencies, and local and pro-loco authorities can also establish IATs. Tourist promotion agencies are suppressed. Other important actions in order to create a system in terms of project integration and partnership are supported by the L.R. 4/2000, which promotes the implementation of programs for the development, revitalization and qualitative improvement of tourist territories and identifies the beneficiaries in the Local Administrations, with a leading role in integrated projects involving public and private entities.

Trentino-Alto Adige - Province of Bolzano

The organizations in charge of the sector are the Personnel, Tourism, Traffic and Transport Department, the Provincial Agency for Tourism Promotion, Tourist Associations and Tourist Consortia. The LP n. 33 of 18/08/1992 governs the tourist organization responsible for the development of tourism promotion which involves the special company called "Provincial Tourist Office" which takes the name "South Tyrol Promotion Tourism", tourist associations not having the purpose of profit and established at local level with the aim of promoting and increasing tourism in the area of their competence, the Tourist Consortium.

Trentino-Alto Adige - Province of Trento

The reference department is the Agriculture, Commerce and Tourism. The LP n. 8 of 11/06/2002, defines the guidelines for provincial tourism promotion, establishes the provincial Observatory for tourism, provincial coordination as a place for expressing opinions and proposals. The promotion of the tourism and territorial image of Trentino is entrusted to a joint stock company established or participated by the Province. To this Company, subsequently constituted and called "Trentino S.p.a.", with the Provincial Council Resolution of 23/05/2003 n. 1216 is entrusted with the promotion of the tourist and territorial image of Trentino.

Aosta Valley

The organization is sanctioned by LR 7/6/99 n. 12 subsequently amended by LR 15/03/01 n. 6 and reports to the Tourism, Sport, Trade and Transport Department with the involvement of the AIAT Tourist Information and Reception Companies and Tourist Consortia. The same law also provides for the establishment of the Regional Information System for Commerce and Tourism (SIRECT), the Consortia and Associations of tour operators and the Regional Observatory are recognized. This is an incomplete legislation that does not consider an appropriate integration between public and private.

In order to proceed with a careful analysis of the situation outside Italy, the bodies responsible for territorial promotion of the nations analyzed in the research chapter are listed. Of the current member countries of the European Union, a large number are distinguished by a strong and well-established capacity for tourist attraction. In fact, for some of them tourism represents the main or one of the main economic resources of the country, while for other states, it is likely to speak of emerging tourism and in the "growth" phase. The tourist resource is less competitive for only a few.

Below is a brief analysis and comparison of the various organizations of the tourism system referring to some European Union countries, such as France and Austria, subjects of the subsequent analysis.

Austria

Competent body	Tourism Department, of the Ministry of Economy and Labor
Legislative Skills	Federal provinces: each province has legislative and executive power in matters of tourism, and each has its own policy in this regard.
Promotion Skills	Osterreich Werbung: promotes the image of the country abroad. Wirtschaftskammer Osterreich: representative body of Austrian economic operators. Osterreichische Hotel und Tourismus Bank: improves the competitiveness of the offer and tends to create employment. Local Tourist Organizations: they operate in the federal provinces and promote the territory outside their own municipality or municipality.
Development Skills	Federal Provinces: 9 autonomous organizations engaged in the task of spreading a tourist entrepreneurial mentality, of endorsing and supporting projects for the development of tourism potential. Institute fur Wirtschaftsforschung: deals with analyzing economic development, prepares medium and long-term forecasts and collaborates with Statistics Austria to create a Tourism Satellite Account (TSA)
Strategic Skills	Tourism Department: draws up strategic guidelines for tourism policy with the aim of creating a competitive market and increasing production in this sector. Regional Structures: regional organizations that facilitate union and communication between the provincial and local levels. In addition, they are involved in promoting market research and alternative strategies to increase the tourist flow.
Programming Skills	Tourism Department: deploy financial resources; plans interventions to eliminate distortions and failures in the tourism system with the aim of increasing employment and growth in this sector. Federal Province: they plan interventions on the territory.

France

Competent body	Ministere de l'équipement, des trasports, de l'aménagement du territoire, du tuorisme et de la mer
Legislative Skills	Secrétariat d'Etat au Tourisme: holds legislative and executive power in tourism matters. Conseil National du Tourisme (C.N.T.): mediation body between the state and the tourism professions and corporations, gives its opinion on the legislative measures taken by the ministry.
Promotion Skills	Secrétariat d'Etat au Tourisme: deals with national promotion especially in relations with abroad. Maison de la France: body created in 1987, dependent on the Ministry of Tourism, it is a dialogue structure between the State, the Territorial Collectives, and the professions related to tourism, it promotes the destination France abroad through a network of 31 offices located in 26 different countries. Local Tourist Boureau: deals with territorial promotion in the municipality of belonging. Délégations Régionales au Tourisme: apply the directives of the Ministry of Tourism on the territory of their competence.
Development Skills	Maison de la France: researches and develops new tourist distribution circuits (associations, companies. . .); identifies and promotes a different image of the French brand, as a symbol of modernity and quality. Secrétariat de l'Etat au Tourisme: commissions studies and analyzes of tourism trends and promotes initiatives aimed at improving and developing French potential. Obseratoire National du Tourisme (ONT): association that is commissioned by the tourism management to carry out general and particular studies regarding the offer and provides information on the aspects that should be strengthened to improve and develop the quality of services.
Strategies Skills	Secrétariat d'Etat au Tourisme: it develops strategies and coordinates the initiatives taken both by local authorities and by private groups and corporations.

Programming Skills	Central tourism administration in collaboration with the Regional Tourism Departments and the Delegations. Local Tourist Bureau: associations created by municipalities, park regulation program, urban planning and construction, beach safety. Maison de la France: programs advertising campaigns to promote the image of France abroad. Comité National pour le Fleurissement de la France: designs interventions to promote, defend and preserve green spaces in cities and make them an important tourist resource.
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The comparison between the laws of the various countries is based on the type of organization, at "central" level (organs of the national government) or "decentralized", referring in whole or in part to peripheral bodies and institutions. In this regard, it appears that in countries such as France the organizational system adopted is centralized. Conversely, in Italy the organizational system is highly decentralized. In terms of functions and roles involving central or local bodies and bodies, ad hoc bodies and more, there is an evident lack of homogeneity determined by the attribution of competence: in fact, within countries with decentralized organization, as in the case of Italy, there is a greater line of programmatic and legislative continuity between the various institutional levels. For example, functions such as promoting the image of the country abroad, in most of the countries analyzed, despite having an apparent decentralized system, is strongly supported and coordinated by the central body.

2.2 The Destination Management

From the considerations made up to now, the growing importance of the development of a superordinate management of the local tourist offer network emerges in terms of governance of tourist destinations and forms and logic of government. In this sense, the perspective of analysis taken is that of metamanagement or Destination Management.

2.2.1 Destination Management: definition and main characteristics

The concept of Destination Management and its advent as a separate discipline are relatively recent. According to Martini (2005), the reasons behind the increase in interest

coincide with the contextual changes that have occurred in the meantime in tourism. The author himself provides a first definition of Destination Management as a «set of strategic, organizational and operational decisions through which to manage the process of definition, promotion and marketing of tourism products expressed by a territory, in order to generate balanced incoming tourist flows, sustainable and adequate to the economic needs of the actors involved» (Martini, 2005. P.118). Similarly, Della Corte defines Destination Management «[...] a type of strategic management of tourist resorts, through an adequate system of planning and control of the activities to be developed to encourage the flow of tourists in the area» (Della Corte, 2000. P.111). According to the author, a correct Destination Management process involves a two-level analysis, both with respect to the individual company and to the tourism offer system as a whole. The goal is to understand what the sources of the competitive advantage of a destination can be compared to the competition: «they depend on resources external to the companies and specific to the locality, as well as on the skills and competences of local companies in promoting an articulated offer, based on both on the quality of the tourist services offered, and on the enhancement and promotion of local resources». Moreover, the meaning and nature of the Destination Management action depend on the configuration assumed by the type of destination; according to Martini (2005), in fact, in corporate-type destinations, the action of Destination Management is essentially intrinsic to the planning and subsequent marketing of the offer, since the business logic, made possible by the hierarchical nature of the coordination, it implies the strategic management of the tourist offer. In fact, according to the author, it is in community-type destinations that Destination Management assumes the greatest importance in terms of impact and innovative scope in the offer formulation processes. In fact, in community destinations, the activity of Destination Management is part of territorial contexts where a multiplicity of actors who control tourism resources and services operate. In this case, the pulverization of decision-making processes gives Destination Management the typical nature of metamanagement, through the coordination, in the logic of the network, of the various subjects (individually organized) that carry out their economic activity in the territory. Therefore, the objective of Destination Management is to create a strategic process that gives systematicity and integration to the tourist offer, in territories where resources are widespread, entrepreneurial spontaneity prevails and the attitude to cooperation is often limited (Della Lucia, Franch, Martini & Tamma, 2007). This objective must be pursued through the planning and management of a set of actions. They concern in particular (Della Corte, 2009):

- the generation of incoming tourist flows through the definition of a strategic plan for the development of the offer that allows the identification of suitable product/market combinations;
- managing the image and symbolic value of the destination also through innovation and qualification of the offer and marketing activity;
- coordination and management of relations with stakeholders;
- the assessment of the impact of tourism on the local territorial system on the double track of the sustainability of the tourism offer and its consistency and integration with the tourism policy of the territory.

Ultimately, Destination Management represents the territorial governance process in a strategic key, whose main objectives are (Della Corte, 2009):

- development of territorial strategies, in particular, through the enhancement of local resources;
- development of integrated marketing plans, which favor the coordination of the efforts of local actors and create synergies capable of stimulating overall actions that transcend the skills and competences of individual actors;
- development of the culture of hospitality at the local level, through the promotion of training actions in the area, both for the improvement of the overall tourist offer and for greater homogeneity in the service standard between companies in the same sector and at the level of the entire local supply chain;
- construction of an adequate image of the destination, which is truly an expression of the quality of the local offer, both at the level of individual services and of attractiveness factors and overall tourism products created, capable of generating positive loyalty processes;
- launch of a sustainable development process, through actions aimed, in fact, at promoting tourism development of a territory with a view to sustainability.

Obviously, this process cannot be separated from integration with the non-tourist but also economic policy of the territory; in this regard, the bodies in charge of Destination Management must take action to ensure that, in areas characterized by a strong tourist vocation, adequate resources are allocated to the sector and that territorial policy decisions are made consistent with the tourism purposes. From the strategic/operational profile, the metamanagement body acts on five levels (Martini, 2005):

- favors and supports the participation of local actors in the collective strategy, credibly highlighting its advantages and leading to overcoming the resistance that the individual entrepreneur can put up against a coalitive plan;
- acts as a mediator between the central body and the individual associates, as well as between the individual associates;
- deals with the selection of new members of the aggregate and the possible exit of others;
- defines the control mechanisms and identifies the possible sanctions against possible opportunistic behavior;
- identifies transparent and shared mechanisms for contributing to the body and for sharing the results achieved among the actors.

As previously mentioned, the destination therefore requires a super partes body that manages, from a strategic and integrated perspective, all the actors and resources present within the local supply community. Along this line Della Corte (2012) reiterates the need for a governing body that «[...] takes on a real leadership role of the system, at the level of territorial marketing actions, to make the territory attractive in terms of investments, enhancement and coordinated promotion of the area, construction of a destination brand and coordination of local actors». Thus, for the development of a local tourism offer system, the Destination Management Organization (hereinafter DMO), is the body capable of defining the program guidelines for sustainable development of the destination.

Sainaghi (2006) states that «DMOs play a crucial role because, through effective positioning choices, they help businesses in the local system, i.e. the whole territory, to create, strengthen and make their competitive advantage sustainable». Initially, the tasks recognized to DMOs concerned only the marketing of destinations, later the role of these organizations has expanded and also extended to the typical aspects of management. According to Della Corte (2012), the DMO is a body that must have leadership skills, becoming the guiding subject who, legitimized by the other actors in the system, must perform complex governance functions within the destination, such as planning, coordination, support, consulting, training and monitoring, marketing and promotion. We can therefore state that the success of a destination depends on the perfect combination of natural/artistic/cultural/structural resources, intrinsic to the destination itself, and the distinctive skills of the DMO which, thanks to its managerial and relational skills, is

able to optimize the exploitation of potential tourist. At the organizational level, DMOs can take various forms, the WTO (World Tourism Organization, 2004) defines the DMO as the organization responsible for the management and marketing of the destination which, in general, falls into one of the following categories (Presenza, 2007):

- national authorities/organizations (National Tourism Authorities or National Tourism Organizations) responsible for tourism promotion at national level;
- destination management organization with regional or provincial competence (Regional, provincial or state DMO);
- local destination management organization (City DMO), responsible for the management and marketing of tourism with expertise in cities or small geographical areas.

The classification just mentioned suggests the presence of different levels of skills that are integrated in the management of tourism promotion. This demonstrates the complexity of the levels of responsibility involved in the tourism development process and the consequent heterogeneity of the DMO models that can be effectively reflected in reality (Della Corte, 2012). The organizational structure can therefore be reflected in different typologies and, some authors including Martini and Franch (2002) and Ritchie and Crouch (2003), have described various organizational forms that include the form of the government department, a division of the government department (for example, the Tourism Departments), a local public body (for example, tourism promotion companies), private consortiums, agencies with mixed public-private capital. According to Della Corte (2012), a central aspect in the governance of the destination is the relationship between public and private and the role they play within the governance processes of the territory. In the past the two roles were well defined and the public sector was responsible for regulating and promoting tourism, while the private sector was responsible for the production of tourism services. The classical interpretation is now outdated and the reality of the facts confirms it, the governance models are oriented towards forms of public-private partnership, based on cooperation and where often the initial thrust input of the destination development process is joint work of institutions and businesses (Della Corte, 2012).

Although the creation of the DMO may undergo structural variations based on the international corporate laws in force in a given territory, it is possible to distinguish two common constitution models, which regardless of whether they are public, private or mixed, characterize the birth of a DMO. According to Della Corte (2012), a DMO can

be the result of a creation process that comes from the bottom (bottom-up) or, instead, descended from above (top-down). The process of forming a DMO based on bottom-up operations involves the emergence of aggregative forms of organization through the action of private entrepreneurs in agreement with local territorial bodies. This procedure can give rise to various legal configurations, such as consortiums and cooperatives, non-profit associations or even development companies. In the second case, however, it is the initial public input that leads to the establishment of bodies, agencies, promotion companies or other coordination bodies that play an institutional role in promoting tourism and territorial economic initiatives aimed at the business sector and infrastructure investments. Within the public sector, the state or local authorities can create various organizational forms of governance of a DMO:

- corporate bodies or special companies, where entrepreneurial activity remains subject to and in the background with respect to institutional purposes;
- public bodies, public law organizations;
- publicly owned companies, private law organizations that can exercise their business through different legal forms, in which the local authority maintains a stake, which can be majority or minority depending on the case.

The public-private integration in the management of the territory is also confirmed by the second framework law n.135 / 2001 which governs the LTS and in the second paragraph of article 5 states that «local authorities or private entities, individuals or associates promote Local Tourist Systems, through forms of concentration with functional bodies, with trade associations that contribute to the formation of the tourist offer, as well as with interested public and private subjects». The second Framework Law therefore governs the cooperation of the public and private sectors in the preparation, through various organizational forms, of a systemic territorial tourism offer. According to Della Corte (2012), the LTS represent a useful tool for overcoming limits and conflicts that hinder the collaboration between the various public and private actors in structuring the destination offer. It is therefore possible to equate LTS with specific forms of DMO governance since, following a process that is generally of a bottom-up matrix, LTS, through the involvement of local authorities, trade associations and private individuals operating in the hospitality sector, aim to outline strategies for the development of the local tourism sector and implement integrated territorial enhancement projects.

2.2.2 The DMO marketing

After analyzing the DMO from an organizational point of view, it is considered appropriate to investigate the role that these organizations play within the destinations. Numerous authors, including Getz (1998), Minguzzi and Presenza (2004), have studied the behavior of various DMOs and have identified a large number of tasks that it performs in the promotion and tourist development of the territory. It is possible to outline 5 main functions to be attributed to the DMO (Presenza, 2007):

- an economic driver that generates wealth through new revenue and new jobs, and contributes to the development of a more diversified local economy;
- a community marketer able to communicate the most significant attractions of the destination and a unified image towards a target market of potential visitors;
- an industry coordinator, or a coordinator able to implement and lead local tourism development towards more focused strategies, stimulating systemic relations between local tourism businesses and acting on the redistribution and dissemination of the benefits deriving from the tourism phenomenon;
- a quasi-public representative, as an intermediary between the interests of the tourism industry, the needs of residents, political choices and the demands of tourism demand;
- a builder of community pride that tends to bring benefits and improve the quality of life of visitors and host populations.

It is possible to state that the *modus operandi* of the DMO is systemic action, which favors the cooperation of the actors within the destination and, more generally, of the stakeholders. The DMO is responsible for defining standards and strategies for the launch of new tourism products and initiatives, takes care of the essential characteristics of the brand image and manages the development processes and marketing policies of the destination from a managerial point of view (Della Corte, 2012). To concretize and make efficient the logic of the network, it is necessary that the governing body of the destination is able to facilitate and stimulate cooperation between the various actors operating in the community, spreading shared objectives and encouraging to translate the competitive level from inside outside the destination. In this sense, the DMO must be able to connect, regulate and mediate the multiplicity of actions and interests, belonging to private or public entities, which make up the intertwining of the system. Only in this

way the governing body will be able to lead and direct, in managerial terms, the correct and profitable development of the destination. Analyzing the functions of the DMO in detail, we can divide the tasks it performs within the system into four macro-groups: destination marketing, destination management, stakeholder coordination, monitoring and performance measurement (Presenza, 2007).

The destination, understood as a system, is the set of products developed by the individual players that make up the offer network and which help to define the destination's image. In this sense, a real orientation to marketing implies, on the part of the various actors in the supply chain, the design and implementation of effective marketing plans, both at the level of the individual company and at the destination level, especially since this configuration has considerable importance from the point of view of the consumer, who perceives the product as a whole and not as the result of the individual services offered (Della Corte, 2012). As Presenza suggests «within an organization, regardless of the sector of activity in which it operates, marketing manages the exchange process with the outlet market in order to maximize the generation of value for the customer and for the organization itself» (Presenza, 2007. pp. 61-62).

Destination marketing actions are aimed at formulating offers that systematize the resources of the territory and are aimed at satisfying the needs and expectations of the target market segments. Analyzing marketing from an economic perspective, it can be said that the numerous approaches applied to the study of the discipline agree on the existence of precise marketing skills that are substantiated in two action methodologies: an analytical method (market research, competitive analysis, targeting , positioning) and a method of action on the markets (definition of operational programs, management of the marketing mix levers, measurement of marketing results). The set of skills described above generates the overall strategy, the effectiveness of which translates into the establishment of a competitive advantage and the definition of the company's position with respect to competitors.

The concepts reported so far can also be translated into tourism terms and in the context of destinations given that, even if the sale of tourism products and services is carried out primarily by individual operators in the hospitality sector and intermediation operators, the DMO assumes an increasingly important role in the marketing of the destination understood as a single and cohesive package (Presenza, 2007). The DMO is responsible for developing a coherent and effective marketing mix for the destination, and must therefore deal with all aspects of the marketing of the offer system. According

to some authors including Dore and Crouch (2003), it is possible to state that the pre-eminent activity of the DMO and, usually, the one that receives the largest part of the budget, is promotion. According to Ejarque (2003) «promoting means communicating with potential consumers to try to convince them that the proposed offer is able to meet their needs». Presenza (2007) and Della Corte (2012) believe that in order to promote the destination, the DMO can perform the following functions:

- Familiarization trips and Educational tour: trips or activities implemented by the DMO to focus the attention of operators and all tourist intermediaries along the commercial chain that connects the destination with the market towards the destination (destination management company, travel agencies, tour operators, tourist-cultural associations, opinion leaders, specialized accommodation operators, etc.);
- Workshops and roadshows: a combination of seminars and workshops, usually organized by representatives of territorial promotion offices, which make it possible to connect the tourist offer of the location with intermediaries (travel agents and tourism professionals/buyers) interested in the destination;
- Tradeshow and sales mission: fairs that aim to increase or create new business relationships and business-to-business relationships;
- Publications: these are generally printed material (tourist guides, maps, hotel directories, promotional brochures, etc.);
- Advertising: a key element for the DMO in order to increase the notoriety of the destination. The tools for advertising can be many (press, newspapers, magazines, promotional videos of the destination, notice boards and posters, radio, internet, etc.) and also very effective but often have a very high cost;
- Promotional activities within fairs, exhibitions, events, meeting places and with high potential for contact with current and potential customers;
- Co-promotion activities: these are transversal cooperation activities between companies in the tourism industry and companies in other sectors. This tool can be extremely useful for increasing the share of voice, increasing launch effectiveness, optimizing market penetration, reducing the launch cost by sharing the promotional investment risk with other partners (Presenza, 2007);
- Destination Management System: the appearance of the internet in the tourism market has led to profound changes both in the nature of tourism consumption

(change in the tourist behavior of consumers) and in the methods of marketing the tourism product. Destination Management Systems are 'interactive platforms' that are created to support local tourism organizations in the development of increasingly effective strategies in attracting tourist flows. Martini (2000) defines the DMS «an integrated information system that allows you to centrally collect all information relating to tourist attractions and services offered, making them available for promotion and marketing through a website»;

- Brand management: the use of brand strategies represents a managerial tool of absolute strategic importance to create and manage product differentiation with respect to other competing destinations and to position the product-destination in a unique and distinctive way in the minds of tourists. Consistent brand management is a tool to amplify and strengthen all communication activities planned to consolidate the perception and image that stakeholders have of the destination (Golinelli & Simoni, 2005).

Typical marketing functions are not the only components of the DMO's work. Therefore, the fundamental role that the DMO plays as an actor appointed to improve, disseminate and enhance the tourist image of its territory of competence and to strengthen the brand as a sign of belonging, or as the result of a conscious and formalized process, is evident aimed at inducing in the minds of all stakeholders a precise perception associated with one or more selected cognitive symbols. As we will see, the actual management of the destination also falls within its sphere of action. On the other hand, typical activities of a DMO, such as, for example, the management of tourist reception and information points, or other more specific ones, including (Presenza, 2007), fall within the functions of managing the tourist destination:

- the activity of Finance and Venture Capital with the aim of assisting tour operators in accessing the capital market as well as presenting the destination to new possible external investors interested in investing in it. For example, a decisive role can be played by the DMO in the incentive and development actions of local entrepreneurship by stimulating the interest of potential investors to invest in the purchase, renovation and redevelopment of the landscape heritage for tourism purposes.
- the analysis and research activity that allows the DMO to better understand the needs and expectations of the market, the expectations and needs of the tourist

offer system, the gap between the needs of the former and the possibilities of the latter;

- the Resource Stewardship activity which aims to manage the destination in a sustainable way, i.e. it consists in studying in depth the bio-physical limitations of the territory for understanding the potential impacts caused by tourism, implement related management practices;
- the control activity on the quality of the stay. In this sense, the role of the DMO is represented by its ability to verify the attractiveness of the destination and the quality of the individual services present within the local tourism offer system;
- the development and management of human resources, or an indirect action exercised by the DMO on the human resources necessary for the management of the tourism system, contributing from time to time to highlighting the skills shortages that may occur within the specific types of offer. This function includes, for example, collaborations with universities and training institutions for the organization of training actions for the professional updating of operators in the sector.

Traditionally, the role of DMO has always been associated with skills oriented towards marketing action, but a more in-depth analysis highlights the existence of a set of parallel activities that go beyond the mere marketing/promotion activity and result in actions that belong more to the sphere of destination management. All those functions that are carried out directly on the territory fall into this category. The first element to be analyzed are the reception and tourist information points. According to Ejarque (2003), the management of tourist information and reception points is a key element as it constitutes the first real approach between supply and demand, and it is starting from these offices that the satisfaction of the needs of both the seller and the buyer. The activities of a reception and information office can be divided into five areas:

- Information activities: it is a support tool for tourists who must plan their vacation. The activity of the information and reception center consists in responding to the requests and doubts of potential/current tourists by mail, fax, post and telephone. Furthermore, it must support the visitor, acting as a point of reference, at every stage of the journey, directing him towards activities in line with his preferences.
- Promotion of the offer: the reception office must implement the so-called "internal promotion" aimed at increasing the level of tourist spending, trying to make the most of the destination's offer capacity;

- Sale of complementary services and products: specifying that in Italy this practice is not allowed, as it is reserved only for travel agencies, the author claims the absolute importance of this activity for the arriving tourist. The work of the information and reception centers must be limited to the provision of 'generic information', brochures, leaflets, catalogs, maps of the city and attractions, but cannot also be accompanied by an explicit sales activity
- Entertainment activities: another typical task of tourist reception point concerns the design and organization of cultural, sporting or entertainment activities. The activity is often carried out by entities or associations and the information point is limited to providing information so that the tourist can use it;
- Research: the reception and information points are also of strategic importance, as they are centers for collecting information on the habits, preferences and desires of tourists. Thanks to the opinions of tourists, it is also possible to be aware of the things that work and the weak points of the destination.

According to the author, in setting up the reception and information centers, it is essential to rationally weigh their location within the destination. The reception and information center must be clearly visible and recognizable by the tourist and must be located in the strategic points of the destination, so that the tourist can easily find him. The key element, on which the efficiency and good functioning of the information point revolves, is the staff. The preparation and attitude of the staff of the information point constitute, in many cases, the tourist's first approach to the destination and therefore represent elements that can change the tourist's judgment on the entire destination system by themselves.

Tourist signage is another critical factor in destination management. Accurate and well located signage makes tourists feel more at ease and increases the quality of service provided by a destination. Presenza (2007) underlines the importance of sustainable destination management and states that the Resource Stewardship activity «consists in studying in depth the bio-physical limitations of the territory (carrying capacities) and developing a long-term program for the understanding of potential impacts caused by tourism and implement the related management practices ».

The DMO can also play a decisive role in detecting tourist satisfaction (through a control activity on the quality of the stay), an action that is not an end in itself, but whose purpose is to improve the services offered within the system. In this way, the DMO can verify the attractiveness of the destination and the quality of the individual services that

make up the tourist offer. Presenza (2007) states that «the analysis and research activity directly supports all the other activities in the sense that it allows the DMO to better understand the needs and expectations of the market, the expectations and needs of the tourism offer system, the existing between the needs of the first with the possibilities of the second».

Another peculiar activity of the DMO is the coordination of stakeholders. Since the destination is an integrated system of goods and services, the role of the DMO is to guarantee and stimulate the organic and homogeneous relationships that exist between the network operators and more generally between all the stakeholders who insist on the destination, in order to protect and increase the competitiveness of the destination itself. According to an important contribution provided by Martini (2005), from the perspective of governance, the network approach and the stakeholder approach make it possible to understand both the complex mechanisms that define the role of individual actors within them, and the methods for determining the related decisions to the elaboration of a shared strategic vision which acts as a glue. This will be analyzed further in the paper.

Following a chronological path (and not a hierarchy of importance), the last role that belongs to the DMO is "post-strategic" control, which can be divided into two phases: verification of strategies and monitoring of performance. According to Ritchie and Crouch (2003) it is important to underline how the competitiveness of a tourist destination is the result of two essential components: the first is represented by the ability to develop destination management and marketing strategies; the second instead by the presence of effective audit tools. The audit "is an introspective analysis, with the aim of investigating the mistakes made in the past, and various evaluation techniques can be used for retrospective, current or prospective analyzes". Audit techniques are applicable to a variety of fields, but marketing is undoubtedly the activity that most openly uses these techniques. Kotler (1998) believes that marketing audit actions are reflected in a periodic, systematic and independent analysis of companies, business units or government development programs, such as marketing plans, useful for implementing action plans for improve the company's marketing performance. In practice, Woodside and Sakai (2001) identify three central objectives of the audit activity:

- helps to increase knowledge and understanding of what works well or badly in the implementation of programs;
- it is an indispensable tool for drafting resorts on the validity and usefulness of evaluation methods;

- The audit activity allows you to understand the possible impacts resulting from the implementation of certain decisions.

Ritchie and Crouch (2003) extend these concepts to the tourist destination and argue that the destination audit aims to improve the performance and competitiveness of the destination, through a systematic verification process of consistency between the management and promotion actions of the destination and the vision and mission traced from the political direction. A fundamental role played by the auditor is the evaluation of the reliability and validity of the information that comes from market analyzes, studies on economic impacts rather than promotional actions, image perception and so on (Minguzzi & Presenza, 2010). Performance control is an activity that requires accuracy and method, in particular it is necessary to set up a valid system of indicators capable of verifying the effects of the planned actions and highlighting, more specifically, the deviation between the actual and expected outcomes of each axis of the project (Minguzzi & Presenza 2010). It is therefore advisable to have a set of indicators that can be divided into lagging and leading indicators (De Carlo & Parolini, 2004). The former are lagged indicators of the outcome. Examples are the volume of tourism demand, the satisfaction of demand, the volume and quality of the tourist offer. The leading indicators express the causes that led to certain results and for this reason they are also called trend indicators or predictors. Indicators are leading indicators on the hospitality and cultural offer, on the investments made as part of the strategy (communications, events, infrastructures and so on), on the level of notoriety of the destination or on the perception of the destination by the target segments (Minguzzi & Presenza, 2010). The difference between these two types of indicators lies in the fact that lead-type indicators, by their nature, are suitable for measuring individual actions taken, while lag indicators, being result indicators, are the synthesis of a multiplicity of actions undertaken in the destination. The lag indicators, easily traceable in the official statistics, can present flaws from various points of view (Minguzzi & Presenza, 2010):

- partiality of the information due to the detection only of the accommodation flows and all the phenomena of commuting and hidden tourism are ignored;
- low reliability, given that the survey criteria are not homogeneous in geographical and temporal terms;
- the data are not provided in real time, but are aimed at the past;
- concentration on quantitative and non-qualitative values.

The leading indicators, in addition, to presenting the same problems related to lag indicators, must also face the fragmentation of the offer of the destination system. These indicators, in fact, do not serve to monitor the final objective result, but the individual activities that allow the achievement of this result, in order to assess in advance whether the organization is moving in the right direction or if it is necessary to make changes. Presenza and Minguzzi (2010) identify the fundamental characteristics that the leading indicators must respect:

- each indicator must be able to be read and understood quickly by all the actors involved;
- each indicator or group of indicators must include some main objectives;
- indicators must be valid to ensure accurate information on objectives;
- it must be possible to undertake direct guidance actions on the basis of indicators which, therefore, must not be excessively complex;
- the indicators must also be linked to the strategy and play the role of timely signs of decline;
- the indicators must be linked to an adequate standard periodically and in turn linked to past results or targets agreed for future results.

In conclusion, it is possible to state that the DMO is a meta-management body that deals with the logistical, strategic and operational development phases of the tourist destination. Specifically, the DMO deals with both the design, marketing, promotion and quality of the territorial supply system, as well as the coordination of local operators and the assessment of the impacts that tourism has on the territory. While playing a central role in the management of resources and tourist flows, thus representing the engine of the strategic plan of the destination, its action must necessarily interface with two distinct levels: a 'political level' that is expressed through the activity of the body government and which takes decisions regarding the intended use of the territory, the allocation of resources, services and infrastructures, as well as the actions necessary to support the economic, social and cultural development of the territory; and an 'operational level', which sees the entrepreneurial action of individual operators as the protagonist, who, operating in an integrated logic, prepare the basic tourist offer. Following this line Martini (2005) argues that «the action of destination management is inserted within a decision-making space between the tourism policy of the territory and the entrepreneurial strategy of the individual economic actors operating there, which must

be made consistent with trends in tourism demand and with the trend of competition between territories and products». The effectiveness of its action is therefore influenced not only by the quality of the decisions taken and the ability to carry them out through appropriate tools and methodologies, but also by the quality of the connection and interaction between the different plans that make up and position the company on the tourist offer market of the destination.

2.2.3 The relationships between the DMO and the destination stakeholders

There is, however, a further function performed by the metamanagement body of a tourist destination which, due to its peculiarity, is considered to be external to the two previous groups, since it is believed that it is present, albeit with different intensity, in all activities of the DMO. In essence, this is the stakeholder coordination activity, of considerable importance so much so that the competitiveness of the destination itself is influenced by the different degree of effectiveness of the relationships that the DMO is able to operate with the network of actors who insist on the destination itself. In fact, the involvement of a company in a systemic strategy becomes particularly high when the body responsible for its implementation pursues a policy that directly influences local actors, inducing behaviors and choices that relate to the management and organization of companies.

As stated several times, even according to systems theory, a system, in order to be able to function, requires not only a perfect functioning of its parts, but a high level of coordination and interchange between each one. Hence the need for the DMO to effectively manage interdependencies and strategically plan the offer, also in function of the changing markets and the competitive framework. In order to be carried out, the DMO must therefore facilitate the processes through which the sharing of decisions, structures and resources between the actors takes place, for example, the circulation of information within the aggregate, the transfer of skills, the use of common brands and names, as well as the sharing of production, logistic and commercial processes. The relevance of this function, essential for planning and promoting the territorial offer in an integrated manner, is linked to the specific investments in the aggregate by individual companies, the return of which depends on the quality of its operation. On the other hand, a configuration of the territorial offer without an explicit coordination action has several limits, including the difficulty of highlighting the vocational specificities of the territory, in terms of products and services offered, of image. In addition, it is difficult to ensure

uniform quality levels between the players operating in the different sectors and within the same sector, as well as to implement large-scale development projects in terms of time and financial commitment. Therefore, from an operational point of view, the most relevant functions that the DMO must assume to ensure the coordination of the actors are (Martini, 2005):

- the incentive and support for the participation of local actors in the collective strategy, credibly highlighting the benefits and overcoming the resistance that the individual entrepreneur can put up against a collective plan. Some actors, for example, may fear losing specific skills following networking, or having to give up some activities following the presence of forms of division of labor between the aggregated units;
- formalization of the relationship mechanisms between the central body and individual associates, as well as between associates;
- the selection of new members of the aggregate and the possible exit of others;
- the definition of control mechanisms and the identification of sanctions against possible opportunistic behavior;
- the identification of transparent and shared mechanisms for contributing to the body and for sharing the results achieved among the actors.

The role of the DMO in facilitating the development process of a tourist destination undoubtedly translates into its ability to interpret the needs and expectations of all the stakeholders of the system and, consequently, lay the foundations for the subsequent collaboration between them.

It is therefore a network made up of actors and relationships that needs to be managed with the utmost attention. Especially since, even if one would favor the formal establishment of a DMO, there would not be an elimination of the underlying network, but simply a change in its structure, with the introduction of a subject that, among other things, it should improve the working effectiveness. According to Tripodi (2014), this network can take on different forms, as a consequence of some variables that define it above all, the number and variety of the subjects that are part of it, being able to distinguish territories with an extended and varied system of relationships, made up of many operators offering hospitality services and many actors involved in tourism decisions (municipality, consortium, trade associations, chambers of commerce, mountain communities), from other territories with a smaller number of operators and with responsibility for

the choices entrusted mainly to local authorities. always with reference to the subjects and in particular to their immanence within the destination, the author identifies more open relationship systems that include the presence of external subjects such as universities and research centers, service companies, brokerage companies, which differ from other networks and are more closed and linked to a local dimension. Finally, a further difference in the configuration of the network depends on the relationships between the individual actors that may have a different nature and intensity, with a single subject that can assume a central position with respect to a large number of relationships that it weaves with other subjects, or a more secluded if it interacts only with a limited number of other actors (Tripodi, 2014). As a result of all these variables, network structures emerge, which describe and characterize the territory and this system of relationships is the context within which they make decisions on tourism matters. Given that the ultimate goal of Destination management is to make good tourism decisions, one then wonders if some characteristics of the network do not exist and which may suggest a better functioning of the same. In fact, if this were the case, an important work direction for the policy makers of a territory would undoubtedly be that of encouraging the development of favorable context conditions for making good decisions. According to Tripodi (2014), it is interesting to try to understand if and to what extent the results held are connected to the fact that a network is:

- Hierarchical: where the hierarchy measures the verticality of relations. With reference to this aspect, the feeling is that the hierarchy can help to put order, to assign the right priorities and to stimulate the realization of common projects; especially in contexts, such as Italian tourism, in which the maturity and experience of the individual subjects does not seem to be such as to ensure that the system is self-governing effectively;
- Formal: by this we mean that the interactions between the subjects are played out within official contexts or if there are informal networks within the destinations. A minimum level of formality is in fact essential to make communication clearer and more transparent, to create consensus to aggregate more subjects around common projects, to ultimately increase the quality of everyone's work;
- Uniform and competent: where the degree of uniformity refers both to the openness to the outside and the variety of experiences and cultural backgrounds that

the different subjects are able to express, while the level of competence is measured with the knowledge of the individual individuals who occupy key functions within private companies and in the management bodies of public entities. Of course, the ideal solution must depend as much on the abilities of whoever is in charge of the system, as well as on the complexity of the challenges that we propose to play; however, it should not be forgotten that if the goal is to build a successful destination, perhaps through the creation of something different than what has been done so far, we must also ask ourselves what can be the activators of new energies and new ways of dealing with competition;

- **Rich:** by referring to the totality of financial resources that are conveyed within the territory and are managed by all the subjects; resources to which the funds deriving from external public entities such as the European Union, the State, the regions and the provinces contribute, the funds made available by the municipal administrations and perhaps generated by tourist taxes, by the fees paid by all the members. It might be all too simple, perhaps trivial, to think that a richer network is favored and competing; much more interesting is the fact that a network that works well is not necessarily rich, that the capabilities allow to obtain better results with the same resources, as well as to aggregate and generate new resources that can be made available to the system.

From these observations, in principle, it is assumed that there is no form of network and that it is absolutely superior to the others. Similarly, for tourist areas it is possible to think that the options described should be lowered into the reality of the place made up of more or less challenging objectives to be achieved, of a culture more or less open to the outside and to change on which to build, of a wealth of resources and of more or less broad and deep skills to start from, of a more or less consistent stock of financial resources to dispose of. In consideration of all this, each destination will be able to build an original model with some inevitable degree of customization, without however neglecting the presence of those transversal ingredients that certainly have a direct relationship with the final results.

2.2.4 Strategic Planning

Based on the foregoing considerations, it can certainly be said that Destination Management interventions require a strategic planning effort, since they must provide guidelines and useful tools for the success of a destination. More precisely, this means that an

effective Destination Management process must be able on the one hand to analyze, define and manage the attractiveness factors and the different entrepreneurial components of the local system, on the other hand to organize all these elements in offer proposals able to intercept market demand in a competitive and adequate way to the load capacity of the destination. Notoriously, strategic planning is a disciplined and well-defined process, the purpose of which is the detailed elaboration of a company's strategy and the assignment of responsibilities relating to its implementation (Gluck, Kaufman & Waldeck, 1980).

The strategic planning process envisages different hierarchical levels and a series of sequential phases that find their synthesis in the plan; the latter represents the shared vision of resources, skills and competitive challenges and constitutes the tool for communicating strategic choices to internal and external stakeholders. Therefore, an effective strategic management process must undoubtedly inherit the pragmatic approach of formal planning, which concerns the analysis and formalization of the process, without however hindering the strategic thinking which concerns synthesis and implies intuition and creativity. It is in this sense that the development of forms of strategic planning represent an essential response to the change of perspective invoked in territorial management, an opportunity to mobilize resources within the territory - the stakeholders and the main territorial resources - and ensure that new development thanks to the involvement of individuals and groups who, in different ways, participate in the strategic project (Camagni, 1998). As previously stated, strategic territorial planning constitutes a program platform which has the fundamental function of mobilizing the territorial components towards certain general purposes; has the task of coordinating and integrating actors, resources and activities in the conception and implementation of large projects that affect the development process of the territory. Strategic planning is, therefore, mainly aimed at defining and activating the conditions that allow the mobilization of the various actors towards the implementation of a common territorial development project, to this end it (Camagni, 1998):

- expresses strategic choices in a codified manner, in such a way as to make them feasible in every aspect;
- divides the strategic orientation into sub-strategies and ad hoc programs relating to each of the territorial components involved in this orientation;
- defines the coordination measures between the various territorial subjects, necessary to make the strategies pursued feasible and, consequently, catalyzes the

choices of these subjects towards a common direction;

- allows to communicate strategic choices externally and internally, thus becoming a tool that is both competition and integration tools;
- translates the effects of strategic choices on the need for resources into quantitative terms and hypothesizes the relative methods of covering this need.

Numerous authors have stressed the need to set up a planning group, consisting of representatives of the most relevant territorial stakeholders, to arrive at the development of a strategic project through three main functions (Nigro, Trunfio, 2003):

- analyze the characteristics of the territory to highlight the main problems, and highlight the factors that cause them, and the opportunities that can be seized;
- popular participation, referring, on the other hand, to all those forms of participation provided for in the statutes in the regulations which each local authority has adopted and which are activated before the plan documents are approved by the competent political body;
- social participation, finally, refers to those forms of involvement of the subjects and social categories concerned through the application of methodologies for the collection/transmission of information aimed at incorporating "common knowledge", for a better understanding of the specificities of the places and situations.

Therefore, the goal is to direct the implementation of a planning process open to consultation and participation from the earliest stages of drafting the plan. The process of building the plan implies, in fact, successive steps and focuses that require not only a strong technical commitment of analysis, forecasting, evaluation and monitoring, but also a continuous interaction with the outside that can only be achieved through the communication of ideas and planning of local communities and individuals. In a nutshell, it can be said that the strategic planning process is divided into two fundamental steps (Napolitano, 2000):

- the first consists of the elaboration of a "vision of the future". In essence, it is a question of defining a long-term overall picture that considers variables and complex phenomena such as, for example, economic globalization, the challenges in the field of new technologies and the carrying capacity of the territory;

- the second step consists, instead, of the territorialization of the vision where the commitment is aimed at identifying spatial challenges and long-term strategic objectives for the reference territory. The technique associated with it is that of the elaboration of alternative scenarios and the goal is to identify the desirable and shared scenario.

Therefore, the construction of the vision of the future and of the scenarios become fundamental moments of the planning process that engage the actors of the subject in charge of planning both in terms of techniques (elaboration of forecasting models and techniques of construction of scenarios), and of communication and mediation (enhancement of the information moment and development of continuous and transparent interaction). Ultimately, the result that strategic reflection must reach through participatory planning is the vision of the future, as a goal around which to aggregate consensus and the will to cooperate to implement successful strategic projects. In essence, it is a question of identifying the direction to be taken, the guidelines to follow to channel efforts towards the realization of the vision, through participatory processes that favor the enhancement of the specificities of the territory, of the environmental, economic and cultural connotations in order to achieve lasting competitive advantages.

Chapter 3

Analysis of the Monterosa destination

After having outlined the theoretical concepts regarding the destination and its management, this paper will focus on the research work carried out whose ultimate aim is to identify the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of a mountain destination taking as a case study that of tourist consortiums and the Monterosa area.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the peculiarities and criticalities of the administration of a mountain destination through the management of a body in charge such as a consortium. In particular, the focus of the analysis will be to take as an example the promotional sector of the Monterosa area in which a recently conceived consortium has taken the place of this management activity, configuring itself with the actors of its own territory and neighboring ones. The ultimate goal will be, after an in-depth analysis of similar management, different neighboring or distant ones, the presentation of the positive and negative aspects encountered by trying to give an answer to the main improvement issues towards which these types of consortium are configured and try to find what are the characteristics that make a tourism consortium an excellence in destination management and then build a model of behavior to apply to other cases

3.1 Research Methodology

From a methodological point of view, the research path was marked by a mixed, qualitative and quantitative approach. To the technique of interviews conducted directly

or by telephone with the sample identified by reasoned choice, to desk analysis and personal re-elaboration, the direct experience lived on site to carry out the participant observation was added. In the beginning, the survey involved a desk analysis of the entire Monterosa area, in fact, the three valleys that compose it were empirically analyzed and for each of them the territorial, economic, cultural, historical, receptive aspects and tourist flows in the decade 2009-2019 were studied in order to have a general overview of the destination taken in the study. The data were collected and analyzed on regional, municipal and Office du Tourisme statistical databases and in the archives of Monterosa S.p.a. Subsequently, the analysis involved the interview of 30 Consortiums/Agencies/-Bodies that deal with the management of destinations. It is important to underline that were examined the main Alpine destinations that possessed some geographical/territorial/organizational features similar to that of Monterosa. In fact, mainly mountain areas have been chosen with medium/large ski areas and a well-marked double seasonality. National and international consortiums were examined, the largest and the smallest ones, not only in the Aosta Valley region because the dimension of governance and the resources available is a relevant topic of the survey. Both national and international examples have been chosen for analyze other customer sectors and market positioning. Of the selected sample, only 16 signed up to participate in the interview. The reason for refusing the investigation mainly concerned the closure of the district offices during the summer period. The interview took place in a telephone conversation addressed to the selected subjects and in which questions were asked on the basis of a flexible and non-standardized scheme that made it possible to investigate a series of topics. The interviews were accompanied by a desk analysis made on those criteria, the information was found on the official websites of the destinations and in regional and national databases in order to incorporate the missing data. Finally, once the data were obtained, the research ended with a de-briefing section in which, with the help of tables and matrices, it was possible to identify a series of variables that would allow to see to what the minor and superior performances of each consortium are related to and on the basis of this trying to find indications of behavior for the individuals and in particular for the main research subject which was the Consorzio Turistico Val d'Ayas Monterosa. The limitations of research derive from the fact that it is always difficult to generalize results; in this case, the hypothesis is verified in a specific context characterized by precise references to the district elements (area vocation, widespread and lively entrepreneurship, cultural predisposition to collaboration, territorial identity, attachment to the territory and respect for environmental balances) generalization in different contexts is difficult.

Secondly, as in almost all small Alpine and subalpine locations, it is difficult to access more sensitive information such as budgets and results. For this reason, especially for the Italian champion, few have provided information of this kind.

3.2 Monterosa District

3.2.1 Monterosa Framework

The Monterosa Ski Group is made up of a vast system of ski resorts consisting of the main carousel, a freeride zone and other satellite stations located in other villages in the area. The “Monterosa Ski 3 valleys” area develops on the slopes of the Monte Rosa glacier, joining the Ayas Valley, the Gressoney Valley and the Valsesia through two alpine passes: 51 slopes served by 28 ski lifts starting from a minimum altitude of 1212 meters to arrive, at the highest point, at 2971 meters. A wide choice of tracks to satisfy the most demanding skiers who are looking for technical slopes on which to test themselves. In addition, the Monterosa Ski reserves "Monterosa Freeride Paradise", an off-piste area with even more height difference. Monterosa Freeride Paradise integrates the offer thanks to the system that starts from 2971 meters of the Passo dei Salati, the border line between Aosta Valley and Piedmont, and reaches 3275 meters of the Indren glacier. The Group's offer includes the resorts of Antagnod and Brusson-Estoul in Val d'Ayas, Gressoney-Saint-Jean, Weissmatten and Punta Jolanda in the Gressoney Valley and starting from the 2018-2019 season, the Alpe di Mera in Valsesia. These stations are ideal for tourists who want to stay in smaller areas, having the guarantee of finding ideal tracks for all levels of skier, from beginners to experts.

The Monterosa district, as understood in this elaborate, is the vast geographical area between Piedmont and Aosta Valley which includes and covers the skiable domain of Monterosaski. It extends to a greater area in the Aosta Valley, including the entire valleys of Ayas and Gressoney, while in Piedmont it affects Valsesia. The inter-valley connection points that make this area an interconnected system are Colle Bettaforca between Val d'Ayas and Valle di Gressoney and Passo dei Salati between Valle di Gressoney and Valsesia. From the point of view of tourism management, the Gressoney - Monte Rosa Tourist Consortium operates for the Gressoney valley, the Val d'Ayas - Monterosa Tourist Consortium for Val d'Ayas and the Alagna - Valsesia Consortium but also the Municipalities, the Tourism Departments and the Office du Tourisme. The territorial touristic offer of each valley acts and is managed independently by the single tourist

entities but being enclosed under the same geographic domain each reality aims at collaboration with the others to create an inter-synergy able to exploit economies of scale in order to offer the same product, Monte Rosa. In order to analyze how the different tourism administrations operate on the territory, it is necessary to study each single valley to understand its history, its morphology and the management of the tourist offer based on the tourist results it records.

"In the Seduni area there is a pass called Silvius, to which the Salassi (Aosta Valley) give the name of Rosae. On this pass there are perpetual ice, for which the Valaisans call it Der Gletscher ". This description appeared for the first time in 1574 in Josias Simler's *De Alpibus commentarius*, a Swiss cartographer probably unaware of the fact that the Franco-Provençal denomination, which he latinized in Rosae, was nothing more than the literal translation of Der Gletscher (Glacier). In the historical texts there are in any case 3 different denominations: Rosa, Glaciers and Monte Boso, the latter denomination, in use among the populations of eastern Piedmont and Lombardy, derives from "forest or woodland". The vast glacial cover appears, in ancient documents, as the most typical character recognized to the great massif and is also mentioned by Leonardo Da Vinci who, in 1511, notes about Monte Rosa: "Whoever goes over the Momboso will see how I saw very high quantities of ice which I found very heavy in mid-July ".

The Monte Rosa massif is the mountain group with the highest average height in the Alps: there are over 15 peaks that exceed 4000; Punta Dufour, with its 4634 meters high, is the highest in the group and is the second highest peak in the entire Alpine arc. The glacial surface covers 220 km² of land at the foot of which 7 valleys develop: Gressoney Valley, Ayas Valley and Valtournenche in Aosta Valley, Valsesia and Anzasca Valley in Piedmont, Zermatt and Saas valleys in Switzerland. The Ludwigshöhe, 4341 meters, represents the meeting point between the Aosta Valley, Piedmont and the Canton of Valais. The first known ascent dates back to 1778 when a group of 7 climbers from the Gressoney Valley, composed of Valentino and Joseph Beck, Sebastian Linty, Joseph Zumstein, Nicolas Vincent, François Castel and Etienne Lisco, reached 4175 meters of the Pietra della Scoperta, near the Colle del Lys. In the following years the ascents and conquests of the different peaks of the "Queen of the Alps" follow one another. In 1872 the Alagna Corps Guide was born, the second in the national territory; in 1962 the Guide Society of Ayas was founded and the following year that one of Gressoney to which, in 1995, the Guide Monterosa Company was added. To date, over 70 professional Alpine Guides operate in the Monterosa valleys, to which are added the aspiring guides.

Monte Rosa has always been a constant reason for interest in its natural beauty, attracting both scientific observers interested in studying its environment, and poets, writers, painters, naturalists and especially mountaineers (Valsesia, Anker, Volken, 2013). Among the best-known mountaineers, we must remember Queen Margherita of Savoy who, in 1893, accompanied by a long royal procession and local guides, inaugurated Capanna Margherita, the highest meteorological observatory in Europe. Queen Margherita, with the construction of Castel Savoia in Gressoney-Saint-Jean and with her summer stays between 1889 and 1925, also contributed to the tourist development of the locality which became one of the favorite destinations of the nobility of the time. The 1907 is the year of the first winter ascent of Punta Dufour and a few years later, in 1911, there was the first Italian ascent on the north of Lyskamm as well as the first ascent of the southwest ridge of Castore by the mountain guide Antonio Welf together and his client Carlo Fortina (Valsesia, Anker, Volken, 2013).

3.2.2 Monterosa ski: history and development of the cable car company

The history of the development of cableway installations in Monte Rosa has, since its inception, a strong connotation oriented towards the connection between the valleys exploiting what were centuries before, the migratory and commercial passages of the Walser population¹.

Gressoney entry into the cableway tourism industry took place in 1957 thanks to the interest of Eng. Eugenio Corsico Piccolino who, raising funds among the industrial-friends of Vigevano, succeeds with the Funivie del Monterosa company to create the single-seater chairlift "Punta Jolanda". Only ten years later the Orsio-Bedemie-Gabiet automatic ropeway gondola lift was inaugurated, alongside the Mongenrot and Bedemie ski lifts. In the following years, and in order to allow the exploitation of the entire basin, the Gabiet, Fontanasella, Castore and Polluce ski lifts were built by the ISAG (Sports facilities in Gressoney) and after about 10 years, the Monte Rosa Cable Car Company continues to exploit the Bademie area by building the Ecko Gaveno, Derromatto and Sehorn ski lifts. In November 1976, the Stafal-Sitten and Sitten-Bettaforca chairlifts were born; the latter was soon completed by the Sant'Anna, Punta Sitten and

¹The Walser are a population of Germanic origin that inhabits the Alpine regions around the Monte Rosa massif. They define their spoken Titsch, a term related to the standard German Deutsch and also to the same Italian word "German".

Bettolina ski lifts by the Lys Glaciers Society. The director of the Ayas - Gressoney link, however, still has to wait and takes shape only from 1979 with the Frachey-Alpe Ciarcerio chairlift and the Mandria I and II ski lifts. The following year was the year of the Bettaforca ski lift and the handshake on Colle Bettaforca sanctioned the engineering and skiing union between the two valleys of the Aosta Valley. I.S.A.G. also in 1980 made a further leap forward with the chairlift called Col d'Olen which continues the line of the Gabiet cable car towards the homonymous hill: Valsesia is getting closer. The Monterosa ski company was born in 1981, a brand that contains the different souls and the different companies that make up the famous carousel: Champoluc cable cars in Val d'Ayas, Monrosa in Valsesia and Gressoney Servizi in Gressoney Valley. In order to reach the complete connection through the 3 valleys and the two regions, it will be necessary to wait until 1991, when the Stafal-Gabiet and Gabiet-Passo dei Salati plants are built through two automatically operated gondola lifts with 6 and 12 seats respectively. The Orsio-Bedemie-Gabiet line gives way to the new connection route that passes through Stafal. These are years of intense work where the Aosta Valley Region invests considerably in the development of cableway installations as a driving force for commercial activities and the tourism market. Up to the present day where regional resources are used with a view to expanding the tourist offer and this is why in 2018 a runway was created in Sant'Anna, in the Gressoney Valley, to allow beginners to approach the descent, to become familiar with skis and prepare for the first descents on the track. Furthermore, the play area dedicated to children makes Sant'Anna the location for families who want to enjoy skiing and fun. After a test season, in 2019 the Bettaforca Fun Slope becomes an important reality for the Monterosa Ski Group. Its characteristics make it perfect for the target family: not presenting particular technical difficulties, it is suitable for adults and children. Its central position in the Gressoney Valley also makes it easy to use by skiers from all areas of the district. The creation in 2018 of the Mullero Competition track, classified black, with a length of 1,501 meters, an average width of 40 meters. Finally, the creation of groomed slopes for the ski mountaineering discipline that make Monterosa Ski, the first ski area in Italy to have slopes dedicated to this sport.

3.2.3 The touristic products

Monte Rosa is the destination for winter sports, especially ski and free ride. This product is so important for the area that the investments made for cableways, services and accommodation are supported on it. The other winter products such as ski touring,

snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and heliskiing are also important within the system offered by the destination but are not able, like skiing, to attract a large number of tourists. In fact, for example, ski mountaineering is a sport practiced mainly by a target of very precise mountain enthusiasts, high altitude experts who want to climb to the top (Turchetti & Favre, 2019). The foregoing explains why within the Monterosa Ski area, huge investments have been made in the ski slope product and in the construction of slopes for a public of both experts and beginners. The information collected on the Monterosa Ski website allows to understand the overall picture and the system offered:

- 4 Management Company: Monterosa S.p.A. (Champoluc, Antagnod and Gressoney-La-Trinité) S.I.T.I.B. S.p.A. (Brusson) S.A.G.I.T. S.p.A. (Gressoney-Saint-Jean) MONTEROSA 2000 S.p.A. (Alagna);
- 3 valleys linked together on skis: Ayas Valley, Gressoney Valley and Valsesia;
- 6 Alpine resorts between Aosta Valley and Piedmont: Champoluc, Antagnod, Brusson, Gressoney-La-Trinité, Gressoney-Saint-Jean and Alagna
- 142 days of skiing
- 136 km of slopes
- 120 km of programmed snow
- about 780,000 cubic meters of snow produced on average in one winter season
- 2 Alpine passes for the passage of skiers: Colle Bettaforca (2705 m) and Punta Indren (3275 m)
- 28 lifts: 14 chairlifts, 1 Baby Snow Park / beginner and child treadmill, 4 Skilift, 5 Cable cars, 3 Cable cars and 1 Funicular
- 51 slopes: 22 blue (simple, for everyone) 24 red (intermediate) 7 black slopes (difficult, for expert skiers only)
- 50,000 people / hour is the total flow rate of all plants
- 96% of programmed snow

In favor, the Aosta Valley Strategic Marketing Plan (2019) places ski and ski mountaineering among the star products or those tourist products that are attractors of global importance such as to allow, if properly exploited, to face even with very large and

distant markets but sensitive to the tourism product. The main products that the destination offers in the winter season are ski, cross-country skiing, mountaineering and freeride; heliskiing; ice falls; snowshoeing; fun parks; fat bike; sledges with dogs and spa relaxation. As for the summer version of the mountain, the location prepares the reopening of the main cable cars and chair lifts to allow tourist to enjoy the mountain more easily for hiking trails and mountain bike routes which are accompanied by rafting, climbing on the cliff, the e-bike and mountaineering.

3.2.4 Monterosa Touristic Flows

Introducion

The analysis of tourist demand is mainly composed by two types of data: one relating to arrivals and one referring to presences. The first is the data that takes into account the number of tourists staying in an accommodation, whether it is a hotel or a non-hotel. The presences instead emerge from the count of the nights spent by customers in the accommodation establishments. A data of difficult analysis is that determined by passing visitors also called "hit and run tourists". Official statistics in Italy as well as in many other countries of the world are based on the mandatory registration of guests at official accommodation facilities and therefore, they only take into account tourists, while same-day visitors data are always difficult to find. These data could be obtained through an estimate based on data from the Sav (Società Autostrade Valdostane) relating to the motorway passes at the Pont-Saint-Martin toll booth or even better through the administration of a survey directly to tourists on site, possibly through a questionnaire. This figure is particularly interesting, as it probably refers to a target that already knows and appreciates the destination, whose purchase propensity is particularly high, who are resident in areas of proximity and therefore particularly loyal. Knowing this target better would make it possible to carry out specific direct marketing actions, activated especially in the low season, encouraging same-day visitors to stay overnight in the resort. Another extremely interesting data for the purpose of analyzing the demand is the tourist penetration rate, which highlights the relationship between the number of beds (hotel and extra-hotel) and the number of inhabitants. Through this analysis it is possible to determine which geographical areas have the greatest tourist density. The strategic marketing plan of the Aosta Valley in 2009 highlighted how Gressoney among the municipalities of the Aosta Valley with the highest index. Gressoney is therefore a

tourist-oriented town towards hospitality. The analysis of tourist flows, arrivals, presences and average stay, presented in the following tables allow us to better understand the incidence and characteristics of the tourist phenomenon in Monterosa.

Attendance trend by origin of guests

Overall tourist flows in the period 2009-2019 show a slight increase in presences and a crisis in the years 2013-2014 (-9.1%). This trend is the result of two opposing trends: a growth in the presence of foreign tourists and a constant trend in Italian tourists. It is possible to note that, as a result of this trend, the Monte Rosa area is a destination that over the years has become a strong international tourist destination, recording a +68% of presences compared to ten years earlier. Despite this positive trend, the tourist of Italian nationality remains the major visitors of the destination (Fig. 3.1).

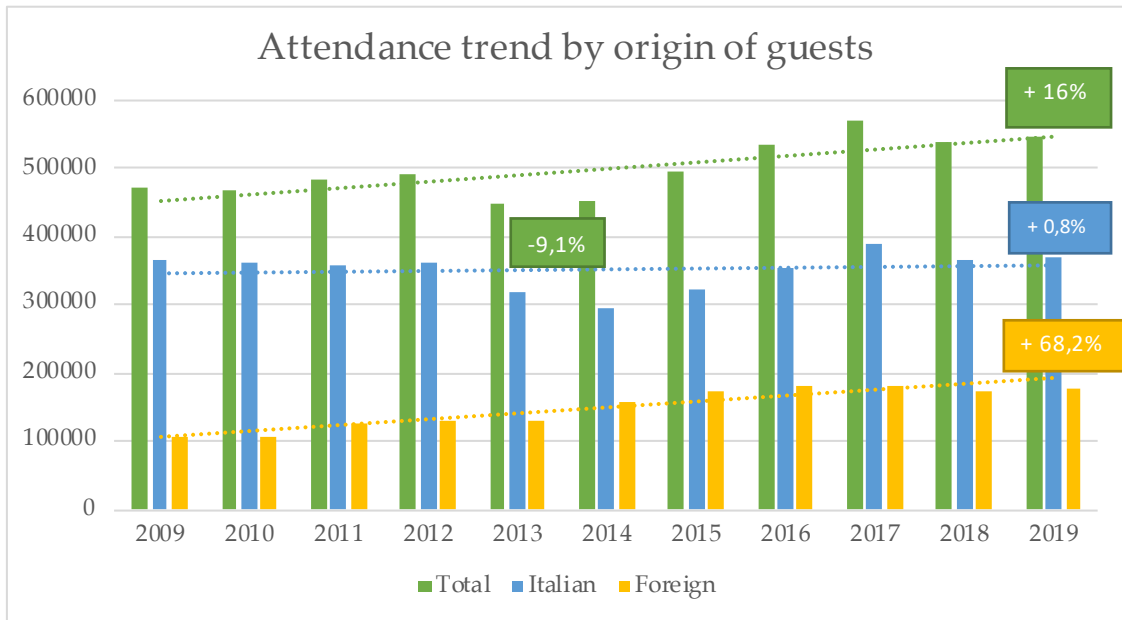


Figure 3.1: Attendance trend by origin of guests

Attendance trend Italian tourists

As shown in the graph below (Fig. 3.2), the constant trend of Italian tourists sees a period of crisis in the years 2012 - 2014 probably due to the economic crisis (Codacons, 2014); an overall reduction in attendance of -18% which, however, sees the numbers rise again in the following years. The data concerning the reduction of the average stay

of Italian tourists can be motivated by a phenomenon of change in consumer behavior. The average stay, calculated as the ratio between the nights spent, the presences, and the number of customers who arrived in the accommodation, the arrivals, in 2009 was 3.96 while 10 years later it dropped to 3.19. The graph below shows how the average stay in the destination decreased by 19.4% in the decade under review, a parameter in line with what happens throughout the Alpine arc, where the skiing weeks were replaced by short breaks or from the holiday weekends.

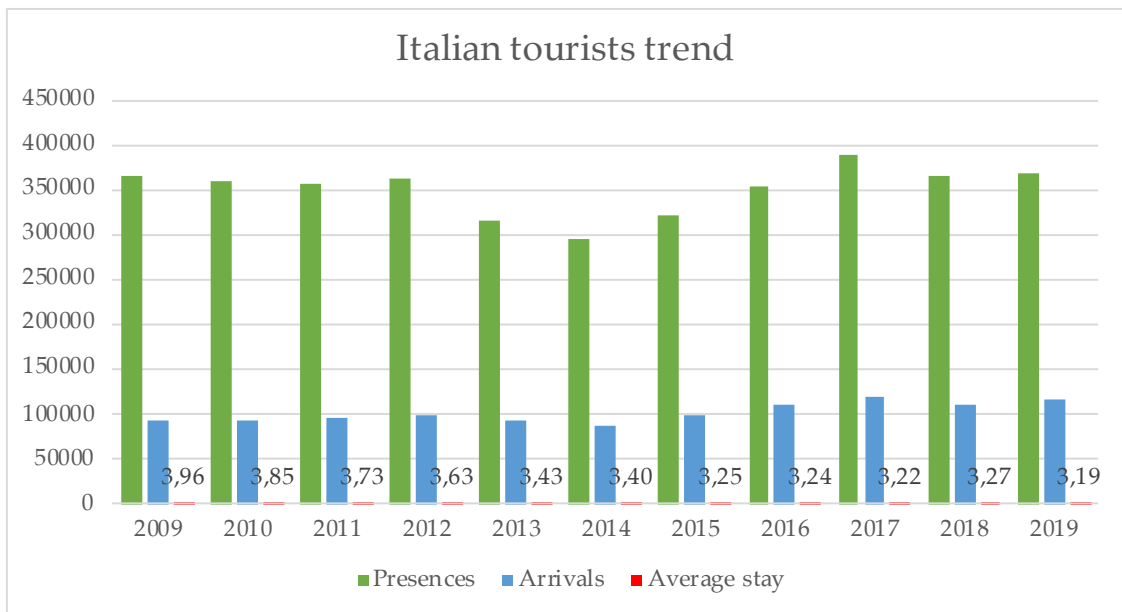


Figure 3.2: Italian tourists trend

Attendance trend foreign tourists

The increase in foreign flows is explained by the growth in arrivals characterized by a stability in the average stay. This is a +68% growth compared to 2009. However, it must be taken into account that despite the incredible increase in presences and foreign arrivals in the Monte Rosa area, these represent 33% of the total tourists (Fig. 3.3). Although the data collected suggest that the development of the destination, also in quantitative terms, must go through the growth of foreign tourists; the data on the flow of Italian tourists should make us reflect on the attractiveness of the offer system, as they are peculiar to the Monte Rosa destination.

Similarly, by analyzing how much the development of the international market is

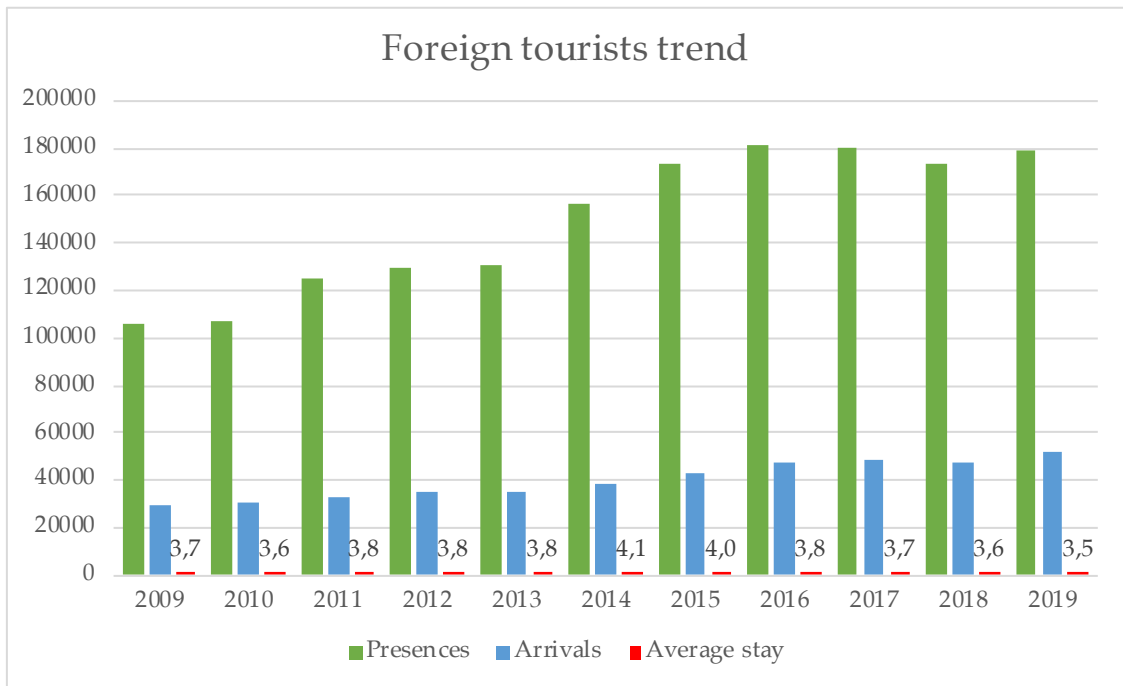


Figure 3.3: Foreign tourists trend

not completely completed and by reflecting on how many the possibilities of growth of the destination are, it is necessary to study the composition of international flows.

Winter season attendance starting from 2009/2010

The data regarding Italian and foreign presences in the summer and winter seasons substantially follow the growth trend of the international market compared to a constant trend of the national one (Fig 3.4 and 3.5). Although it is immediate to observe how foreign tourists prefer the destination in its winter version compared to the summer version, the situation is different for the national market which in the summer of 2019 marks a + 22% compared to the winter of the same year. The presence of the winter season in the face of a steady decrease in Italians, with a more marked decrease in the two-year period 2013/2014, shows a substantial increase in foreign flows of + 70% in 2016 while a loss of 46% from 2016 to 2019. It should be noted that the data relating to the 2019 winter season include the data for December 2019 and January/February/-March/April 2020, therefore it is necessary to bear in mind the sudden closure of the resort due to the Covid-19 health emergency in mid-March. Despite the closure and the loss of about a month and a half of activity in the resort, the data do not indicate a

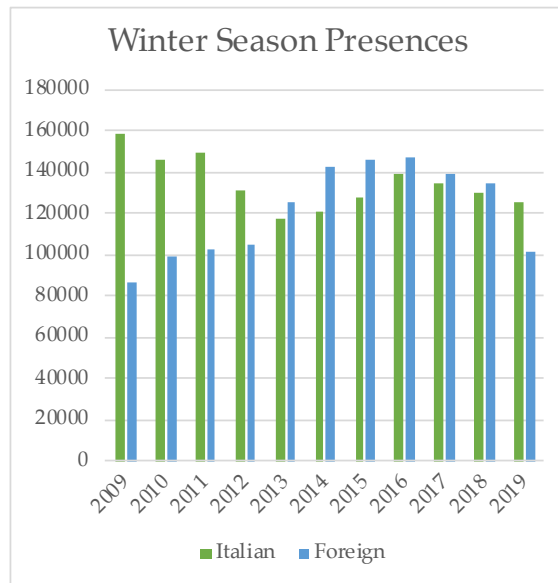


Figure 3.4: Winter Season Presences

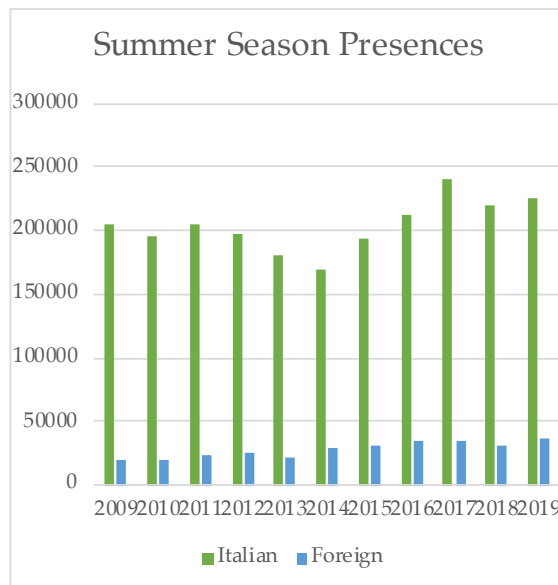


Figure 3.5: Summer Season Presences

marked crisis in presences, perhaps outlining an excellent start of the season. Different situation for the summer season which sees the clear prevalence of the Italian market to the international one. In support of what has been said above, it is possible to observe that the Italian market alone represents a significant part of all presences in Monte

Rosa in the summer. We can therefore say that the Italian tourist prefers the area in its summer version as much as the foreigner prefers the winter season.

Italian presences Monte Rosa per month

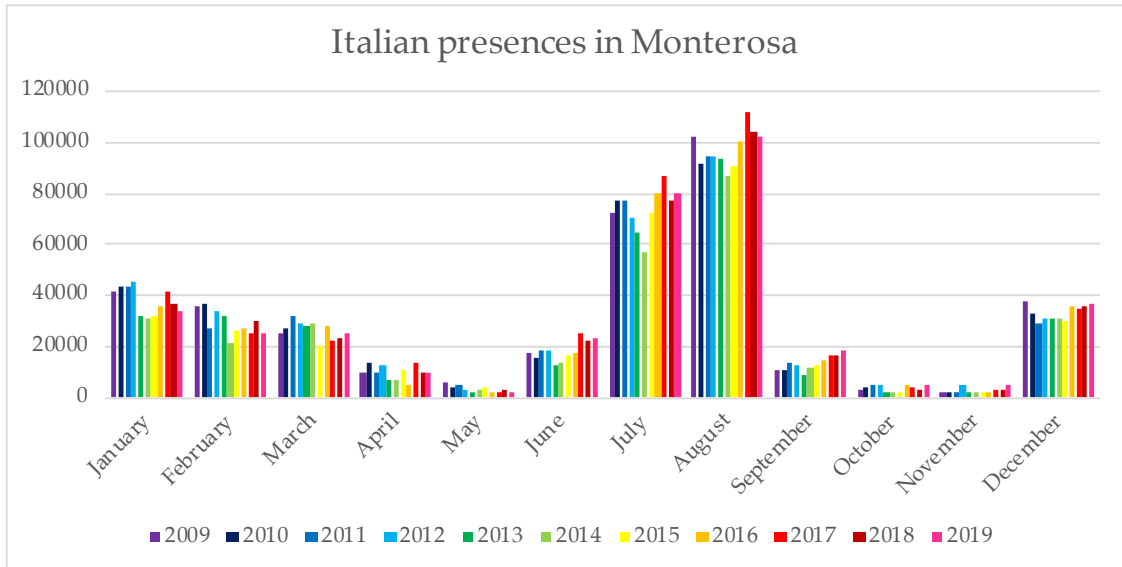


Figure 3.6: Italian Presences in Monterosa

The foregoing is confirmed by the above data, the largest Italian presences in Monte Rosa are recorded in the summer months of July and August, recording numbers that double those of the winter months. It can be observed that during the months of the year, over the last decade, the trend has been growing slightly overall, recording decreases in the two-year period 2013/2014. The graph 3.6 shows how much the area is subject to strong seasonality. This situation is also likely to be seen in the other ski areas in the region which can only rely on the mountain product in the winter and summer seasons and which therefore in April, May, October and November observe a sharp drop in tourist presences.

Foreign presences Monte Rosa per month

The outlined graph (Fig 3.7) shows how the composition of customers determines the trend of destination flows. If on the one hand the winter product is well sold on both the Italian and foreign markets, the same cannot be said of the summer product. It is therefore possible that the communication and promotion efforts of the summer in the

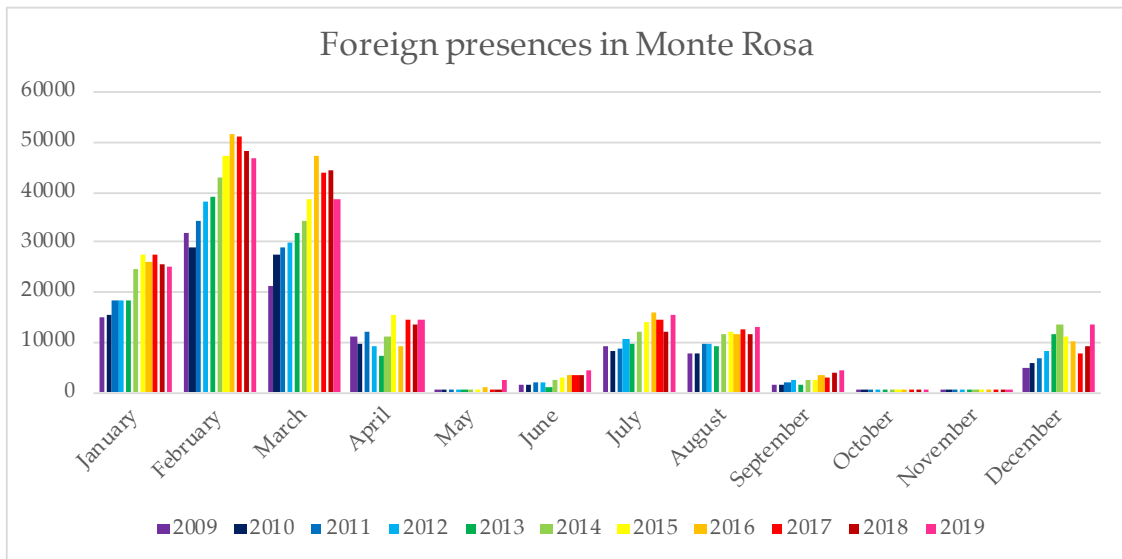


Figure 3.7: Foreign Presences in Monterosa

foreign market are not as effective as those for the Italian market or the products offered do not meet international demand.

Market composition

In order to concentrate resources for the promotion of the territory in a winning way, it is necessary to identify the national and international markets on which to intervene. In this regard, in accordance with the data provided by the Office Regional du Tourisme, an analysis of the main regions or states of origin of tourists in the Monte Rosa area will be provided below. As far as the national market is concerned, the destination enjoys a proximity tourist basin; these are regions such as Piedmont or Lombardy which alone represent a large portion of national tourists. These markets are important markets to invest in with promotions and marketing activities, although over the years they have suffered from fluctuating movements. Furthermore, it can be said that the proximity market is also a source of same-day visitors, which however does not reveal any data relating to tourist presence but which allows us to understand how sensitive these markets are to the promotion of the area and how vital it is to stimulate with tourist proposals always new. Continuing with the analysis of the main Italian regions of origin, the markets of Liguria, Tuscany, Lazio and Emilia-Romagna are to be considered interesting not so much for their percentage compared to the others but because they

have grown in recent years. They are therefore markets that could potentially grow if stimulated by the right promotional initiatives.

For the international market, on the other hand, it is possible to note that over the years there has been a general growth in tourist flows. Among the main countries of origin, it is possible to find the United Kingdom, followed by Germany, Sweden and France even if the greatest growth is recorded for Finnish and French tourists. Also noteworthy is Poland, which despite not being among the top places by origin, has recorded greater growth over the years compared to the leader. It is interesting in this case to go and analyze the main distinctive features of the different markets of origin as they do not all have the same needs and do not look for the same elements in the holiday. This allows you to understand the different purchasing behaviors and consequently manage a promotion targeted to the needs of each market.

The United Kingdom represents the first incoming market in the Monte Rosa area. Various research on the behavior of tourists of the United Kingdom underlines how only one in three tourists decides to buy a pre-packaged holiday, most of them choose to build their stay by booking mainly on the internet. While those who choose a package rarely visit the travel agency directly, most of them buy online through their websites (Michopoulou, Moisa, 2016). Despite this, in the locality and in general throughout the Aosta Valley, the large number of winter presences of tourists from the United Kingdom is due to intermediation with tour operators who offer Monte Rosa to the British market. The main ones are Crystal, Thomson, Echo Travel, Momentum, Inghams, Zuba Ski and Interski, which for the moment collaborates only with the Val d' Ayas. Furthermore, an important role in the Ayas Valley market is played by Ski2, a tour operator rooted in the territory in which Britain and Italy cooperate as incoming British tourists in the territory. Analyzed in general the behavior of British tourists and approved that the tourist in question prefers to use the internet as an information resource rather than going to the travel agency, it is necessary to implement online channels to allow the tourist to plan and book their stay independently, and use social networks, blogs and websites to publish additional information material and promote the location more effectively.

As for the purchasing behavior of tourists from Germany, one in three Germans decides to spend their holidays in their own country while those traveling abroad prefer Mediterranean destinations such as Italy and Spain (Zillinger, 2020; Mirtillo, 2019). Again according to this research, the German market is the one that spends the most on holidays with a total spending volume in 2018 of 90 million euros, in fact as important as it is to find advantageous economic offers, this tourist prefers the quality of the product

or service to savings. According to a research conducted in 2012 by ADAC Reisenmonitor, the Germans prefer mountain destinations for their holidays compared to seaside resorts which, compared to the previous decade, lose about 10%. They love to plan their stay in advance, to plan and book each visit from the comfort of their home using the internet and about 6 months in advance. Although the travel agency channel is the one most used, the demand for packages organized in the face of online autonomous schedules is decreasing more and more. According to an analysis by ReyseAnalyse conducted in 2017, the preferences of the German tourist regarding the choice of destination are the landscape, the possibility of reaching the destination by car, the welcome on the spot, the presence of multiple hiking trails, nature, the presence of typical products and the possibility of interacting with the locals. These elements are all available to the destination and it is therefore possible to think of Monte Rosa as an optimal location for the German tourist.

The Swedish market is a market that has always stood out in the area, emerging for its high spending capacity. If in the summer months they prefer to move within the nation to take advantage of the summer weather, in the winter months they prefer foreign destinations and destinations that offer different alternatives for sporting and active tourism (Italian Chamber of Commerce Report for Sweden, 2011; Palani & Sohrabi, 2013). It is in fact the segment of tourists who choose the "snow" product to practice activities related to downhill skiing, freeride, heliskiing and is interested in tourist itineraries both environmental and cultural and food and wine thanks also to the collaboration with the tour operator Ving, from the Tui group. As for the accommodation system, the Aosta Valley Strategic Marketing Plan (2019) states that the Swedish tourist prefers to stay in apartments to have maximum freedom and to have the opportunity to experience the typicality of the location. The purchase, information and booking behavior of the stay is directly on the internet. Due to its geographical proximity and shared language, France is certainly a relevant market both for the area and for the entire Aosta Valley. Analyzing the behavior of French tourists, it is possible to observe how the activities mainly chosen are those related to sport and nature, the real motivation of the stay. In addition, the French tourist prefers destinations that offer trekking and walks, tours to historic centers, markets and craft fairs or shopping. As for the average shopping, as well as for German tourists, French tourists also pay close attention to the quality of the environment, especially as regards the price. Being an extremely important market for the region, it is also the one for which the most investments have been made in promotion.

3.3 Val d'Ayas Analysis

3.3.1 Geographical framework

The territory of the Municipality of Ayas is located at the head of the valley crossed by the Evançon torrent, the Val d'Ayas, at the foot of the great peaks belonging to the Pennine Alps, which separate it from the Swiss Zermatt. The main mountain ranges exceed 4000 meters and are part of the Monte Rosa mountain range. In particular, among these we can remember: the Breithorn (4165 m), the Castore (4221 m), the Polluce (4090 m), the Gran Tournalin (3379 m) along the watershed with the Valtournenche, the Testa Grigia (3315 m) and the Rothorn (3152 m) along the watershed with the Valle del Lys. The main glacier is located on the valley head on the border with the Swiss territory and is the Grabde Verra glacier.

The valley is located longitudinally with respect to the main fluvio-glacial section of the Aosta Valley, in the north-eastern portion of the same, at a distance of about 65 km from the city of Aosta. The municipal territorial extension is equal to 129.2 square kilometers with a minimum height above sea level of 1464 m and a maximum height of 4226 m for an altitude excursion of 2762 meters. The border sectors generally coincide with distinct physical elements, represented by the watershed crests that enclose the basin of the Evançon torrent. The Ayas Valley has no easy alpine passes nor the lateral valleys, apart from the Col di Joux which however is not in the municipal area. Among the hills that can be traveled only pedestrianly, the best known are: Colle della Bettaforca (2676 m) and Colle Pinter (2776 m) towards the Gressoney Valley and the Colle di Cime Bianche (2980 m) towards Valtournenche. The lakes are numerous, of glacial origin, gathered in groups (Cime Bianche, Gran Lago, Palon di Résy, Colle Pinter) and have a total extension of about 60ha. The Evançon River is an affluent of the Dora Baltea and is fed from the right by the rivers coming from the Nana and Courthod valleys, to the left by those of Cunéaz and Mascognaz. It also collects all the waters from the Verra valley. The territory is defined by a strong identity, with a great historical-cultural importance and structural relations of very delicate micro-landscapes. A large part of its territory is located at the foot of Monte Rosa and consequently covered by moraines and glaciers important from a natural point of view so as to be defined a special protection area by the European Community, another substantial part of the territory is covered from forests and pastures. The urbanization has developed throughout history on 36 centers of which today, only those along the central axis of the valley from Corbet to St Jacques, and those along

the Corbet - Lignod - Antagnod - Champoluc axis have undergone of the time a substantial building development, the others are now almost abandoned except for some cases (Crest, Cuneaz, Mascognaz and Resy) which in recent years are undergoing renovations for residential building and tourist activities. The presence of the Monterosa ski area is another characterizing factor of the use and exploitation of the territory. The regional legislation is expressed on the territory through a planning order, which assimilates the concept of landscape protection, based on integrity and globality. Consequently, this implies a reconsideration of the entire territory, in light and in implementation of the aesthetic-cultural value from which art.4 of the Special Statute. Specifically, sentence no. 1029 of 1988 issued by the Constitutional Court found that naturalistic protection and the regulation of parks and natural reserves constitute a real matter, falling within the regional functions, and underlined that it is a matter "organically connected to both agriculture and urban planning". There is therefore a close connection between the discipline of the urban planning of the territory and the discipline of the natural environment and landscape. The geographical location of the Municipality of Ayas places the same in difficult situations of interaction with the neighboring territories, except for the Municipality of Brusson, located southeast on the same road. In the Municipality of Ayas there is another important road network, the Regional Road n. 5 which allows access to all the hamlets located on the coast on the orographic right of the Evançon. The country is not directly affected by the international communications of the Colle del Piccolo San Bernardo, the Mont Blanc Tunnel, the Colle del Gran San Bernardo and the Gran San Bernardo Tunnel since the Valle d'Aosta motorway, as well as the state road no. 26, is more than 25 km away. The anthropized areas of the Ayas territory are schematically located in 5 sectors (Municipality of Ayas, 2015). The percentage distribution of inhabitants in light of this division into sectors and in accordance with the 2015 Environmental Preliminary Report drawn up by the Valle d'Aosta Autonomous Region for the Municipality of Ayas, is as follows:

The Municipality of Ayas is part of the territorial entity of the Evançon Mountain Community, from the name of the torrent that crosses it to flow into the Dora Baltea. This Community, whose extension is equal to about one tenth of the entire Aosta Valley, consists of 36,613 ha and boasts a high difference in altitude. The Municipalities of: Arnad, Brusson, Challand St. Anselme, Challand St. Victor, Champdepraz, Issogne, Montjovet, Verrès are part of the Evançon Mountain Community with Ayas.

3.3.2 Historical framework

The first settlements of which to be aware were villages that towards the hundred BC were born for the exploitation of mines. In fact, it seems that in this period the village located where now is find Antagnod was the highest in the Aosta Valley. The data are not certain, but it is presumable that between 400 and 700 after Christ in the village of Saint Jacques the first industrial activity of exploitation of the soapstone of the Alps was born. In 1300 the arrival of the Walser population in the nearby valley of Gressoney and the cultural exchange with it, especially with the learning of the construction of rascards, typical structures of Walser architecture, have left an important mark on the territory. The census drawn up at the end of the 1700s signaled the presence of 1800 residents in the whole valley, a figure kept the same until the beginning of the 1900s. Since then a slow decline that has affected a minimum of 600 inhabitants at the end of the Second World War up to a presence today of 1360 residents (Istat, 2019).

Agricultural production, trade and the construction of "wooden shoes" called sabots, were the activities that allowed the survival of such a large number of people in this area. The first tourists appeared in Ayas in the early 1800s driven by the English passion for mountaineering. This is testified by some books including "Around Monte Rosa" written by Lady Cole. To meet the tourists needs, the first hotel was born in 1856 in Fiery, a small village at the foot of Monte Rosa. It is still necessary to wait half a century for a consistent development of the beds, which are concentrated mainly in the village of Champoluc. The Breithorn hotel, the Castor hotel, and the Favre hotel still testify to this. The first tourist buildings appear after the 1920s, these are villas built by wealthy Piedmontese industrialists to deal with exclusively summer tourism, but with a strong mountaineering connotation. The real urban expansion erupts from the sixties to the nineties. It is in this period that most of the houses are built (there are about 5300 real estate units) which mainly have a second home use. The development of skiing began to appear in the early sixties, but it is only after the creation of the interconnection links with Gressoney and with Alagna, and with the construction of the artificial snow systems that the winter season recorded an increase in the tourist presence.

3.3.3 Economic framework

Most of the activities in the area are managed by residents who, in a significant percentage, own the properties themselves (Municipality of Ayas, 2015). The activities related to tourism and the services connected to it are the masters, which require a large use

of professionalism external to the municipality to guarantee the services in the periods of maximum tourist turnout. The presence of craftsmen in particular of carpenters and building workers is significant. Agricultural activities are present in particular with regard to breeding and pastoralism. In recent years, farms have been created linked to the production of small typical high mountain vegetables, medicinal herbs, beers, etc. There are also small activities related to beekeeping.

3.3.4 Real estate assets

In accordance with the data published by the Municipality of Ayas, in 2015 the properties are 1/3 owned by the residents and 2/3 owned by the non-residents. Of the third of the residents, half are productive activities (hotels, businesses, craft shops, agricultural premises) and half of them are homes, including the first houses.

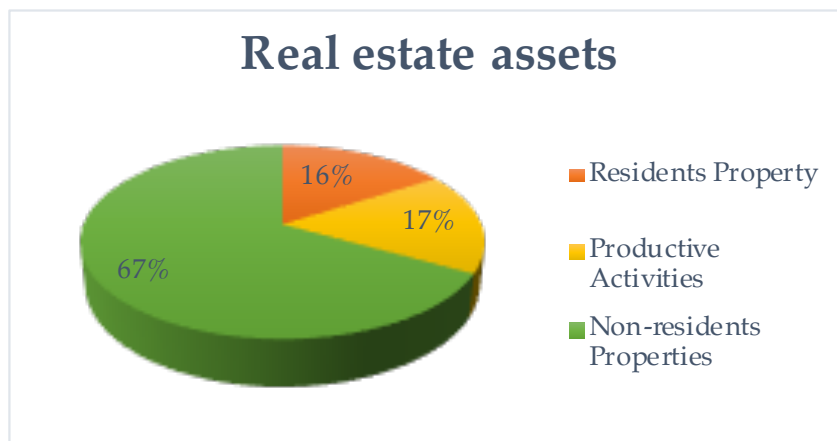


Figure 3.8: Real Estate Assets

It is therefore clear from these data that almost all the production activities are owned by residents and that out of a total of 5300 housing units, 900 are owned by residents.

3.3.5 Touristic flows

In accordance with the data provided by the Aosta Valley Region, it is possible to identify an analysis framework for the individual Ayas Valley. Also in this case, the attendance and arrival data of Italians and foreigners relating to the decade 2009 - 2019 were taken as a sample. Specifically, one of the purposes is to outline the trend by origin of tourists to get a general picture of the individual destination, thus comparing it with the

trend of the entire area to assess any gaps. The analyzed data include presences and arrivals of the municipalities of Brusson, Challand-Saint-Anselme, Challand-Saint-Victor, Champoluc/Ayas/Antagnod.

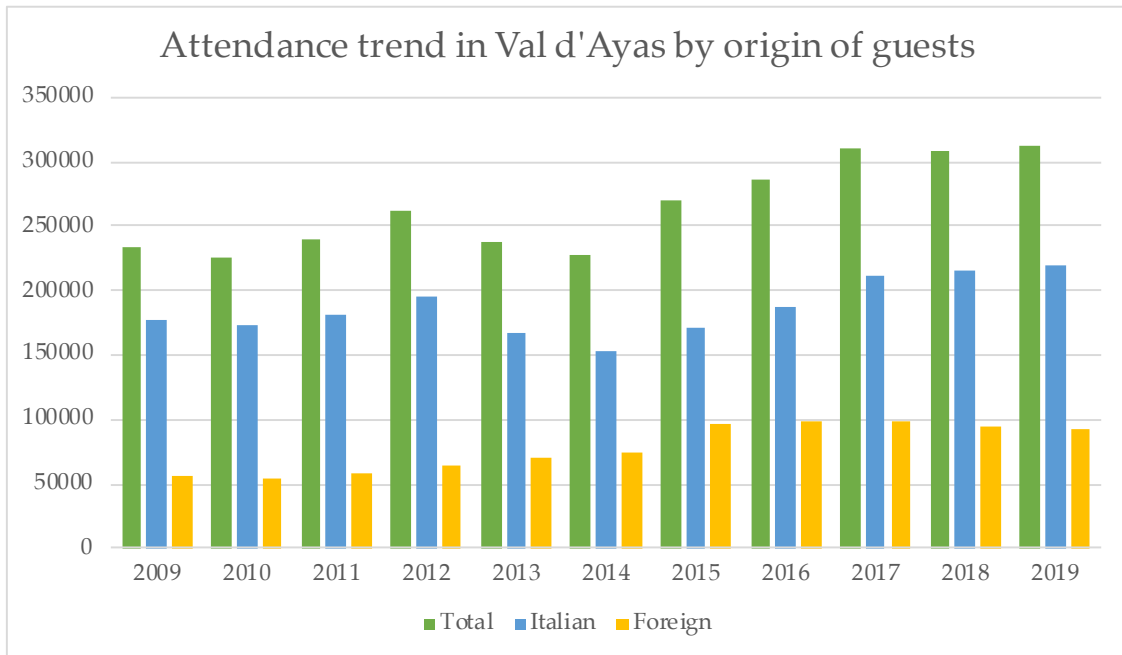


Figure 3.9: Attendance trend in Val d'Ayas by origin of guests

The trend of presences in Val d'Ayas in the decade 2009-2019 is, as shown in the graph 3.9, positive and tending to increase. In total, in 2019 there was about + 34% compared to 2009, with +23 for the Italian market and + 67% of foreign visitors in the valley. As well as for the data collected for Monte Rosa, also for the Val d'Ayas there was a decrease in attendance in the two-year period 2013 - 2014.

As shown in the graph 3.10, the constant increase in tourists sees a period of crisis in the years 2013 - 2014; an overall reduction in presences of -18% which, however, recorded an increase in the following years. The average stay drops, this figure, calculated as the ratio between the nights spent, the presences, and the number of customers arriving at the accommodation, arrivals, in 2009 is 3.98 while 10 years later it drops to 3.37. The graph above shows how the days of average stay in the destination decreased by 18%, a parameter in line with what happens in the rest of the Monte Rosa area.

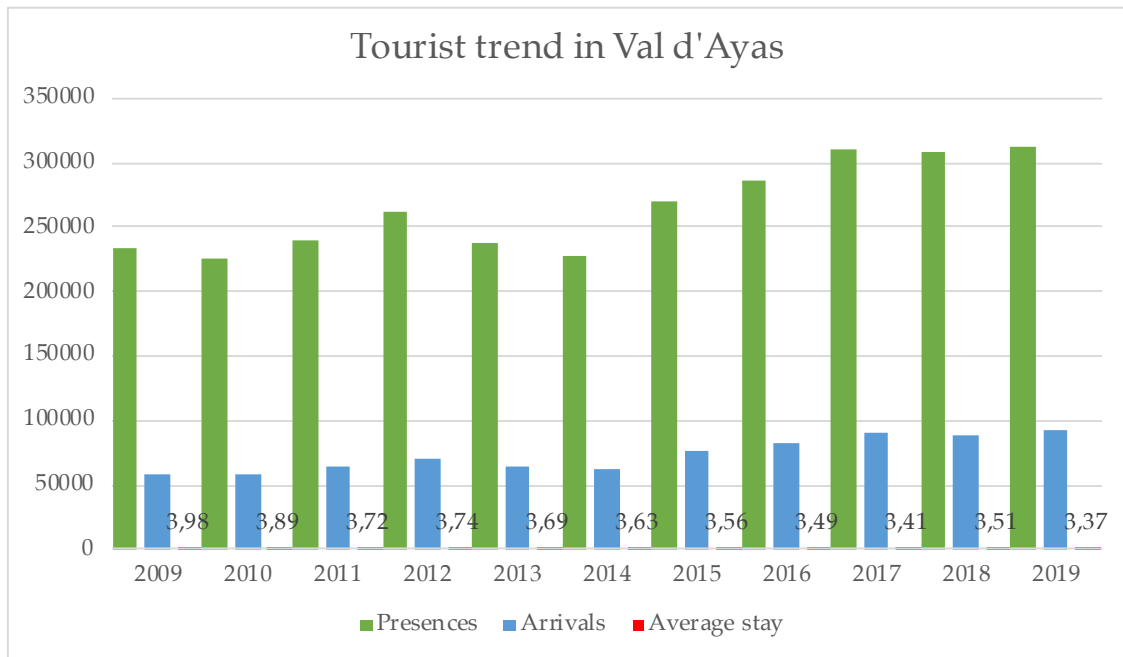


Figure 3.10: Tourist trend in Val d'Ayas

3.3.6 Accommodation

As regards the receptivity of the Ayas Valley, there are 85 structures including hotels, B&Bs, guest houses, residences, campsites and hostels for a total of 1171 rooms and 3033 beds. The accommodation facilities that in 2019 have decided to join the Val d'Ayas Monte Rosa Tourist Consortium are 59. It includes 25 hotels, 8 B&Bs, 8 RTAs, 4 Alpine huts and 4 Campsites.

3.4 Valle di Gressoney

3.4.1 Geographical framework

The Gressoney valley is 85 km from Aosta and belongs to the Walser Alta Valle del Lys Mountain Community to which Gressoney-La-Trinité, Issime, Gaby, Gressoney-Saint-Jean also belong. The Municipality of Gressoney, in German Walser dialect Greschônei Drifaltigkeit or Creschnau Drifaltigkeit, is located at the head of the Gressoney valley (also called Lys Valley) at the foot of Monte Rosa, in a vast flat area dominated by the imposing glacier del Lyskamm (1078 hectares, the largest on the Italian side of the group

and the second in the Aosta Valley). The territorial extension of the Gressoney valley is 69 square kilometers with a minimum height above sea level of 1189 m and a maximum height of 3315 m for an altitude excursion of 2,126 meters. Among the main peaks of the valley we find the Castore (4226 m), the Western (4481 m) and the Eastern (4527 m) Lyskamm and the Vincent Pyramid (4215). The highest point of the Monte Rosa massif is instead more distant, between Macugnana and Zermatt (Switzerland). The slope of Monte Rosa di Gressoney shares the morphological characteristics of the bordering the Aosta Valley side of Champoluc: wide shapes, large glaciers, wide plains at high altitude, all elements very distant from the neighboring and close Piedmont side. Here the shapes become much more rugged and grandiose, the large glaciers are replaced by overhanging walls and sheer slopes.

The linear conformation of the Lys Valley has conditioned the development of the locality which has historically spread along the route of the road, tending to parallel to the torrent. The border with neighboring municipalities did not determine conditions in settlement, historical or recent choices. In fact, the border with the Piedmontese municipalities to the east develops by ridge or by high altitude hills, where the settlements are non-existent or are limited to some pastures. The same as regards the border with the municipality of Ayas in the west. The schematic connections make the Gressoney valley in an isolated position at the bottom of a long and narrow valley. The consequences of such a geographical position and the lack of relations with the Ayas valley in the west or with Valsesia in the east involve serious isolation risks, which have already occurred during the recent floods, which entail serious safety problems. The overall analysis of the demographic trend in the Gressoney valley (811 inhabitants (Istat, 2018)), heralds some particularly interesting features that may have some form of tourist interest. Examination of the data relating to the total size of the population shows that this has historically been in progressive decline since 1861, in accordance with the phenomena of depopulation of the mountain, and then, starting from 1951, in a significant rise consequently to tourism development of the locality, especially related to the capital (Zanzi & Rizzi, 2018). The distribution of residents is characterized by a considerable dispersion of the resident population in numerous small hamlets; the concentration of the population residing downstream in the localities of Tache, Edelboden, Underwoald and to a lesser extent upstream in the localities of Stafal and Tschaval; the occasional population also thickens mainly in the same localities; the peaks of concentration of the occasional population occur in correspondence with the large tourist accommodation structures.

3.4.2 Historical framework

Founded around the thirteenth century by the Walser, peoples of Germanic origin mainly dedicated to commercial traffic, the territory of Gressoney depended in the Middle Ages on the abbey of Saint-Maurice d'Augune located in the canton of Valais in Switzerland. As attested by the municipal historical archive of the Municipality of Gressoney-La-Trinité, from the thirteenth century the territory of the country became part of the mandate of Graines, under the jurisdiction of the House of Challant. Between the end of the XII and the beginning of the XIII also residential nucleuses belonging to populations of Germanic origin begin to be attested. The term Walser, a contraction of the German word Walliser, indicates the Valaisan populations who, between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, abandoned their homeland in Valais, and driven by economic, demographic, commercial and political reasons, decided to create new settlements. According to the most accredited theory, these populations, facilitated by the withdrawal of the glacier, arrived from Zermatt at the beginning of the thirteenth century and settled in almost the entire Valle del Lys (Gressoney, Issime, Gaby and Niel) and in the upper Val d'Ayas (Canton des Allemands), across the Teodulo Pass (3,317 m) to the west and from Monte Moro (2,984 m) to the east (Zanzi & Rizzi, 2018). The different Walser communities had some distinctive characters: the community spirit, the high altitude, the nomadism and the spoken language. The community spirit was strengthened by the "Walser law", which spread between the XII and XV centuries throughout Europe and which provided for the perpetual concession of the land by the feudal lord to his settlers, and by administrative and judicial autonomy in exchange for aid and protection to one's lord (Zanzi & Rizzi, 2018). The Walser language, from which many surnames and toponyms remain, is spoken today mainly by the elderly but over the years it has been the subject of many recovery projects by public bodies and cultural associations so that this culture could be kept alive. Among the elements that still characterize the pride of the Walser community today, the Costume of Gressoney is perhaps the most important symbol. The costume, the dress worn daily for any job, was not so rich and ornate, but short and unadorned. With the evolution of the times, also in Gressoney the clothing common to all was adopted, so that the costume, with its precious cap woven in gold filigree and set stones and the skirt made with the local cloth "Landtuech" is worn in all special occasions and solemn holidays. It should be emphasized that the passes for the transalpine area practicable from this valley are at a much higher altitude than those of the nearby Ayas valley, and therefore it is likely that the road system in ancient times was mainly transversal, connected to the numerous hills, among the particularly

important are Ranzola and Bettaforca, which allowed access to the adjacent valleys: Val d'Ayas, Valsesia and Biellese. The first tourists arrived in the Gressoney valley at the beginning of the 1800s driven by the English passion of mountaineering and stimulated by the preference for the location manifested by members of the Savoy house. This is testified by some photos found at the municipal library. To meet the tourists need, the first hotels were born at the end of the 1800s. It is still necessary to wait half a century for a substantial development of the beds, which are concentrated mainly in the village of Gressoney.

3.4.3 Economic framework

An analysis of the economic fabric is useful as a basis on which to base tourism development activities, the choices of which can have important economic and employment effects on the locality. Economic activity in Gressoney is mainly based on three pillars: tourist accommodation, commerce and services. The tertiary sector as a whole, occupies more than 4/5 of the workforce employed, with a considerable weight represented by the employees of the public administration. The greatest weight is represented by the private service sector, supported by the hospitality and catering structures, by trade and transport (Municipality of Gressoney, 2015). The presence of craftsmen in particular of carpenters and building workers is significant. Agricultural activities are present in particular with regard to breeding and pastoralism. As in the neighboring Val d'Ayas, farms have been created in recent years linked to the production of small vegetables typical of the high mountains, medicinal herbs, beers etc.

The Municipalities of Issime, Gaby, Gressoney-Saint-Jean and Gressoney-La-Trinité share common development objectives with their respective local communities, with the aim of achieving full integration in the provision of services, through the pursuit of quality standards optimal, as well as to represent a single point of reference for the territory, for the purposes of a common programming policy. The Unité des Communes Valdôtaines Walser has as its objective the preservation and enhancement of Walser traditions, with particular regard to language and culture, artistic and architectural heritage and customs, the natural and human environment. At the same time, the institution also promotes the consolidation and development of economic activities important for the permanence of its population in the places of origin, for the purpose of maintaining the linguistic and cultural identity of the Walser Community.

3.4.4 Touristic flows

The data collected and analyzed are taken from the Gressoney Tourist Office and compared with the municipal data in possession. In accordance with the data provided by the Aosta Valley Region, it is possible to identify an analysis framework for the individual Gressoney valley. Also in this case, the attendance and arrival data of Italians and foreigners relating to the decade 2009 - 2019 were taken as a sample. Specifically, we want to outline the trend by origin of tourists to get a general picture of the individual destination, thus comparing it with the trend of the entire area to assess any gaps. The analyzed data includes presences and arrivals of the municipalities of Gressoney Saint Jean, Gressoney La Trinité, Gaby and Issime.

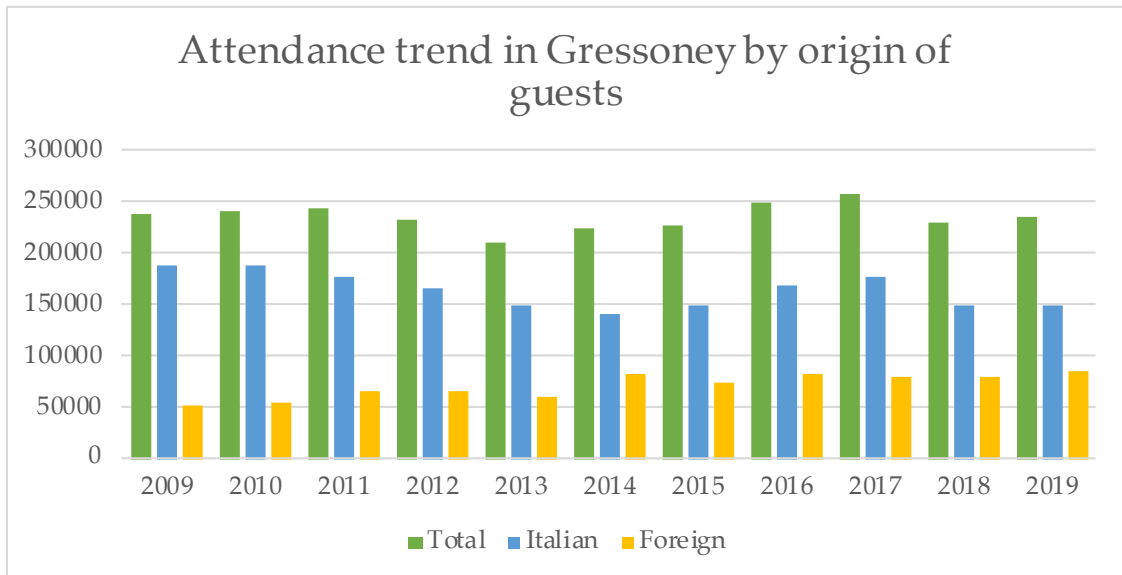


Figure 3.11: Attendance trend in Gressoney by origin of guests

The trend of presences in the Gressoney valley in the decade 2009-2019 is, as shown in the graph 3.11, positive and basically constant. In total, in 2019 there was about a -1.38% compared to 2009, with a reduction of -20% for the Italian market compared to a +69% of foreign visitors in the valley. As for the data collected for Monte Rosa, also for the Gressoney valley there was a decrease in attendance in the 2013-2014 two-year period, which was later recovered in the following years.

As shown in the graph 3.12, the constant increase in tourists sees a period of crisis in the years 2013 - 2014; an overall reduction in presences which recorded an increase in subsequent years. The average stay, calculated as the ratio between the presences and

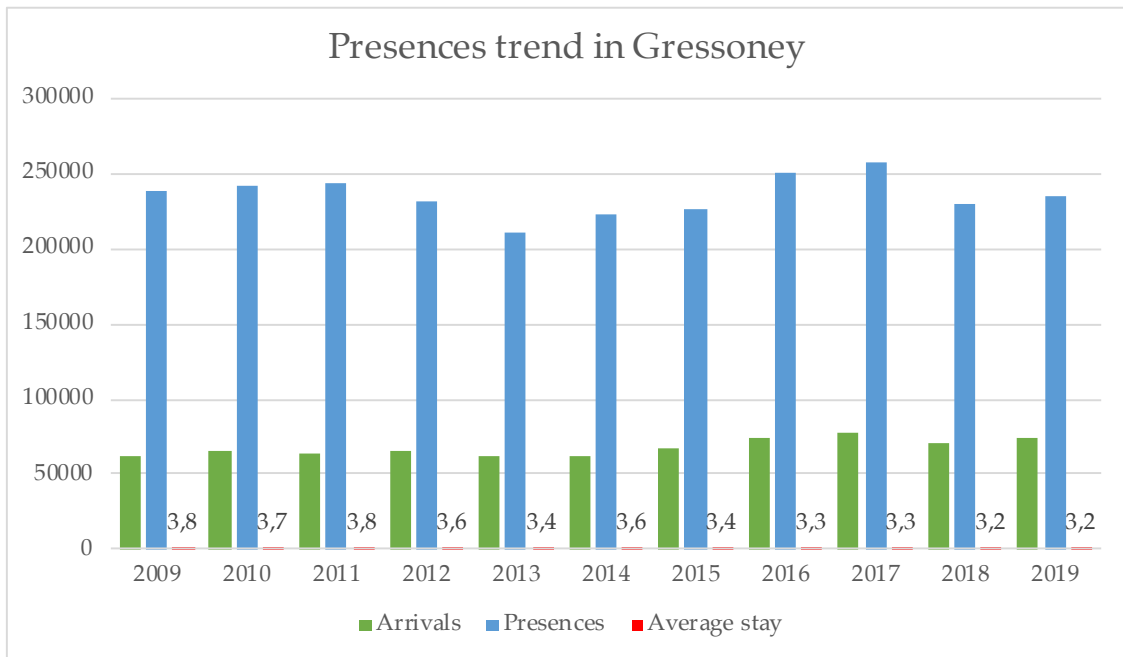


Figure 3.12: Presences trend in Gressoney

the arrivals, drops, if in 2009 was 3.8, 10 years later it drops to 3.2. The graph above shows how the days of average stay in the destination decreased by 16% in the decade under consideration, a parameter in line with what happens in the rest of the Monte Rosa area.

3.4.5 Accommodation

In order to obtain an exhaustive picture of the resources present, divided by hotel and extra-hotel sector, as well as the potential for second homes, the resort's accommodation facilities were analyzed. The data collected are taken from the Gressoney Tourist Office. Overall, the accommodation system is made up of 68 establishments (excluding secondary dwellings). The hotels are 25, divided into four, three, two and one star, 18 residences, 4 mountain shelter, 8 Rta, 11 B&B and 2 camping. Also in Gressoney, as in the main Italian mountain tourist resorts, a gradual change of destination of use for businesses is underway. The most striking case is evidenced by Monbosco, a structure that represented the flagship of the destination especially for the number of arrivals and presences. It is possible to affirm that the accommodations in the Gressoney valley do not have elements attributable to the large hotel chains but are characterized by

being of a small family-run nature with consequent control of the capital invested and managed mainly by local operators.

3.5 Alagna Valsesia

3.5.1 Geographical framework

The Municipality of Alagna is a small center of 431 inhabitants (Istat, 2017) in Piedmont in the province of Vercelli, at the foot of Monte Rosa. In particular, Alagna borders the municipalities of Riva Valdobbia always in Valsesia, of Rima San Giuseppe in Val Sermenza, of Macugnaga in Val d'Ossola, with the Aosta Valley Gressoney-Saint-Jean and with Zermatt in Switzerland. Specifically, Alagna is located in the territory called Alta Valsesia as the Valley itself is divided into Alta and Bassa depending on whether or not it is close to Monte Rosa. It extends for several kilometers from the plain of Romagnano Sesia to the high peaks of Alagna, comprising several municipalities and smaller valleys. Its elongated shape and rich in different landscapes allows to attract various types of visitors, from admirers of good food and wine to mountain enthusiasts. For this reason, specifically, Alta Valsesia is rich in organizations and associations that manage and protect the immense natural heritage, which annually attracts thousands of tourists intrigued by the beauty of this valley. Alta Valsesia is also organized in smaller valleys according to the torrent that bathes them: the Val Grande di Alagna borders the Val d'Oro, Riva Valdobbia borders the Val Vogna and finally Campertogno borders the Valle Artogna. This mountainous massif is also characterized by its high peaks above 4500 m and by its proximity to the east of Lake Orta and Lake Maggiore, popular tourist destinations thanks to the mild climate and 35 and 50 km away from the valley. In addition, since 2013 the territory has become a UNESCO heritage site thanks to the Valsesia Geopark, established for the conservation and protection of the fauna and flora species present in this area which once housed a Supervulcano, whose traces are still visible today in many municipalities in Valsesia. Culture and landscape are condensed, therefore, in a single valley capable of offering different accommodation for every type of visitor. The long valley creeps for 60 km in the heart of the Pennine Alps. Steep and narrow valley, it has six peaks over 4000 meters, all on the Monta Rosa massif (Corno Bianco 3320 m and Monte Tagliaferro 2964 m). The Walser communities are also located at the head of the Mastallone and Sermenza valleys. Part of the territory of the Walser municipalities in the high valleys is protected by the Alta Valsesia Natural Park.

3.5.2 Historical framework

The territory of Alagna Valsesia, formerly used as a mountain pasture, was colonized in the 13th century by the Walser, during subsequent migrations and who built their houses here and made it a permanent settlement. This population, coming from the nearby Valais canton in Switzerland, was devoted to sheep farming and agriculture, and with its culture, its traditions and its characteristic rural buildings left a profound mark in many areas of Upper Valsesia. The village was a secondary colony, founded by Walser from nearby Macugnaga. According to tradition, Alagna - or Lagna - was founded by Enrico Staufacher who started the construction of the first permanent houses. At that time the last inhabited center of the valley was Pietre Gemelle, located where Riva Valdobbia stands today. Initially Alagna joined the community of Gemstones, established in an independent parish in 1326. Towards the end of the fifteenth century Alagna separated becoming an autonomous parish (1475), with the exception of the territory of the Val d'Otro which remained part of the parish of Riva, moving on to Alagna only a few decades later (Zanzi & Rizzi, 2018). The Walser community remained relatively isolated until the mid-sixteenth century, but there was no lack of contact with the Valsesian population. Towards the end of the 16th century a family from Varallo, the Scarognini, began the exploitation of the gold mines near Alagna, an activity that also involved the local population. The mining activity also included silver and copper resulting in a substantial immigration of workers from Valsesia, Biella and other areas of Piedmont (Zanzi & Rizzi, 2018). The Walser language is a particular variant of the southern German dialect, called "very high Alemannic", and is very similar to the Swiss German dialect in its most archaic form: the titschu of Alagna Valsesia and Rimella in Valsesia is one of its three variants still existing in Italy.

3.5.3 Economic framework

Formerly home to a gold mine, Alagna is now a summer and winter tourist resort, well known for being the home of ski freeriding. Thanks to the new ski lifts, which since December 2004 have been connected to the Gressoney-La-Trinité lifts by cable car, Alagna is part of the large interspersed ski area of Monterosa Ski, including the ski resorts of Alagna, Gressoney and Champoluc. From the Gressoney-La-Trinité side of the Salati Pass, the brand-new cableway starts that leads to the Rocchette di Punta Indren (3275 m), an almost obligatory starting point for the ascent to the main peaks of Monte Rosa, many of which bear the names just of Alagnese citizens. Another pole

of tourist attraction is the cultural, architectural and folkloristic evidence related to the population of the Walser: Alagna hosted three times, in 1962 together with Saas-Fee, in 1983 and 2007, the "Walsertreffen", the three-year meeting of Walser people from all over Europe. The municipality of Alagna is part of the Valsesia Mountain Community.

3.5.4 Freeride Paradise

Over the past few years, Alagna has established itself as the location par excellence for the practice of freeride (the resort claim is precisely "freeride paradise"). This claim was given by the American magazine Powder which in an article wrote: "Is Alagna, Italy, a Freeride Paradise?" (Gallo, 2011). Over the years, the territory of Alagna was first discovered and then literally launched as a place par excellence for off-piste skiing. This activity today attracts fans of the genre from all over the world, in particular from the United States, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Germany and northern European countries in general. This is mainly due to the particular shape of the valley, harsh and impervious but at the same time with numerous hanging, "comb"-shaped lateral valleys, which allow a great exploitation of the land with panoramas that are always different and inserted in grandiose landscapes.

3.5.5 Touristic flows

In accordance with the data provided by Piedmont Region, it is possible to identify an analysis framework for the individual area of Valsesia. The attendance and arrival data of Italians and foreigners relating to the decade 2010 - 2019 were taken as a sample. The purpose is to outline the trend by origin of tourists to get a general picture of the individual destination and then comparing it with the trend of the entire area to assess any gaps.

The trend of presences in the Alagna valley in the decade 2009-2019 is, as shown in graph 3.13, basically constant. In total, in 2019 there was about a -0.9% compared to 2009, with a reduction of 7% for the Italian market compared to a +22% of foreign visitors in the valley.

As shown in the graph 3.14, the average stay drops, if in 2009 was 3.8, 10 years later it drops to 2.9. The graph above shows how the days of average stay in the destination decreased by -23.5% in the decade under consideration, a parameter in line with what happens in the rest of the Monte Rosa area.

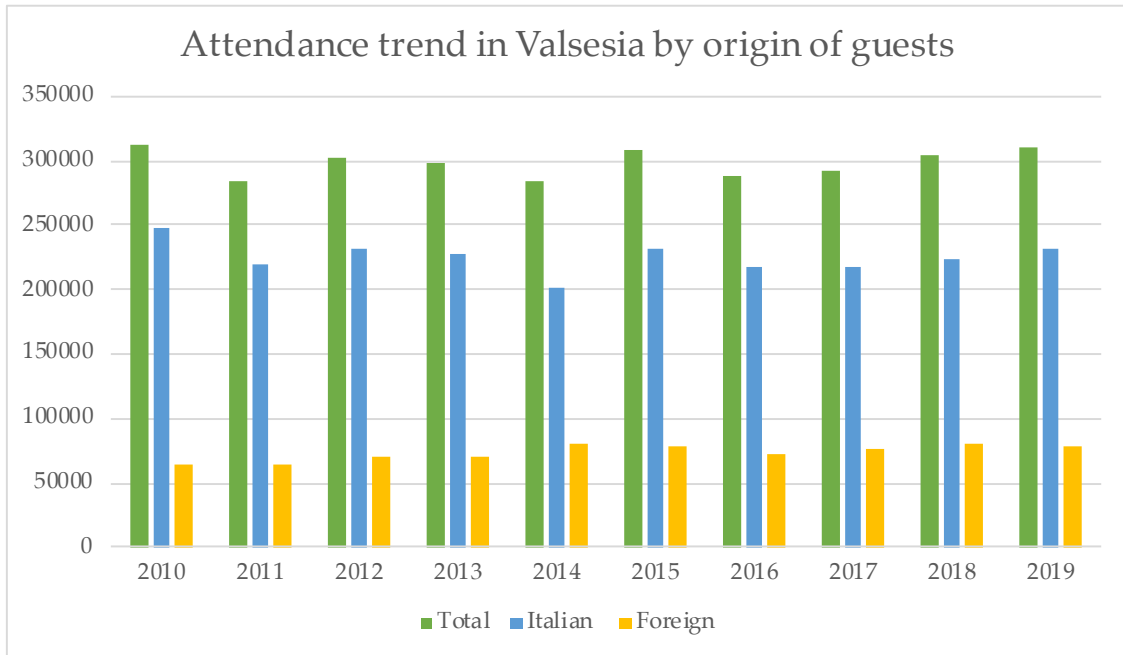


Figure 3.13: Attendance trend in Valsesia by origin of guests

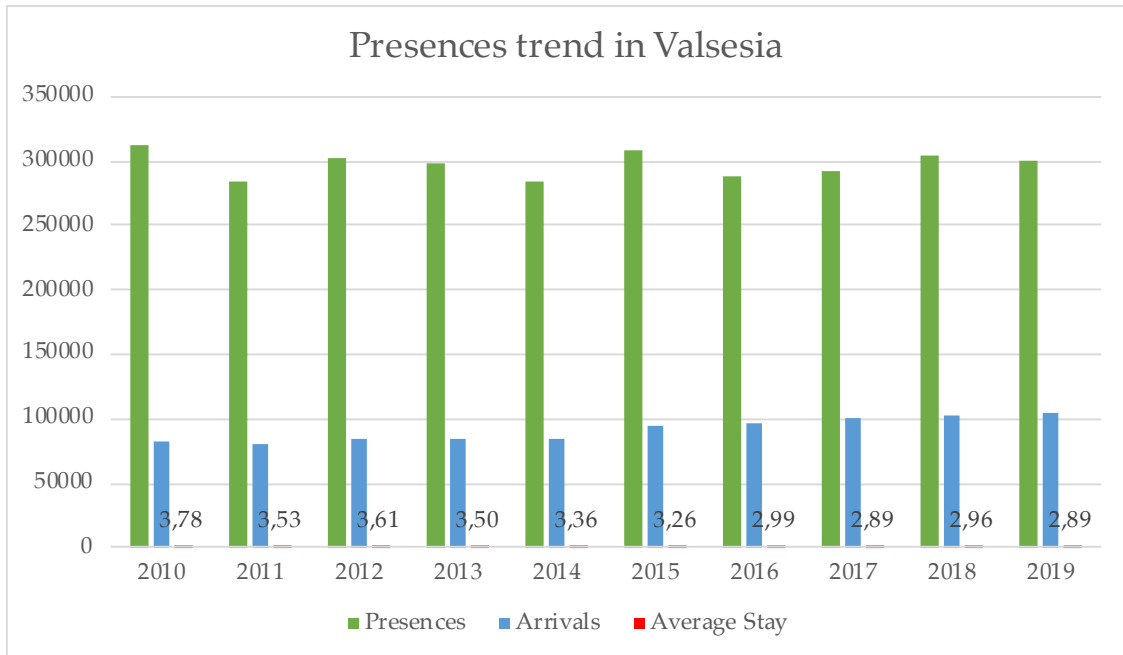


Figure 3.14: Presences trend in Valsesia

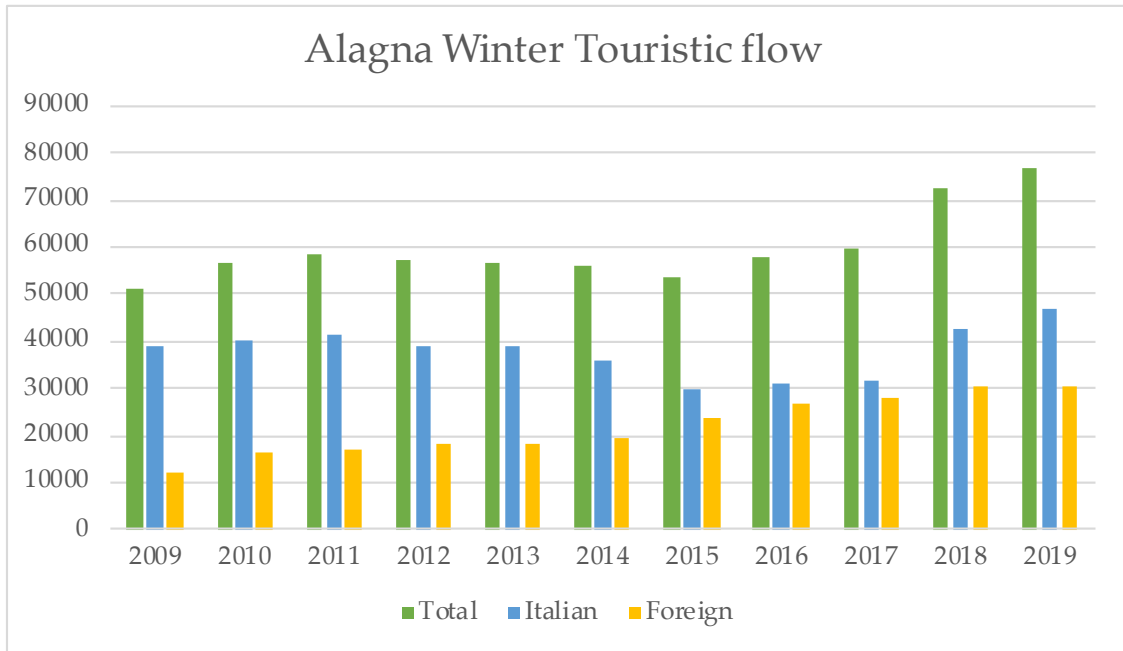


Figure 3.15: Winter presences in Alagna

As for the presences in the winter season alone, it is possible to observe how the trend is increasing (Graph 3.15). The Italian market saw a drop of 26% in the period 2015-2017 compared to the previous year, which however recorded an increase in the following years. While, as regards the foreign market, it is possible to observe an almost positive trend, with an increase of 60%. It is possible to note how the most marked increase in presences has been recorded in the last 2 years. This increase can presumably be attributed to the creation in 2018 of a new appealing slope, the Mullero Competition slope, classified black, with a length of 1,501 meters, an average width of 40 meters.

3.5.6 Accommodation

In order to obtain an exhaustive picture of the resources present, subdivided by hotel and extra-hotel sector as well as the potential for second homes, the destinations' accommodation facilities were analyzed. The data collected are taken from the Regional Observatory of Piedmont. Overall, the accommodation system is made up of 238 establishments (excluding secondary dwellings) for a total of 6291 beds (Osservatorio Turistico Regionale, 2018). The trend of accommodation facilities in the period 2009-2018 and the trend of beds always for the same reference period are shown below.



Figure 3.16: Accommodation flows in Alagna

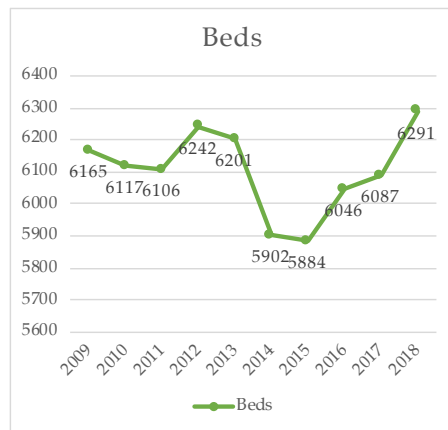


Figure 3.17: Beds flows in Alagna

As can be seen from the graphs 3.16 and 3.17, the trend recorded for the accommodation facilities is positive, despite some decreases over the years, in 2018 there were 28 facilities more than in 2009. As previously mentioned, the trend is positive, except for 2011 in which there are 3 fewer structures and in 2016 with a decrease of 7 accommodation facilities.

3.6 Conclusion

3.6.1 SWOT Analysis

At this point of the analysis, it is interesting to build a Swot matrix for the Monte Rosa area, in order to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strenghts

- Competitive natural resources and good environmental protection
- Good gift of historical resources and Walser culture
- Excellent complete and integrated offer for alpine skiing (3 Valleys area, 140 km of slopes)
- Offer for Trekking, High routes, wide and varied huts for all difficulties
- Well-known area (especially in winter);
- Proximity to the main major cities of northern Italy (proximity tourism)
- Mountaineering offer famous throughout Italy (Catore, Polluce, Capanna Margherita)
- Presence of major sporting events known both in Italy and abroad (Mezzalama Trophy, Tor des Géants, Monte Rosa Walser Trail, Monterosa Prestige, Sky Marathon)
- Ski touring offer on the track, one of the few in the Aosta Valley

Weaknesses

- Limited financial resources for tourism promotion
- Opportunities for leisure time
- Poor tourist planning
- Viability, presence of parking lots and public transport in the high season
- Difficult and superimposed coordination between operators
- Price policies of the hospitality sector and of the lifts
- Seasonal problems related to winter and summer

- Mostly summer attractiveness
- Presence of the phenomenon of "cold beds" or second homes not occupied and not rented to tourists
- Undeveloped interval public transport links
- Lack of a single entity that deals with the marketing and promotion of the territory

With regard to coordination between operators, the situation of relations between the tourism promotion actors appears to be not very functional. The most critical element is the overlapping of the competences between the various bodies including the Municipality, the Tourism Department, the Consortia, the Monterosa Ski company and the Office du Tourisme which causes a duplication of competences and therefore a waste of resources. For this reason, some players in the promotion require better planning and a hierarchical structure that assigns the management of a common operating line to a single office or a single entity. The Destination manager in question would have the task of managing a tourism promotion strategy common to the whole locality as it happens for other Alpine regions of the nation that have left the Destination manager the task of managing and coordinating between public bodies and private operators operating in the same location.

Opportunity

- The nature of the Mote Rosa product or the "real mountain", an image of places that drives both summer and winter sports products. At the same time, Monte Rosa is "silence and relaxation" and therefore a mountain suitable for everyone, even for those who do not like or practice mountain sports, a mountain for the family.
- Enhancement of the culture segment for the creation of a single cultural product that enhances the Walser identity
- Urban planning tourism aimed at tourist services and infrastructures rather than the construction of second homes or new accommodation facilities
- Meteorological phenomena and the increase in temperatures in the city leads tourists, in summer, to seek the high mountains and therefore to increase tourist flows

Given the high level in the tourist offer and in the quality of the services provided, the entire range of winter sports is already present within the Monterosa Ski area, if

anything it should be promoted start from the concept that these activities take place in unique environments. Do not underestimate the fact that outdoor sports related to snow have a longer seasonality than the track one and constitute a valid integration and diversification of alpine skiing, they also allow to activate good seasonal adjustment policies especially during the mid-season periods (start and end of the winter season).

Threats

- Overclassing by other destinations that make price the competitive lever
- Weak propensity to renovate and redevelop hotel facilities due to their weak profitability
- Deterioration of the reception facilities currently in use
- Lack of generational change within the hotel professions and therefore the presence of an antiquated mentality not inclined to online promotion
- Partial loss of the social value of Walser culture and traditions
- Progressive conditioning by forms of hiking tourism linked to volatile variables such as economic and weather conditions

The analysis of the tourist flows deriving from the Istat data, highlighted some characteristics of the visitors to the resort and highlighted how the "alpine skiing" product has now reached a stage of maturity. The economic crisis that has hit Italy but in general Europe as a whole, the stagnation of the economy and political uncertainty, have incentivized the element "price" on the choice of the place to spend their holidays. Loyalty to the "brand" and to the tourist destination is the lowest found in recent years, and the price war does not make it possible to see the possibility of being able to count on quality tourists. From a merely economic point of view, the competitors of Monterosa are no longer the other destinations in the Alps, but the sea, Morocco or Dubai. Competition is therefore played on an ever wider territorial scale therefore it is essential to be able to count on a product organization capacity and the possibility of being able to offer an alternative to skiing. Two thirds of skiers are people who go to the mountains to carry out more recreational-sporting activities, therefore it is important to be able to also offer animation, wellness and gastronomy services.

3.6.2 The targets to invest in

The analysis of tourist flows and the type of accommodation facilities offered by Monterosa help us to divide tourists according to the main "holiday styles":

The full optional athletes

- Devotees of all winter disciplines
- They are generally young, expert skiers, they switch from traditional skiing to snowboarding and mountaineering
- Little interested in leisure and extra activities
- Often, they travel within groups of enthusiasts
- Very responsive to news related to the sports of interest
- He reads a lot and finds information in specialized magazines or the internet

Family vacationers

- Sports tourist
- It also chooses the destination based on the presence of extra-ski activities
- Interested in food and wine, folklore and cultural traditions
- Travel often as a couple but especially as a family and choose comfortable and equipped accommodation for children

The eco savers

- Tourists who stay in the destination for short periods, even just a weekend
- They play undemanding sports
- They seek wellness, relaxation and hospitality in the mountains
- Interested in local gastronomy, folklore and local events
- Having limited financial resources, they decide to leave not before checking the weather forecast

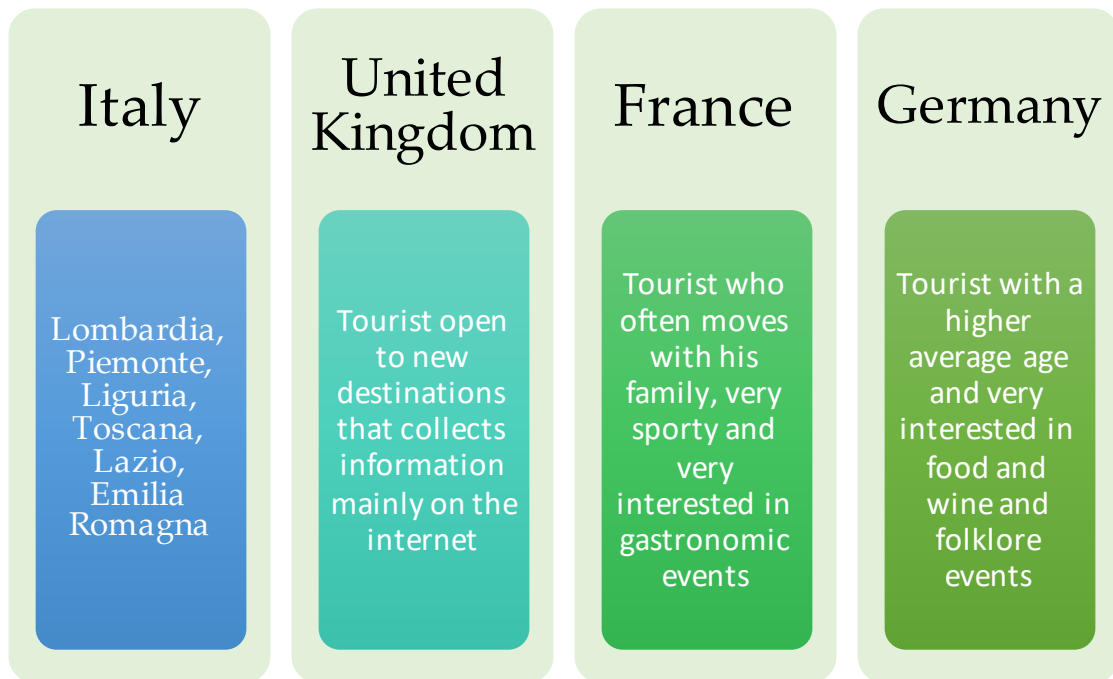


Figure 3.18: Markets to be enhanced

Full optional athletes, family vacationers and eco-savers are the targets on which Monterosa must invest in the future, offering them a product that is perfectly suited to their needs and aspirations. As previously stated, the ski product is a mature product, this product is no longer considered as a single, albeit main, element of the offer. It is in fact necessary to rethink the product by creating alternative proposals to skiing, capable of enriching and increasing the offer. In particular, it is necessary to be able to work on some aspects including the Walser culture, understood as a totalizing experience (gastronomy, trekking, culture, language, architecture, traditions); on well-being intended as the discovery of naturalistic wealth and well-being of the body and finally on the family, for which services and areas dedicated to children become essential. It is therefore, on the one hand, to be able to offer complementary proposals with respect to skiing, which can make up for adverse weather conditions, how to enrich the offer and offer alternatives respect for those who do not practice that sport (cultural activities, food and wine itineraries , wellness offers, golf, proposals for children).

Among the markets still totally unexplored there is the US one which, at the world level, is the largest generator of winter mountain tourism. The American tourist has an

average higher spending capacity and is looking for a very comfortable accommodation. Snowboarding and free ride among young people is very popular.

Chapter 4

Comparative Analysis

4.1 A comparison between the main mountain consortiums

After analyzing the Monte Rosa destination, in order to obtain more information on how tourism promotion is developed in the area, an interview was conducted with the Director of the Consortium of the Val d'Ayas – Monterosa area in order to understand, more in details, how the destination Monterosa is managed.

4.1.1 Consorzio Turistico Val d'Ayas – Monte Rosa

The Val d'Ayas - Monte Rosa Tourist Consortium is a private company established in 2003 with the aim of bringing together all tourism professionals. It is one of the 3 consortiums in the Monterosa area that deals with the tourist promotion of Val d'Ayas. As stated in the previous chapter, the consortiums of the respective valleys are mainly concerned with the promotion of their own territorial area, while the management of the ski lifts is entrusted to Monterosa Spa, a private company that has been based in Val d'Ayas for years. In detail, the structure of the consortium is as follows: In order to facilitate interaction and communication with all partners and local subjects each reality, such as hoteliers, merchants, restaurateurs, ski schools and ski lifts, identifies representatives and each sector has a representative up to a board of directors composed of 11 directors who develop the tourist and promotional policies of the resort. The assembly elects the board and confirms the work of the executive. The budget is approved, and the macro-activities carried out are explained, it is often an opportunity to exchange ideas. Within the executive there is the director and the employee of the institution. Its task is to carry out the activities of the Consortium at a programmatic and operational level as defined

in agreement with the executive. Its task is also to report all the activities carried out and the results obtained to the board as well as to the executive itself. Decisions are always made on a majority vote basis. Each year the board sets itself a series of actions such as participation in workshops, national and international fairs or promotional marketing actions, paper printing, dissemination of press releases regarding what concerns the locality but also marketing actions with the presence of a site for booking accommodation facilities and maintaining relations with tour operators. The Consortium is not for profit and aims to promote the tourist development of Val d'Ayas and the Monterosa District, with specific reference to the territory of the entire valley from Verrès to Saint Jacques in order to improve economic, social and cultural conditions of the destination. In particular, the consortium deals with the organization, management and marketing of promotional, advertising and tourism services and initiatives, also through participation in fairs and exhibitions in Italy and abroad, the publication of information and advertising material such as books, magazines, brochures and similar; the preparation and implementation of a marketing program for the tourist product of Val d'Ayas and the Monterosa District, also through the direct management of entrepreneurial initiatives in the sector, including the exercise of the activities of travel agencies and tours operators and the promotion, organization and implementation of initiatives aimed at enhancing tourism, economically, socially and culturally the Val d'Ayas area and the Monterosa District, also in collaboration with public or private entities, with particular regard to the protection and the improvement of the environmental heritage. In order to actively promote the destination, the consortium reserves the right to collaborate with other consortium in the Aosta Valley, with the Tourism Office and with the Municipalities of the Ayas Valley; as well as participating in any initiative useful for the image and environmental decor of the Val d'Ayas area and the Monterosa District, and this in the primary safeguarding of the collective interest in supporting the tourist product in general and its related industries in particular. The main activities of the consortium are mainly tourism promotion but also the management of tourism services, commercial activities to support the activity itself and info-point activities in support of the Tourist Office. As a percentage, if 70% of the resources are spent on promoting the location, only 5% is used for the info-point activity, 20% for tourism services and 5% for commercial activities. As for the tools used in tourism promotion, the main channel used is the online one, in fact, in addition to the management of the Facebook, Instagram,

Youtube and Vimeo pages, various paid campaigns are carried out to increase engagement and interactions on social networks and promotion for a fee on more specific websites dealing with mountains, mountain biking, trekking and skiing. In addition, the consortium participates in various events and fairs both nationally and internationally such as Cosmo bike Verona, Capoliveri, Alassio or Salzkammergut while no traditional advertising such as print is used as it is too expensive for the company compared to the results obtained. In terms of visibility on social media, the numbers are as follows:

- 12,691 followers on the Facebook page
- 2,527 followers on the Instagram page

As regards the management of the website, all three valleys in communion with Monterosa Spa manage the website visitmonterosa.com, the official website of the Monterosa area. Specifically, the site is owned by the ski plant company but is used by consortiums to promote various local activities and events. The same goes for Facebook and Instagram, the common page is @VisitMonterosa and each consortium, with a precise programming calendar, publishes and uses the portal for the promotion of its territory, thus making the page integrated in every aspect. In addition, for the social media pages, their management and control are entrusted to an external communication consultancy agency that deals with the correction and processing of the statistical data concerning the Monterosa institutional pages. As far as the private pages of the individual consortiums are concerned, the management is not entrusted to external companies. As for the events, the Val d'Ayas - Monterosa Tourist Consortium is the organizer of the Monterosa Prestige, an ultra-mountain bike marathon that now in its third edition sees bikers from all over the world participate. The number of visitors grows every year and thus allows to increase the visibility of the event but not only; like any major event, the Monterosa Prestige also allows athletes but also the team, families and visitors to get to know the area and so promote the territory. As for budget management, the Val d'Ayas - Monte Rosa Tourist Consortium obtains membership fees from the various members each year based on the weight of the promotional activities for the sector and obtains public funds deriving from public competition notices won. The goal is to become the reference body for administrations and regain the most important part of the notices and funds that administrations manage for tourism. By leading to the increase in the public and exponentially increasing commercial activities and services, the consortium would be able to make the private share marginal in order to act with more force and impact on the front of promotion, maintenance of a high standard of services for tourism on site, and in the

integrated and non-chaotic management of manifestations/entertainment/events.

Furthermore, in order to answer the research question and with the aim of analyzing and comparing what is happening in the Alpine panorama, other interviews were carried out with the main Italian and international mountain areas. For the type of information to be collected for this project, the most suitable type of research was the quantitative one. In this sense, the intention was to carry out an analysis in a deconstructed way with a range of open questions that allowed, however, the possibility of deepening the answers given. The profiles analyzed were 15, in particular 9 Italian in the Alpine arc, French 3, 1 Austrian and Swiss 2. First, the tourist consortium of the geographic areas that most shared structural characteristics with the Monte Rosa area were identified, i.e. destinations located on Alpine mountain ranges, with the presence of a ski area and with a summer/winter tourist offer. In this sense, the Tourist Consortium of Bardonecchia, Val di Non, Cortina but also Bormio, Valle di Ledro, Piana Rotaliana Königsberg and Livigno were interviewed. The interview took place in a telephone conversation addressed to the selected subjects and in which questions were asked on the basis of a flexible and non-standardized scheme that allowed for a range of topics. Specifically, the questions followed the following interrogation pattern:

- What type of institution / company are you? (public, private or mixed; year of establishment; company name; institutional objectives; type of activity: tourist information, promotion, commercial agency)
- Have you obtained the recognition of a tourist promotion agency in the legal system?
- How is your company / institution composed (what kind of internal organization did you have, how many permanent employees, how many seasonal workers, how the organization chart is composed, how you make decisions)
- What is the panorama of the activities carried out: promotion, info point, service management, commercial activities? What is the weight of each activity compared to the others?
- What are the main tools used in the promotion: fairs, social media, press, events? In what percentage is one tool used compared to another?
- How is your budget managed? Do you have private shares of local entrepreneurs who affiliate themselves, do you live on public funds or on commercial activities?

In what percentage?

- Have you participated in European calls / projects in the last 3 years and if so, in what form?
- What are the main markets in which you invest segmented between Italy / abroad and between winter / spring / summer and autumn?

The interview proved effective as a flexible and open tool, which can be modeled during the interaction and adaptable to different empirical contexts. Even if the interview was not standardized, it, however, should not have been left to chance: the interviewees, in fact, were chosen on the basis of the characteristics that pertain to belonging to a specific geographical area.

In addition to the interview tool and in order to obtain the necessary data, a desk analysis was carried out for the research, evaluation and possible re-processing of information already collected from official sources such as the institutional sites of the destinations. The results collected were useful in identifying the internal structure of the various consortia and categorizing them based on the promotional activities carried out. Below what was collected.

4.1.2 Consorzio Turistico Gressoney – Monte Rosa

The Gressoney - Monte Rosa Tourist Consortium is a private company established in 2002 with the aim of bringing together all the main tourism professionals to create tourism promotion projects. Each reality, such as hoteliers, traders, restaurateurs, ski schools and ski lift, identifies representatives and each sector has an advisor to compose a board of directors composed of 10 councilors (3 for the accommodation, 1 for restaurant, 1 for the shops, 1 for ski slopes, 1 Alpine Guide, 1 Ski Instructor and 2 tourism councilors) who develop the tourist and promotional policies of the resort. The assembly elects the board and confirms the work of the executive. The budget is approved and the macro-activities carried out are explained, it is often an opportunity to exchange ideas. Within the executive there is the director and the employee of the institution. Its task is to carry out the activities of the Consortium at a programmatic and operational level as defined in agreement with the executive. Its task is also to report all the activities carried out and the results obtained to the board as well as to the executive itself. Decisions are always made on a majority vote basis. Each year the board sets itself a series of actions such as participation in workshops, national and international fairs or

promotional marketing actions, paper printing, dissemination of press releases regarding what concerns the locality but also marketing actions with the presence of a site for booking accommodation facilities and maintaining relations with tour operators. The Gressoney consortium deals with relations and commercial agreements with tour operators and groups, thus formulating tourist packages dedicated to individuals for both the summer and winter seasons. Furthermore, it promotes the territory and the planned initiatives and is alongside the municipal administrations in the main development projects of mountain tourism. It promotes the area through indirect presence in fairs and events and participation in tourist workshops exclusively organized and in support of the Aosta Valley region. The main activities of the consortium are those of tourism promotion but also of management of services for tourism and info point activities. As a percentage, if 60% of the resources are spent on promoting the resort, only 5% is used for the info-point activity, 25% as a Tourism agency and 10% for tourism services. As for the tools used in tourism promotion, the main channel used is the online one, in fact, in addition to the management of the Facebook, Instagram, Youtube pages, various paid campaigns are carried out to increase engagement and interactions on social networks and paid promotion on more specific websites that deal with mountain, mountain biking, hiking and skiing. In addition, the consortium participates in a few events and fairs both nationally alongside the Valle d'Aosta region and uses traditional advertising such as print to promote the area. In addition, the consortium organizes a series of training courses for its affiliates, ranging from basic hygiene and safety at work to more technical courses on strategic communication and the use of the main tourism promotion tools. In conclusion, as far as budget management, the Gressoney-Monte Rosa Tourist Consortium obtains affiliation quotas from the various members each year based on the weight of the promotional activities for the sector. Furthermore, the consortium obtains public funds every year from the municipalities of Gressoney-Saint-Jeans and Gressoney-la-Trinité to be used in the promotion of the locality. The goal is to become the reference body for administrations and regain the most important part of the tenders and funds that administrations manage for tourism. By bringing the increase in the public and exponentially increasing commercial activities and services, the consortium would be able to make the private share marginal in order to act with more force and impact on the front of promotion, maintenance of a high standard of services for tourism. on site, and in the integrated and non-chaotic management of manifestations/entertainment/events.

4.1.3 Consorzio Turistico Alagna Valsesia – Monte Rosa

Alagna è un punto di riferimento per lo sci e lo snowboard fuori pista, tanto da essere conosciuta come Freeride Paradise. Punto di partenza per antonomasia è il ghiacciaio di Indren, al confine tra la Valle di Gressoney e la Val Sesia da cui si apre un panorama che offre numerosi percorsi di fuori pista di media o elevata difficoltà.

The Alagna Valsesia Tourist Consortium is recently formed, in fact it was born in 2016 with the purpose of bringing together different figures from the tourist landscape of the area with the aim of gathering forces to promote the locality. The management of the company is made up of 7 directors representing the sectors of the tourism offer: hotel, restaurants, municipalities, facilities, commerce and individuals. Each reality identifies representatives and each sector has one or more councilors to compose a board that develops the tourist and promotional policies of the locality. Each year, the board of directors sets a series of objectives ranging from promotion, marketing of the site, to the management of services and information of the site. The organization chart of the Alagna Valsesia Tourist Consortium is made up of 1 employee who carries out the main administrative functions and manages the promotional activities of the locality. The activities range from tourist promotion and territorial marketing activities but also tourist information and hospitality. As a percentage, promotional activities account for 50% of the company's resources, 45% for welcoming guests while commercial activities are of lesser importance, only 5%. Within the promotion, the main tools used are B2B and B2C fairs in which both nationally and internationally for mountain and ski products participate. In addition, they host press trips, blog tours and PR and media initiatives, organize and support events of tourist interest, manage a destination internet portal and two social channels Facebook and Instagram and are present on various tourist portals and digital platforms. This is accompanied by activities aimed at creating promotional and informative material. The percentages of use for each tool are as follows: web and social media 35%, promotion 25%, PR and Media activities 25%, events 10%, participation in B2C and B2B fairs 5%. The main channels used are Facebook, Instagram and Youtube. The budget for the promotion of the destination is taken by the public but with some private affiliation quotas from the various members each year based on the weight of the promotional activities for the sector. Furthermore, the consortium obtains public funds from the municipalities of Alagna to be used in the promotion of the locality.

4.1.4 Consorzio Turismo Bardonecchia

In general, the geographical area of Bardonecchia, located in Val di Susa, is made up of the following areas, which have different but complementary characteristics. The Colomion-Les Arnauds and Melezet districts are characterized by wide slopes and mainly traced in the woods, starting from the town center - in Campo Smith, just over 1330 m - reaches the vast plateaus outside the wood of Vallon Cros at 2400 meters. Just 5 minutes from the town center it is possible to reach the Jafferau area which reaches its peak of 2800 meters in height.

The Bardonecchia Tourism Consortium was founded in 2004, just before an important date for the destination, 2006 - the Turin Olympics Games. It is a private company with indirect public participation that was born as an operational team of the protagonists of tourism, an organizational table that brings together tourism professionals such as hoteliers, traders, restaurateurs, ski schools and ski lifts. Each reality identifies representatives and each sector has a councilor up to a board of directors consisting of 9 councilors who, in collaboration with the municipal administration, develop the tourism and promotional policies of the locality. Each year the board of directors sets itself a series of actions such as participation in workshops, national and international fairs or promotional marketing actions, paper printing, dissemination of press releases regarding what concerns the locality but also marketing actions with the presence of a site for booking accommodation facilities and maintaining relationships with tour operators. The Bardonecchia Tourism Consortium has decided by choice to maintain a lean organization chart, in fact the board of directors works free of charge and there is only one permanent employee who takes care of accounting, administrative and promotional tasks. In order to have the least possible expenses, the executive decided to entrust the main tasks to the employee and carry out various collaborations with external professionals for more specific tasks. It should be specified that the presence of at least 1 employee is a fundamental criterion for obtaining recognition as a tourist consortium by the Piedmont Region. The Bardonecchia Tourism Consortium is in fact one of the 14 consortium recognized for the promotion of the territory, this recognition allows the body to take advantage of a series of benefits such as the possibility of participating in national and international fairs with the Piedmont Region free of charge and the possibility to obtain regional funding for the tourist promotion of the area.

The institution has decided to concentrate its forces only on tourism promotion and marketing of the destination abroad. In this sense, the main promotional tools concern workshops, the relationship with tour operators, web campaigns and paid social media

campaigns but also agreements with local realities such as sports associations and ski clubs; offline campaigns with the editorial staff of a tourist information newspaper, Bardonecchia Magazine and the collaboration with Trenitalia for paper advertisements in locomotives. As a percentage, 50% of the forces and economic resources for promotion are used in the major national and international B2B fairs for the snow and outdoor sector; 10% in Social Media Marketing activities; 20% for the collaboration with Trenitalia and 20% offline.

As far as budget management is concerned, the Bardonecchia Tourism Consortium is envied by many, in fact it receives 70% of the tourist taxes paid by the hoteliers in the municipal coffers from the Municipality of Bardonecchia as the Municipality has identified this consortium as the territorial body in charge which deals with the tourist promotion of the town. In addition, the institution has a self-taxation system with a quota, called the operating quota, which each member pays annually in order to join the initiatives and benefits of the consortium. The amount of each operating quota varies from sector to sector, starting from the merchants who pay the lowest tax up to the hoteliers, the sector that benefits most from the consortium's actions.

Bardonecchia lives of a real double seasonality, being at about 1400 meters above sea level it is perfect for hosting families, elderly people and children in summer while in winter it is the favorite destination for skiers. As in the other mountain resorts, the main reference markets in the locality differ according to the summer / winter product. While summer is more frequented by local Italian tourists such as Piedmontese, Lombard and Genoese, with a percentage of French that is getting stronger; in winter the town is frequented by the French, Belgians, Russians and English, the top market of the destination thanks also to the relationship with the TO. In the last 3 years they have not participated in European calls but only in calls allocated by the Piedmont Region.

4.1.5 Azienda per il Turismo Val di Non

In general, there are 3 ski areas in the Val di Non, which offer opportunities for fun for those who love Nordic or Alpine skiing, ski mountaineering or for those who prefer snowboarding. For those who do not ski there are still many alternative experiences, such as excursions on a horse-drawn sleigh and with snowshoes, a tradition of the Val di Non. You can skate on the ice of Lake Smeraldo or at the Palaghiaccio di Fondo. The area offers slopes for alpine skiing at Passo della Mendola on Monte Roen in the Campi di Golf area; in Ruffrè-Mendola on Monte Nock and on the Predaia plateau, in Ciasazze, all places where snow is guaranteed by the programming system. In addition, in Val

di Non there are numerous routes for ski mountaineering, an opportunity to immerse yourself even more in the peace of the valley, especially in the Maddalene area.

The Val di Non Tourist Company is a cooperative that currently consists of 300 members. It was created with the aim of bringing together different figures from the tourist landscape of the area with the aim of gathering forces to promote the locality. The management of the company is made up of 15 directors representing the 9 sectors of the tourism offer: hotel, non-hotel, catering, travel agencies, municipalities, pro loco, facilities, commerce and individuals. Each reality identifies representatives and each sector has one or more councilors to compose a board that develops the tourist and promotional policies of the locality. Each year, the board of directors sets a series of objectives ranging from promotion, marketing of the site, to the management of services and information of the site. The organization chart of the Val di Non Tourism Company is well structured, it is made up of 11 employees including a Director, a Deputy Director, administrative managers and assistants, marketing managers and assistants and information office managers.

This company mainly deals with activities related to the promotion of the territory and the dissemination of tourist information. In recent years, the goal has been to get out of the usual tourist promotion schemes, moving from promoting "simple" products to the ability to convey and bring emotions to life. Defining themselves as an "open valley" they want to convey the idea that, in addition to the territorial opening, the Val di Non is open 365 days a year, since it remains alive even out of season, always inhabited, a place where people have chosen to live even reinventing itself. The idea of creating a "new story" was born in 2017, after spending time with many inhabitants of the valley, dealing with those who have chosen the Val di Non to live there and to cultivate their passions. The main channels used for the promotion are the website, social media Facebook and Instagram, editorials in specialized press, editorials on local TV, events in collaboration with the provincial authority Trentino Marketing and trade fairs and workshops in Germany. Like most of the agencies in charge of tourism promotion, the Val di Non Tourism Company also collaborates with Trentino Marketing. Trentino Marketing is a special purpose company aimed at the realization of a specific public interest engaged in the design, implementation and promotion of initiatives and projects aimed at the development of Trentino tourism. In this context, it assumes the delicate role of control and mediation room with the aim of channeling the many energies and resources that operate in the area making their action more effective. It was established on 30 June 2014 by Trentino Sviluppo SpA, a company created by the Autonomous

Province of Trento to promote the sustainable development of the Trentino system.

4.1.6 Azienda per il Turismo Livigno

The town of Livigno lies in a small valley in Lombardy, while the ski area is located along the slopes that surround it. There are two separate ski areas which, although with the same ski pass and very close to each other, are not yet connected with skis. You can ski from the end of November to the beginning of May: 115 kilometers of slopes of various levels from 1,800 to 2,900 meters above sea level, with 12 black, 37 red and 29 blue slopes served by state-of-the-art ski lifts which include 6 cable cars, 13 chairlifts and 11 ski lifts arranged on two mountain sides. For cross-country skiing in the valley there are 30 km of tracks which are constantly groomed and free; 5 km are covered by artificial snow. In Livigno there is also the possibility of practicing biathlon: cross-country skiing and rifle shooting. Every year in December Livigno hosts La Sgambeda, a cross-country skiing in classic technique, included in the Visma Ski Classics circuit.

The tourism promotion for the town of Livigno is managed by the Livigno Tourist Company, a company wholly owned by the Municipality of Livigno and on behalf of the reference partner carries out, with in-house reliance, the service management activity public of general interest in favor of the reference community, residents and tourists. It is a well-structured private company with a staff of 25 people. At the head of the organization chart is the CEO who also holds the position of Director. The team is then divided into different offices, each headed by a manager who coordinates the team and reports directly to the CEO. The different offices of the structure make clear the idea of the main actions of the company and are the marketing, accounting and contracts, booking, events, technical - IT, front office, outdoor and workers team.

The main activity of this company is the promotion of the resort but not only that, the Livigno APT deals with the management of the infrastructure of biathlon, cross-country skiing, tennis courts, golf courses and Lake Livigno. The sports center of Aquagranda Active You and the MUS! Museum of Livigno and Trepalle are also managed by the tourism promotion company. In particular, the Livigno APT, with Aquadranda and Museum consists of about 70 people who vary according to the summer/ winter season. As for the tourist promotion of the location, the main channels used are mainly social networks with the creation and management entirely by the APT of the Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest profiles. In addition, the Livigno.eu website was created with a number of unique users per year of 1,500,000. Participation in national and international fairs related to the world of skiing and biking represents another large

slice of promotion and marketing of the locality as well as the development of a press office in Italy and 7 press offices abroad including Belgium, Holland, Russia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Switzerland and Germany. Finally, for the promotion of Livigno in recent years, the APT has also started working with various bloggers and influencers. Every year, both in summer and in winter, they organize several individual or group press tours where journalists are invited to Livigno to personally test the local offer. As a percentage, 40% of the forces and economic resources for promotion are used in Social Media Marketing; 30% are engaged in major national and international B2B fairs for the snow and outdoor sector and finally 30% in national and international press offices.

As with other mountain resorts, Livigno lives of a double seasonality; if in summer a market made up mainly of families is preferred, winter focuses entirely on skiing, offering proposals for all lovers of this sport. The main reference markets present in Livigno differ according to the summer / winter product. Summer is mostly frequented by local Italian tourists such as Piedmontese, Lombard and Genoese with a percentage of French that is getting stronger; in winter the town is frequented by French, Belgian, Polish and English people.

4.1.7 Cortina Marketing

Cortina d'Ampezzo is immersed in the Dolomites, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A world-famous sports destination, it was home to the 1956 Winter Olympics, will host the Alpine Skiing World Championships in 2021 and host the 2026 Winter Olympics with Milan. It is the only Italian destination that is part of the Best of the Alps association. Ideal for practicing any winter and summer sport, it is a privileged place of the Dolce Vita and guardian of a strong gastronomic, cultural and hospitality tradition. The promotion of the territory is managed by Cortina Marketing, a company wholly owned by a single shareholder, the Municipality of Cortina. It is a reality that has entered the Ampezzo Services, a company for the management of services and spaces in the area. The internal organization includes a board of directors with a president, a contact person for long-term strategy and several offices including communication, markets and the web. Servizi Ampezzo, with over 60 employees, takes care of the technical part of the events, an administrative part and the management part of spaces and local transport. The decisions are made within the board of directors and in agreement with the Municipality of Ampezzo, the contribution that is provided by the other categories of tourism with which the body has opened a continuous communication channel is not secondary. Cortina Marketing is the official body for the promotion, communication

and territorial marketing of the destination of the Dolomites. The institution promotes Cortina d'Ampezzo through participation in trade fairs, workshops and events in Italy and abroad, offering on-site and digital assistance to Italian and foreign journalists and operators in the sector. Cortina Marketing also offers its support to local operators, acting as a point of contact with journalists and operators and promoting facilities, services and events on the official destination website and on its social channels. It also participates in shared actions with the Dolomiti Superski, the DMO Dolomiti and with the Best of the Alps association. In fact, the institution offers the basis for the development of multi-level collaborations, facilitating contact between local, national and international operators, with the support of the selected staff of Cortina Marketing.

In particular, Cortina Marketing has been a member of the Dolomiti Superski for years, the consortium that unites some Dolomite resorts belonging to Veneto, Trentino and Alto Adige. 450 ski lifts in 12 ski areas, 50 resorts, 30 snow parks and 1,200km of slopes to spend incredible days on skis with a single ski pass. The 12 locations share communication actions aimed at specific national and international markets. The offers are aimed at end users (B2C) and concern not only the purchase of the ski pass, but also other useful services for the skier (ski schools, rentals, restaurants, shelters, hotels). Among the shared promotional actions, the Dolomiti SuperPremiere and Dolomiti SuperSun offers are aimed at increasing the number of customers during the low season, on the Italian market and other selected European markets. Finally, thanks to the Dolomiti Supersummer project, the promotion of the Dolomiti Superski has also extended to the summer season. In addition, the institution has been a reference for the international Best of the Alps association for years. For over 30 years Best of the Alps has united the twelve most authentic alpine resorts, which have made the history of mountaineering, skiing and mountain tourism: Chamonix-Mont-Blanc, Cortina d'Ampezzo, Crans-Montana, Davos Klosters, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Grindelwald, Kitzbühel, Lech Zürs am Arlberg, Megève, Seefeld, St. Anton am Arlberg and St. Moritz. The twelve Best of the Alps destinations share two characteristics that distinguish them from any other place: the strong appreciation of tradition and the desire to achieve excellence. Added to this is their extraordinary scenic beauty, with unspoiled views and some of the most spectacular peaks in the world - including the Matterhorn, the Arlberg mountains, the Dolomites, the Eiger, the Mönch, the Jungfrau and Mont Blanc. Cortina Marketing continues its traditional collaboration with Best of the Alps in trade fairs, workshops, international and local events. Finally, Cortina Marketing is the reference in Cortina d'Ampezzo for the National Agency for Tourism with which it participates in national

and international events (fairs and workshops). In 2019, in collaboration with DMO Dolomiti, it hosted the conference “Dolomiti. The Mountains of Venice” Giorgio Palmucci on his first outing as ENIT President.

4.1.8 Consorzio Turistico Piana Rotaliana Königsberg

The Piana Rotaliana Königsberg is a geographical area located in the heart of Trentino, halfway between Trento and Bolzano whose territory includes Faedo, Lavis, Mezzocorona, Mezzolombardo, Nave San Rocco, Roveré della Luna, San Michele all’Adige and Zambana. The territory, with its slopes and steep mountains, offers unspoiled nature and strong emotions for a generally outdoor holiday. It is also a repository of various cultural centers, such as the Museum of Uses and Customs of the Trentino People or the frescoes by Paul Troger, castles, hanging gardens, ancient, Gothic and Baroque churches.

The Piana Rotaliana Königsberg Tourist Consortium is responsible for promoting the area, whose organization is the one recognized by the Province of Trento. Its legal form is Social promotion association, although this name will change from 2021 due to a change in the reform of the system that will ensure that the body will be absorbed by the Dolomiti Paganella Tourist Board. The Piana Rotaliana Königsberg Tourist Consortium is made up of a board of 12 people, all unpaid volunteers representing the major categories of tour operators in the area and a staff of 5 qualified employees, in fact their qualifications are specialist degree, research doctorate and / or various specializations in the reference field. The Consortium contributes to the tourist enhancement of the territory, supporting the commitment to raise the quality of the offer by making it increasingly usable. In fact, the focus of this company is not so much on promotion in terms of advertising as much as on tourism product development. However, some promotional activities are carried out on the web and social channels and many proposals are implemented in collaboration with Trentino Marketing as is the case for the Val di Non Tourism Company and most of the promotional bodies in the region. The main channels used are Facebook, Instagram and Youtube and it is possible to observe how the few resources used in social communication translate into poor results, in fact there are only 900 followers of the different pages with low engagement and poor programming of communication content. Finally, by the common will of the management, the Piana Rotaliana Königsberg Tourist Consortium has decided not to participate in national, regional or international events and to organize only two / three events a year,

focusing instead on the development of the tourism product. This is why the consortium invests a large part of its resources in the promotion and sale of cultural and gastronomic experiences in the area, especially launching the product wine, grappa and museums, organizing experiential tours in the vineyards, distilleries and in the major cultural centers of the area.

4.1.9 Azienda per il Turismo della Valle di Ledro

The Valle di Ledro Tourism Agency was founded as a private company in 1972 thanks to the Pro Loco Valle di Ledro Consortium in order to enhance the territorial and tourist resources of the Valle di Ledro area. The main institutional objectives concern the enhancement of the territorial and tourist resources of the area, also in order to increase the activities of the members, increasing and improving their efficiency, competitiveness and sustainability; provide an integrated supply system, suitable for satisfying the different tourist demand targets, with particular attention to the certifications recognized in the territory, in order to make the territorial area competitive, with a consequent improvement in the economic, social and professional conditions of the members; develop synergies between members; create an organized and integrated system of services for the socio-economic enhancement of the territory within the Ledro Valley. In addition, the APT works for the coordination between the Pro Loco members and the voluntary associations belonging to the Association, operating in the sectors of sport, culture, education, environmental protection as well as in sectors having any relevance to the purposes of the Association, with particular regard to the organization, implementation and enhancement of common initiatives; but also for the supply of administrative, organizational and accounting services both to the Pro Loco members and to the associated subjects, also with reference to relations with the Autonomous Province of Trento and local authorities; for the promotion of forms of collaboration with third parties, expression of neighboring territories as well as transversal projects, in order to develop opportunities for growth of the tourist product and generate value in the local economic system. With regard to the company organization chart, decisions regarding the organization, management and control of the company are taken by the Board of Directors chaired by the President and elected by the Shareholders' Meeting. The provisions of the Board of Directors are implemented by the Director who coordinates the activities of the company and is the head of staff. The staff consists of 4 permanent and 3 seasonal employees. One employee takes care of the administration, two of the promotion and marketing activities and one of the tourist accommodations. Seasonal workers perform

various tasks. The activities of the Tourist Board range from tourist promotion and territorial marketing activities but also tourist information and hospitality. As a percentage, promotional activities account for 50% of the company's resources, 45% for welcoming guests while commercial activities are of lesser importance, only 5%. Within the promotion, the main tools used are B2B and B2C fairs in which both nationally and internationally for mountain and ski products participate. In addition, we host press trips, blog tours and PR and media initiatives, organize and support events of tourist interest, manage a destination internet portal and two social channels Facebook and Instagram and are present on various tourist portals and digital platforms. This is accompanied by activities aimed at creating promotional and informative paper material. The percentages of use for each tool are as follows: web and social media 35%, paper promotion 25%, PR and Media activities 25%, events 10%, participation in b2c and b2b fairs 5%. Finally, 20% of the budget derives from private funding (shareholdings, membership of marketing projects) and 80% from public funding (which includes the amounts obtained from the tourist tax).

4.1.10 Associazione Promozione Turistica Bormio Marketing

Located at 1,225 meters above sea level, Bormio is set in the center of the Alps. In the heart of Alta Valtellina, about 60 km from its capital Sondrio, it is surrounded by the imposing peaks of the Rhaetian Alps, which reach 4,000 meters above sea level. and inserted in the Stelvio National Park. In winter, the Bormio area offers 115 kilometers of perfectly snow-covered slopes, which start from over 3000 meters of Cima Bianca and end at 1225 meters of Bormio. A level offer, with modern snow parks, ski schools and perfectly equipped spaces for those who want to take their first steps.

The Bormio Marketing Tourism Promotion Association was founded in 2017 and gathers the administrations of Bormio, Valfurva, Valdidentro, Valdisotto and Sondalo under it for the management of tourism promotion for the entire territory. It is made up of a board of directors of 5 members, a president and a vice president who meet on recurring deadlines to analyze the data of past seasons and decide on new objectives based on the target audience and manage the budget in tourism promotion projects. The board of directors is joined by a team of 4 employees who take care of promotional activities in the area.

The main promotional activities concern the communication of the brand on social media including Facebook and Instagram and the management of the website which is accompanied by activities of organization of sporting events mainly related to sport

and cycling but also press reviews with international journalists and fairs and workshops including Skipass Modena. In fact, every year the Modena exhibition center is transformed and becomes the capital of skiing, the showcase for all the news related to the winter season with the Modena Skipass fair which gathers thousands of enthusiasts, athletes, operators, journalists and experts in the sector. Bormio marketing participates every year at the fair for the promotion of the upcoming winter season with a stand of strong impact right in the central gallery where the peculiarities of the Bormio area and the disciplines that characterize winter are presented: alpine skiing, Nordic skiing, snowboard, freeride, ski mountaineering, snowshoes, sled dog and fat bikes. Relevant is an important image promotion campaign that took off during the months of December and January 2019, put in place by Bormio Marketing and activated in Milan, with the aim of raising awareness of the tourist area and enhancing its visibility. In ten strategic points of the city center, including Piazza Duomo, Piazza San Babila and Corso Buenos Aires, a series of high-definition giant displays were set up that showed a series of high-impact images of the locations. Two trams passing through Milan were also entirely covered with images depicting the suggestive landscapes of the Alta Valtellina and emphasized the range of winter offers proposed by the tourist area, focusing on the combination of snow + spas. This promotional initiative represents one of the many activities implemented by Bormio Marketing to promote the territory in a unified manner. All this is made possible thanks to the contributions disbursed by the Administrations of Alta Valtellina which are added to those from the Internal Areas Fund, in a wide-ranging project in favor of the whole area.

Finally, as regards the budget, Bormio Marketing can count on the payment of tourist taxes by the municipality which in 2019 amounted to € 5,178,000 in addition to the annual contribution of € 800,000 on strategic funds for the internal areas thanks to which the destination implements territorial promotion campaigns.

In addition, other realities outside Italy were interviewed in order to understand the structure of the tourist promotion of mountain areas even exterior the Italian legislation. In this case, the tourist boards of the Verbier 4 Vallée, Chamonix Mont-Blanc, Val Thorens, Engadin – Saint Moritz, Font-Romeu-Odeillo-Via and Sankt Anton am Arlberg areas were interviewed.

4.1.11 Verbier Tourisme

Verbier is a Swiss town located at 1500 meters above sea level in the Alps of the Canton of Valais. It is part of the large Les 4 Vallées ski area, thanks to its connections with Siviez (off-piste) and Tzoumaz (on-piste). Verbier is the locality, within the Les 4 Vallées area, with the largest number of slopes and with the best equipment. It is possible to ski from the 1500 meters of the town up to the 3300 meters of Mont Fort. A large area between the 2950m of the Col des Gentianes and the 2050m of Tortin is dedicated to off-piste skiing and freeride. Even from the 2740 m of Chassoure up to Tortin there are no slopes, but the lifts take skiers upstream allowing them to have fun in the fresh snow. The offer also includes ski mountaineering or heliskiing, snowshoeing, hiking, cross-country skiing or the 10 km toboggan run, allowing you to have fun in the open air. The town of Verbier is known among ski touring lovers as a stop on the “Haute Route”, the ski mountaineering route that connects Chamonix in front of Mont Blanc (France) to Zermatt in front of the Matterhorn (Switzerland).

Verbier Promotion is the marketing company for the Destination “Verbier - Val de Bagnes - La Tzoumaz”. Its role is to promote the Verbier brand and its region throughout Switzerland and abroad, to increase inbound tourism and awareness for the region. Verbier Promotion works hand in hand with the Tourist Offices in Verbier, Le Châble and La Tzoumaz whose mission it is to welcome and inform guests as well as driving events in the resorts.

The Comité de la Société de Développement de Verbier is made up of 10 people; a president, a vice president, a secretary and 7 members representing the different tourism sectors. As is the case for other entities, also in this case each tourism sector has its own representative who takes decisions on behalf of the entire category in the council. Each year the committee sets itself a series of actions such as participation in workshops, international fairs related to snow and outdoor or promotional marketing actions, dissemination of press releases regarding what concerns the locality but also marketing and maintenance actions relations with tour operators. The main destination promotion tools concern paid marketing communication campaigns on the main social media, press relations and influencers, press releases, sponsors and ambassadors but also commercial partnerships and digital content. In particular, as regards the Influencer and Press section, the 2018/2019 financial year in the locality saw:

- 181 journalists / influencers received
- 55 press trips (individual or group)

- 150 million people affected (share)
- CHF 155,000. - investment
- 3 million francs of estimated advertising
- $19.35 / 1 =$ return on investment

During 2018/2019, Verbier welcomed around 40 tour operators and travel agencies to introduce them to their destination and resources and to encourage them to add it to their portfolio of offers. The results of some of these meetings are particularly tangible because in the summer of 2020 they welcomed some of their clients. The locality of Verbier has renewed the collaboration agreement with Valais Wallis Promotion (VWP) and SCIB (Swiss Convention & Incentive Bureau) for 2019. Thanks to this, we benefit from a presence in the media of these entities (brochures and websites mainly the Internet) and regularly receives requests to be processed through SCIB offices based abroad. Despite this, the feedback on “indirect” requests, ie those coming from SCIB or VWP, is low.

One of the most successful promotion campaigns for the destination was in summer 2018, Verbier through its tourist authorities (Verbier Promotion SA and Téléverbier SA) signs a 4-year partnership agreement with the English football club Liverpool FC. The commercial agreement links the two parties from the 2018/19 football season, which begins at the end of August 2018 and ends on June 1, 2019. The deadlines for reflection and implementation are therefore short for the Verbier teams who decided to focus their communication on winter. For this, the actions were multiplied with LFC fans. While some fees are annual - presence of the Verbier logo and html banner on the LFC website - other activities are limited in quantity. Therefore, Verbier’s communications with LFC fans were split into main waves, fueled throughout the season by insertions into 10 match schedules. The main tools used in this campaign were newsletters, hospitality takeovers, LFC social media posts, hospitality promotions and competitions on LFC platforms.

4.1.12 Chamonix – Mont - Blanc

Chamonix-Mont-Blanc is a French commune located in the Haute-Savoie department of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. A large ski resort known throughout the world, the city was awarded the title of Alpine Town of the Year in 2015 and is connected to the municipality of Courmayeur (AO), in Italy through the Mont Blanc Tunnel. The ski area that includes the valley is that of the 4 Vallée to which, in addition to Chamonix, also

belong Les Houches, Servoz, Angentière and Vallorcine. The 4 valleys are positioned on the market differently, trying to attract the attention of different targets: from families, to nature lovers, to lovers of social life, extreme sports and culture.

Tourism promotion for the Chamonix destination is managed by the Chamonix Office du Tourisme, a public company that collaborates and enters into agreements with other companies such as cableways to implement tourism promotion projects. It is a well-structured public body with a staff of 33 people. At the head of the organization chart is the CEO who also holds the position of Director. The team is then divided into different offices, each headed by a manager who coordinates the team and reports directly to the CEO. The various offices of the structure make clear the idea of the main actions of the company and are the marketing, accounting and contracts, booking, events, technical, front office, outdoor and workers team. Within the promotion, the main tools used are B2B and B2C fairs in which both nationally and internationally for mountain and ski products participate. In addition, we host press trips, blog tours and PR and media initiatives, organize and support events of tourist interest, manage a destination internet portal and two social channels Facebook and Instagram and are present on various tourist portals and digital platforms. As also happens for the other French tourist destinations, also for the promotion of Chamonix, the main tools used refer to the fairs organized mainly by Atout France and France Montagnes, actor and coordinator of the mountain promotion campaigns in France on major social media.

- 163,709 followers on Facebook
- 143,500 followers on Instagram
- 5 Workshops and B2B fairs attended

4.1.13 Val Thorens

Val Thorens is a winter sports resort in the Tarentaise valley, located in the town of Belleville, in the Savoie department in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. It has been transformed into a virgin site since 1969 and inaugurated for the winter season in 1971. Val Thorens belongs to the domain of the 3 Valleys in Savoy, France, spread over 600 km of slopes. The Val Thorens area alone consists of 150 km of slopes and is managed by SETAM (Tarentaise Maurienne cable car management company). Since the beginning of 2014, the resort has the highest cableway in the world, accessible only to skiers, which connects Pointe du Bouchet (3230m) to Pointe de Thorens (3002m). It is about 1.3 km

long, can reach speeds of 65 to 105 km / h and flies over the Pierre Lory valley at a height of 250 m. It is accessible from 8 to 88 years old. The "flight" is billed at 55 €. The locality generally benefits from an image of "entertainment, sport and fitness" both in the national and international media and in the more specialized literature, just like the other places in the valley.

As for the promotion of the Val Thorens resort, the main tools used refer to the fairs organized mainly by Atout France, where Grand Ski remains the flagship event and by France Montagnes, actor and coordinator of the mountain promotion campaigns in France on the main social media.

Atout France, the tourism development agency of France, is an economic interest group (GIE), operated by the French state in tourism. Its objectives are the promotion of tourism in France, the implementation of tourism engineering operations and the implementation of a competitiveness and quality policy for companies in the sector. In order to strengthen the attractiveness of the tourist offer, Atout France carries out various observation and analysis missions: economic and prospective monitoring, support in the creation of tourism and investment projects, publication of studies, analysis and development assistance. To strengthen the reputation of French destinations and sectors, the Agency organizes internationally: communication campaigns and events, actions for the press and influencers or trade fairs. The Agency also relies on the power of France.fr, the portal for French destinations. Atout France is also responsible for ensuring the quality of tourist services. It then manages the classification of accommodation facilities and the registration of travel and holiday operators. Atout France carries out these missions thanks to a network of 32 offices in 29 countries. While, France Montagnes is an association that brings together the main players in mountain tourism in France with the aim of promoting the French mountain, nationally and internationally. The association brings together French mountain tourism professionals to promote the destination in highly competitive markets. The structure entirely dedicated to mountain tourism is a place for consultation and a collective communication and promotion tool at the service of all professionals and institutions in the sector. In this sense, France Montagnes is carrying out a marketing action at the service of the entire French mountain range aimed at strengthening the notoriety and image of the mountain, winter and summer attendance and the recruitment of new national and international customers. The missions of the association are grouped around 4 axes: representing, marketing, communicating and prospecting.

In Val Thorens press meetings are organized regularly with journalists from all over

the world by the press service of the company that produces the ski resort's press kits in winter and summer and is responsible for welcoming journalists to Val Thorens throughout the year. These tools are complementary and used proportionally, thus allowing the company to vary the targets and the public. The events are organized regularly in collaboration with the 3 Vallées association, which brings together the 8 resorts that make up the largest ski area in the world. These events are public or B2B only. Finally, Val Thorens has a strong social media presence, to date:

- 139K followers on Instagram (2nd French station)
- 529,000 likes on Facebook (first station in the world)
- 30.9K followers on Twitter (first French station)

4.1.14 Engadin – Saint Moritz Tourismus AG

The Engadin St. Moritz Tourism Organization (TO ESTM) has been responsible for marketing the destination since 2007. It was created from the merger of the tourism offices of the 11 municipalities of the Upper Engadine district. In the cantons of Graubünden, the political circles and thus the patronage of the tourism organization were dissolved at the end of 2017. For this reason, with the approval of all municipalities, Engadin St. Moritz Tourismus AG (ESTM AG) was founded, which assumes the duties of TO ESTM. With the involvement of partners, locals and guests, the board of ESTM AG thus initiates a process and revisits the previous strategy of 2006 by approving the new strategy of ESTM AG and presenting it to the public. The St. Moritz and Engadin brands are separately positioned and marketed separately by the responsible teams, as the travel reasons for St. Moritz and the Engadine are different. St. Moritz ranks with the "extravagant" value, the Engadine with the "nostalgia" value. The Engadin St. Moritz corporate brand will be retained and will be responsible for both brands.

St. Moritz The positioning of St. Moritz is the result of the 12 megatrends and 12 travel motifs that the German Future Institute has defined for the coming years. For St. Moritz, status, participation and curiosity are decisive as travel motives. St. Moritz is developing from an alpine destination / holiday resort according to its previous positioning into an extravagant urban mountain lifestyle. The value of "extravagance" is decisive. This value is only the "program" for St. Moritz as a tourist destination: it should not be seen as a claim.

Engadine The Engadine's positioning is also based on the 12 megatrends and 12

travel motifs of the German Institute of the Future. For the Engadine, vitality, self-realization and deceleration are decisive travel reasons. The Engadine is developing from a high valley according to its former position into a stimulating place of nostalgia at 1,800m. The "desire" value is decisive. This value is only the "program" for Engadine as a tourist destination: it should not be seen as a claim.

ESTM AG also divides the target markets entering the destination into different categories listed below:

- Volume markets: Switzerland, Germany, Italy. These markets account for around 70% of hotel nights and are targeted in accordance with the new strategy of the two brands.
- Growing markets: USA, UK, Russia, Japan. ESTM has already achieved success in these markets. They continue to offer growth potential. They account for about 20% of hotel nights. ESTM will form alliances to manage these markets.
- Partner markets: China, India, GCC, Scandinavia, Austria, Canada, Brazil / Latin America. ESTM has already achieved its first successes in these markets. You are very promising. The prerequisite for further cultivation on the market is the acquisition of partners. These markets are then processed only if the partners are active in these markets together with ESTM in the areas B2B / B2C / meetings, incentives, events.

The St. Moritz brand team works in Italy, USA, UK, Russia, Japan, China, India, GCC, Austria, Canada, Brazil / Latin America while the Engadin brand team works in Switzerland, Germany and Scandinavia.

The company is made up of about 17 employees who work in various sectors and a Board of Directors, responsible for the strategic choices of destinations. The Board of Directors has defined the strategic themes and projects to be developed during the year, which for 2020 are 10, four in winter and six in summer. In particular, greater focus is concentrated on the consistent implementation of the strategy of the two brands St. Moritz and Engadin; for the acquisition and implementation of high-value meetings and incentives; for the concentration on the main events relevant to the brand; focus on cultural and lifestyle issues relevant to the brand. There are also 4 winter themes in the strategic zone "1800 m above sea level": skiing, Nordic, hiking, ice. Finally, the 6 summer themes run under the strategic "Trail" band: cycling, trekking, mountaineering, running, water and golf. In order to promote tourism awareness among partners and

the population, ESTM AG further strengthens hospitality and cooperation for mutual success in the Upper Engadine.

Regarding the main tools used in tourism promotion, in 2018 ESTM AG took over the social media channels of St. Moritz; for the first time, you can compare the number of social media visitors for both brands. There is still no common comparison period for the brand's two websites, as they were activated at different times in 2018 and 2019. Overall, the number of visitors and followers increased by 82% in 2019, thanks in particular to the new website www.engadin.ch and the focus on the Instagram channels of St. Moritz and Engadin, which are based on the collaboration with well-known, world-renowned influencers have benefited from this. In particular, the following were recorded:

- Over 700,000 interactions on the St. Moritz social media channels
- Over 900,000 video views on the Engadine Facebook account
- 3,818 published media reports
- 410 journalists assisted on site in 143 media trips
- 10 media events in different countries (CH, D, I, UK, USA, Russia, Scandinavia)

In addition, the company participates in various national and international events and fairs including some summer kick offs (220 participants) and winter kick offs (280 participants), training and information events for holiday homeowners but also the Hospitality Pop Up Academy Grisons and internal training courses. In detail, in 2019 the company supervised 61 on-site tour operators, participated in 5 B2B workshops and fairs, answered 7 sales calls, participated in 6 marketing war activities and organized meetings and meetings with various event managers.

4.1.15 Font-Romeu-Odeillo-Via

Font-Romeu-Odeillo-Via, or simply Odeillo, is a commune in the Pyrenees Orientales and Cerdagne near the Spanish border in the south of France. It comprises the villages of Odeillo and Via, as well as Font-Romeu, one of the oldest ski resorts in France and the oldest in the Pyrenees. Very close to Spain and Andorra, Font Romeu is famous for its ski slopes in winter, its open spaces and its protected environment. Its inhabitants have maintained a strong Catalan identity which is reflected in its language, traditions and gastronomy. The promotion of the destination is entrusted to Font-Romeu-Odeillo-Via, a private company with public participation founded in 1912. The company name is

EPIC (Etat Public Industriel et Commercial) or a legal person under public law with the aim of managing a " public service activities of an industrial and commercial nature. The main activity is that of info point, in fact the company also acts as the Tourist Office for the destination and in this sense the main activities concern tourist information, animation, the organization of events, marketing and web campaigns marketing.

The internal organization of the company is very collegial, it is a group of 10 collaborators who work together. Decisions are made together, in meetings where past results are discussed to set future goals. A very involved and dynamic team in the promotion and reception as well as providing information to customers, in fact, gives $\frac{3}{4}$ time out of the office for entertainment, summer and winter. In the low season, however, the team manages the promotion for the future season and therefore prepares marketing campaigns, editing of collected material, website management, advertising and promotion of tourism activities.

The main activities carried out by the company concern promotion and marketing, information and entertainment, events, B2B workshops, partnerships with other companies, sports groups, management of tourist taxes collected by the tourist office, transport management, management of sports facilities. The main tools used concern web marketing, Font-Romeu-Odeillo-Via works mainly on social media, on partner sites and on the main tourist and travel platforms. In addition, the company is present on local radio with a one-off radio campaign for events, some press activities with journalists, some France2 TV campaign for television games, some web marketing contests, and few billboard advertisements. The social networks used most are Instagram and Facebook, Snapchat and Twitter are also used, albeit in a lower percentage. Font-Romeu-Odeillo-Via manages 3 different Facebook pages:

- one mainly for children with the activities of the area and the mascots;
- one for regulars, those with second homes and residents;
- one for general communication with about 40,000 / 50,000 active followers which is used for the reputation and image of the destination.

In line with the internet communication plan implemented to promote the ski resort last winter, a communication operation was carried out for the summer period. Keeping active the subscribers to the Facebook page obtained last winter, consolidating the address folder and increasing the number of subscribers to the Tourist Office Newsletter are the objectives of this summer advertising campaign in the form of games on the Internet and on its social networks.

The budget for the promotion of the destination amounts to € 750,000 / 950,000 per year, most of which is taken by the public but with some private participation due to partnerships with companies for services offered. Furthermore, Font-Romeu-Odeillo-Via receives part of the tourist tax paid by tourists. The municipality receives the remainder and has developed specific software capable of locating tourists who have yet to pay the tax to be detained regularly.

4.1.16 Sankt Anton am Arlberg

Sankt Anton am Arlberg is an Austrian municipality of 2,349 inhabitants in the district of Landeck in Tyrol. Ski resort specializing in alpine skiing, it hosted the 2001 World Championships and numerous World Cup races, among other things. It is known for its proximity to the Arlberg ski area and is often referred to as "the cradle of alpine skiing" because it is the place where the sport was born. The St. Anton am Arlberg museum, housed in a traditional chalet, traces the local skiing history. There are 88 mountain railways and lifts, 305 kilometers of prepared slopes and 200 kilometers of fantastic powder and granular snow slopes throughout the region, offering unlimited possibilities. One extremely important point - this Tyrolean resort is in an area of the Alps where snow is virtually guaranteed.

The tourism promotion activity is managed by Sankt Anton am Arlberg, an Austrian public rights company that has been involved in tourism for more than 100 years. Their main mission is to promote their territory throughout the world in tourism, but in addition to this they are also involved in creating tourist infrastructures and managing tourist information at the regional level. And decisions regarding tourism matters are taken within a board, the same which also establishes what are the annual objectives and the reference targets to be achieved. Every year a meeting is held in which the directors of all departments that make up the company participate where, after analyzing the data and results of the year, future goals are discussed and the budget is managed based on the projects to be implemented. The operational team of Sankt Anton am Arlberg is made up of about 35 people during the winter season and 55 in the summer, the one with the highest turnout. It is important to underline that as with the Val d'Ayas - Monterosa Tourist Consortium, Sankt Anton am Arlberg does not deal with the management of the ski slopes, the 305 km of slopes are managed by a private external company. Before talking about the promotion strategies of the locality, it is well specific that Sankt Anton am Arlberg deals with the promotion of Austria and the whole of Tyrol, the management of the large territorial area is due to the strong presence of partnerships with

the related municipalities. As for the tools used in tourism promotion, the main channel used is the online one, in fact, in addition to the management of Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, TikTok pages but not only, various collaborations are made with influencers, bloggers and journalists to increase even more the perception of Sankt Anton am Arlberg abroad and in the world. As for journalists, about 900 journalists are invited each year who, trying alpine sports themselves, present them in their articles, thus improving the promotion of the locality. Furthermore, the promotion passes through the creation of flyers and brochures that are sent to the major airports and tourist reception centers in the world in order to increase knowledge of the territory. Finally, a lot of resources and a part of the budget is allocated for promotion on radio and television broadcasts where commercials and small promotional videos of the locality where the main activities to be carried out are filmed. The work to be done in the field of promotion is so extensive that Sankt Anton am Arlberg has decided to allocate 2 resources solely to social media, 4 for collaborations with the press and 1 for partnerships with international influencers and bloggers. The budget of Sankt Anton am Arlberg is € 9,000,000 per year which is provided by the Tyrol region for the promotion and management of the territory to which are added the tourist taxes in the locality which amount to € 3 per person for destination marketing and promotion.

4.2 Findings

Name	Nat	Structure	Activity	Tools	Budget
Consorzio Turistico Val d'Ayas Monterosa	Italian	B of D (11 members) + 1 employee	Promotion; Service management; Commercial; Info point	Social media; Website; Events; Workshop; National/ international mountain fair; TO partnership; Press	Membership fee + public funds 80,000.00€
Consorzio Turistico Gressoney Monterosa	Italian	B of D (10 members) + 1 employee	Promotion; Service management; Info point	Social media; Website; Events; National mountain fair; TO partnership	Membership fee + public funds
Consorzio Turistico Alagna Valsesia Monterosa	Italian	B of D (7 members) + 1 employee	Promotion; Service management; Info point	Social media; Website; National mountain fair ;TO partnership	Membership fee + public funds
Consorzio Turismo Bardonecchia	Italian	B of D (9 members) + 1 employee	Promotion	Social media; Website; Events; Workshop; Local partnership; TO partnership; Press; Offline campaign	Membership fee + 70% of the Bardonecchia tourists' taxes

Comparative Analysis

Azienda per il Turismo Livigno	Italian	25 employees	Promotion; Service management	Social media; Website; Workshop; National/international mountain fair; TO partnership; Press	N/A
Azienda per il Turismo Val di Non	Italian	B of D (15 members) + 11 employees	Promotion; Info point	Social media; Website; Press/TV; Events; Workshop; Partnership w/Trentino Marketing	N/A
Cortina Marketing	Italian	60 employees	Promotion	Social media; Website; Events; Workshop; National/international mountain fair; Local partnership; TO partnership; Press	N/A
Consorzio Turistico Piana Rotaliana Königsberg	Italian	B of D (12 members) + 5 employees	Promotion; Product development	Social media; Website; Events; Partnership w/ Trentino Marketing	N/A
Azienda per il Turismo della Valle di Ledro	Italian	B of D + 7 employees	Promotion; Commercial; Info point	Social media; Website; Press; Events; PR and Media activities; Workshop; Partnership w/ Trentino Marketing	20% private funds + 80% Valle di Ledro tourists' taxes
Associazione Promozione Turistica Bormio Marketing	Italian	B of D (5 members) + 4 employees	Promotion	Social media; Website; Events; Press/campaign; Workshop	tourist taxes € 5,178,000 (2019) + € 800,000 publics funds
Verbier Tourisme	Swiss	B of D + 7 employees	Promotion	Social media; Website; Press; Events; PR and Media activities; Workshop; TO partnership; Partnership w/ sport company	12,000,000.00€
Chamonix Mont Blanc	French	B of D + 33 employees	Promotion; Booking; Info point	Social media; Website; Events; Press/campaign; Workshop; PR and Media activities; Partnership w/ Atout France	N/A
Val Thorens	French	N/A	Promotion	Social media; Website; Events; Press/campaign; Workshop; PR and Media activities; Partnership w/ Atout France and France Montagne	N/A
Engadin St. Moritz Tourism Organization	Swiss	B of D + 17 employees	Promotion	Social media; Website; Events; Press/campaign; Workshop; PR and marketing activities	11,529,000€
Font-Romeu-Odeillo-Via	French	B of D + 10 employees	Promotion; info point	Social media; Website; Events; Press/campaign; Workshop; PR and marketing activities; Partnership w/ sport company	€ 750,000 / 950,000 per year (public funds)
Sankt Anton am Arlberg	Austrian	B of D + 35/55 employees	Promotion	Social media; Website; Events; Press/campaign; Workshop; PR and marketing activities; Offline promotion	€ 9,000,000 per year + tourists' taxes

Table 4.1: Comparative Analysis

This table summarizes the information collected following the interviews and the desk research conducted. In order to be able to compare the various consortiums in a graphic and immediate way with the aim of creating a winning behavior model, a matrix was built in which two variables were studied: the quantity of promotional activities and the organizational structure. By quantity of promotional activities, is meant the number of all those activities that the destination organizes in order to promote itself in the market; this category includes events, workshops but also press trips or advertisements. The second variable instead analyzed the quality of the organizational structure of the consortium, that is, the size, the number of employees but also the qualifications of the same, the work sectors, the harmonization of the management of the destination and the general organization of the destination. Below what analyzed:

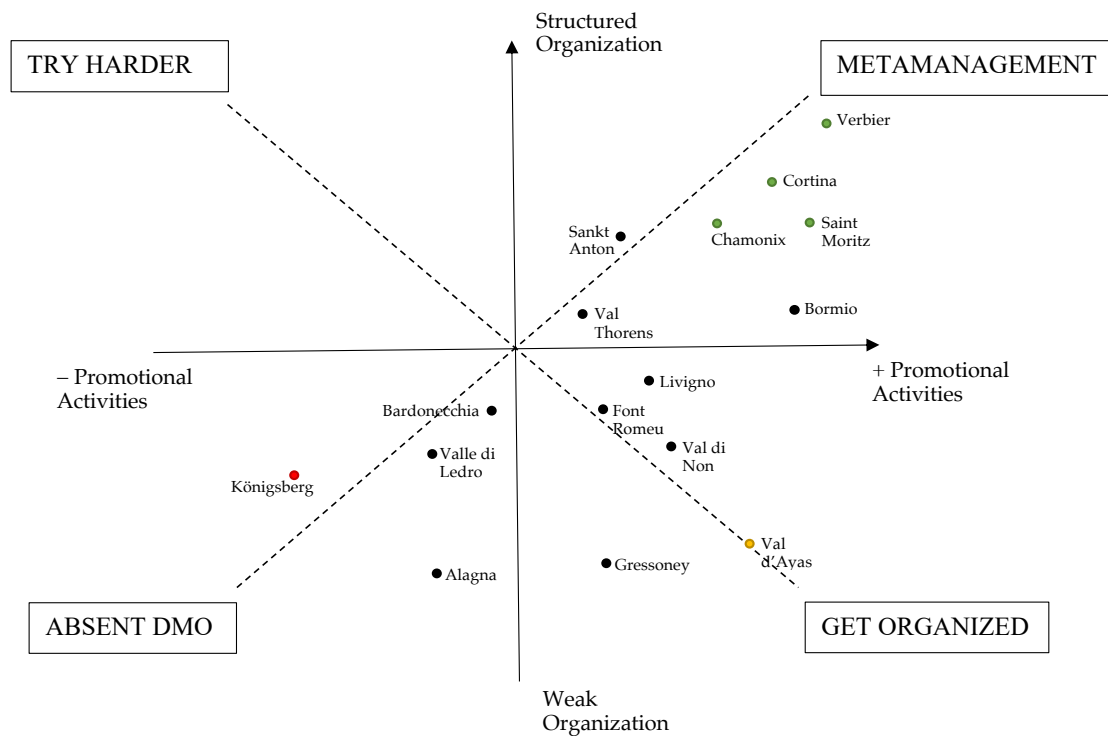


Figure 4.1: Comparison Matrix

As is possible to observe from the graph, the subject in question, the Consorzio Turistico Val d'Ayas Monterosa, is in an excellent position with regard to the amount of promotional activities in the destination, while it ranks among the last for the organizational structure. This is due to the problem of dis-harmonization of the destination and the lack of a Destination Manager figure able to direct the bodies and subjects involved

in tourism and act on the development of the destination's governance. The best performing position is the one of Verbier followed by Cortina, Saint Moritz and Chamonix which in terms of organization structure and number of activities represent a virtuous example. These destinations fall into the "Metamanagement" category as destinations managed in a winning way by one or more subjects and therefore able to provide a product-destination in line with what was planned. On the other hand, the Piana Rotaliana Königsberg Tourist Consortium is in a disadvantageous position as it has a weak organizational structure and a limited amount of promotional activities. This is because, as already mentioned during the interview, the consortium in question has settled its strategy around the development of the tourism product as much as the management of the destination itself. It is interesting to observe how the three consortiums of the Monterosa district, despite being geographically close and united by different elements, position themselves differently. All three cases see a weak organizational structure as they are afflicted by the same internal governance problems, despite this it is possible to note how both Gressoney and the Val d'Ayas have committed themselves to proposing a series of activities aimed at promoting the destination on the market. This result may suggest the presence of qualified and proactive employees and a greater willingness to push the destination on the market. All the other consortiums, on the other hand, are positioned in the middle, excelling at least one of the two variables and scarce in the other. For all these cases it is advisable to develop a behavior model that leads to real actions for governing the destination.

In light of what is observed in the graph, the want is to investigate what are the characteristics that make a tourist consortium efficient and therefore create a sort of model to be replicated in the Val d'Ayas case. For this reason, the cases best positioned on the graph have been analyzed in more detail: Verbier Tourisme and Engadin St. Moritz Tourism Organization and a well-positioned Italian company such as Bormio Marketing in order to compare them with the Consorzio Turistico Val d'Ayas Monterosa difficulties, identify a model of behavior to follow and apply it to the case study.

Criteria	Consorzio Turistico Val d'Ayas Monterosa	Verbier Tourisme	Bormio Marketing	Saint Moritz Tourism Organiz
Budget	80.000,00 €	± 12,000,000€	5,978,000€	11,529,000€
Strategic Planning	no	strong	medium	strong

Promotional Activities				
Events	yes	yes	yes	yes
Workshop	national and international ski/mountain/ bike	national and international ski/mountain/ bike	national and international ski/mountain	national and international ski/mountain
PR and Media Activities	press trips Press section	press trips influencer trips Press section	press trips influencer trips Press section	press trips influencer trips Press section Media events
AD				
Campaign	no	yes (Liverpool FC)	yes (Milan public services)	yes
Partnership	TO Comm. company	TO Promotion company Comm. company	TO Promotion company Comm. company	TO Promotion company Comm. company
Organization Structure				
Structural aspects	BofD and employee	BofD and employees who work in diff. sectors	BofD and employees who work in diff. sectors	BofD and employees who work in diff. sectors
Employees	1	7	4	17
Skills and				
qualifications	degree + master degree	degree + master and previous experience in the field	degree + master and previous experience in the field	tourism/ marketing master degree and previous experience in the field

Other entities that manage the destination	Ayas Municipality Monterosa S.p.a.	no	no	no
Social Media Communication				
Facebook	12,691 followers	49,916 followers	29,860 followers	113,989 followers
Instagram	2,527 followers	48,700 followers	17,200 followers	81,100 followers
Website	a section on the Monterosa website	own website	own website	own website

Table 4.2: Comparative Table

Before starting the comparison, it is necessary to point out the significant discrepancy between the budgets of the different consortiums that see the Val d’Ayas Consortium in the lower position. A further determinant of the consortium’s performance is represented by strategic planning, in fact, it is possible to note that in virtuous cases it is more or less developed but always present. It is possible to note that in these cases there is a strong definition of positioning and formulation of a development vision which is accompanied by the construction of the product system, the development of the brand, the supervision of the relationship with customers, the management of marketing and communication management. Based on these elements, the development of skills, the development of external partnerships and the development of synergies and interrelationships are established. In fact, a first level of strategic planning is represented by the definition of the positioning of the formulation of the destination development vision. This is medium-long term thinking, which arises from a deep knowledge and analysis of the territory, takes into account the development objectives of the destination, takes into consideration the evolution of the markets and the behavior of competitors that is rooted in a robust in the history and tradition of the place. A fundamental starting point that guides and directs the other actions, but which also assumes consistency and concreteness through all the activities that take place. As far as promotional activities are concerned, the consortium in question is positioned in a positive way with respect to

its competitors because despite its small size and its small resources, it offers a series of activities and events like the others. Perhaps with a larger budget, it could intervene by developing ad hoc advertising campaigns, increasing partnerships with valuable subjects, developing the possibility of improving the visibility of the destination. What most differentiates the consortium of the Val d'Ayas from the other virtuous cases is the internal organizational structure. The main problem of the subject is the non-harmonization of the management of the destination due to the presence of too many subjects that deal with the same. Furthermore, the presence of a single person who takes care of all the tasks is perhaps not sufficient to develop good governance of the destination. In conclusion, in order to identify a model to follow to obtain a successful output, it is possible to identify the behaviors that make a consortium work well:

- Detailed strategic planning designed on the territory
- Governance of the territory united and not fragmented
- Organized structure that knows how to enhance the skills of individuals
- Partnership with internal and external subjects to enhance synergies, increase know-how and manage common projects.
- Quality promotional activities that know how to market the brand on the market
- An adequate budget

The result is a rather broad and articulated content framework of destination management, which requires an equally broad spectrum of skills to be successfully implemented. Skills which, as is possible to imagine, are not exclusively limited to the tourism sphere, but which also have to do with the knowledge of companies, with the ability to transfer teachings, to stimulate and manage collaboration processes and much more.

Therefore, at this point of the analysis it is clear how important it is that, to improve its performance, the Consorzio Turistico Val d'Ayas Monterosa must:

- Develop a strong strategic planning of the destination, define the real government actions and formulate a vision of development of the destination;
- Intervene on the quality of the promotion activities of the destination as much as on quantity;

- Develop internal managerial and operational skills to increase the possibility of obtaining good results, of creating wealth for the territory, of contributing to the development of innovation in services;
- Develop the collaboration of several subjects who can share know-how, financial resources, accommodation and services availability, thus overcoming the limits of the small size and favoring a constructive and stimulating comparison;
- Establish a single body responsible for the management of the destination in order to avoid the redundancy of contents and information, thus harmonizing the governance of the territory.

4.3 Discussion

After a brief overview of the case studies analyzed, it is clear how the organization of the entities that deal with tourism in mountain areas differs according to the nation, and therefore to the regulations in force and to the size of the tourist area. The tourism organization in Italy tends to foresee that the provincial territory is divided into geographical areas or not, which in turn correspond to tourist areas. Tourism companies (which have taken the form of joint stock companies, cooperatives or consortium) can operate in tourism areas or other areas may be the responsibility of tourist consortium, non-profit organizations, registered in the appropriate list, upon request or finally by private companies. Both the Companies and the Consortium benefit from annual subsidies from the provinces or regions to support the activity of: tourist information and hospitality; coordination of tourist animation activities and identification and enhancement of the tourist resources of the territory for the construction of the tourism proposal of the area. On the other hand, destination management in France is entrusted to Atout France, the tourism development agency of France, an economic interest group (GIE) operated by the French state in tourism.

The first comparison that can be made between the various bodies that deal with tourism is in the activities carried out. In fact, we note that while the international stations mainly deal only with promotion, the Italian ones also use their resources in commercial activities, info points and service management. It is impossible in this paper identify who gets the best results as each destination has its own organization, structure and budget that prevents their direct comparison. In any case, it is interesting to observe how the worldliest mountain destinations and also the best known, both nationally and

internationally, are those that concentrate their monetary and personnel resources only in promotion. It is clear how focusing on a single activity is more effective in terms of commitment, skills and output obtained. At this point it is easy to think how the notoriety of these destinations may also depend on the fact that they are better advertised and promoted and pushed on international markets with more force than the others. It is possible that the Monterosa destination, despite being internationally known for the vastness of ski slopes, is not as famous as many other smaller destinations due to the fragmentation of the activities carried out by the consortia. At the same time, however, the management of a destination is not based only on the promotion of the same, it embraces a series of activities including, for example, the management of services or the activity of info points which represent some of the tourism development objectives of the destination. It is clear that the central objective of the tourist development of a territory is the attraction of visitors, the ability to attract increasingly important tourist flows or to be able to shift consumption towards target customers with greater spending capacity represents the condition for obtaining positive results. However, tourism development is to be considered fully completed when tourist flows are able to generate the economic growth of the destination and are linked to the improvement of the living conditions of the residents (Tripodi, 2014). This can be accessed when the accommodation capacity of the destination is increased, when the offer as a whole is enriched or when the quality of individual services is improved.

A second comparison can be made with regard to the budget of the various companies dealing with tourism. Unfortunately, not all the consortiums/companies interviewed have disclosed information about the budgets but it is easy to think that the larger ones, with more employees and those that tend to be private and not in associative form, are those that obtain the highest budgets and therefore can use them in more efficient promotion campaigns. In particular, with regard to the Val d'Ayas - Monterosa Consortium, its membership structure and its small size contribute to the fact that it does not have large budgets to be allocated to promotional activities. Furthermore, in this specific case, there is another problem that is the fact that it has to compete with other local authorities for the promotion of the territory. In fact, in the Ayas Valley, not only the Consortium is involved in promotion, but also the Municipality of Ayas and Monterosa Spa. The three forms, with three different budgets, compete for the management of the territory without being able to collaborate. As already anticipated in the theoretical part, greater collaboration and the possibility that these entities can be governed under the same metamanagement would allow sharing resources, budgets, skills and abilities and

promoting the destination more effectively. In order to operate, a destination requires a budget adequate to the objectives it sets itself and must necessarily have a level of financial autonomy (Tripodi, 2014). Also, according to the author, the nature of the funds is not important, they may derive from public funds or private equity investments, tourist taxes or affiliations, but its continuity and availability over time is important. In fact, an excessive dependence on public funds is linked to the risk that financial availability is dependent on the political dynamics that typically characterize the public administrative system, while a second risk is linked to the trend of public administrations to contract financial resources over time. It will be the DMO's credit to try to raise funds through public or private partnerships or other remedies, but these proceeds must be seen as a surplus of an initial basic provision.

Finally, the last comparison can be made on the organization chart. A fundamental aspect that absolutely must not be forgotten when it comes to DM is the verification that there are valuable skills within it. The challenges to be played are important and can only be won in the presence of individuals with qualified experience. From strategic and organizational planning skills, to web and social media communication skills, to relations with residents or the ability to build a tourism product, it is important to know how to entrust tasks to qualified personnel. The international experiences interviewed, as well as some Italian ones, actually seem to go in this direction, placing professionals with management skills and experience in the tourism sector at the top of the company structure. While, as regards the Val d'Ayas - Monterosa Tourist Consortium, the organization chart does not seem effective as, first of all, being of an elective nature, it does not allow for continuity and long-term planning; secondly, it is composed only of an employee who, despite having qualified skills, cannot take care of the activities listed above alone and finally, the composition of the management, which is mainly made up of owners of tourist activities who, despite having proven experience in the sector, they do not have any managerial, strategic or leadership qualifications.

An element that characterizes the successful strategies of companies is the ability to deal simultaneously with all aspects of management and follow up on what has been started. The fragmentation of the subjects and the unclear definition of roles often lead to a partial approach to managing the destination while the real leap in territorial management is having an all-round approach that can make organicity and coherence one of the strengths of the local strategy. Not just partial actions but an organic design that embraces all the DM's work areas. Furthermore, a facet of professionalism must also be the ability to develop a long-term vision and to build a planning activity that forces to

verify the overall coherence of the development plan.

4.4 Destination problems and possible solutions

At this point, in order to complete the research project, the main problems encountered in the organization and structure of the Val d'Ayas Tourist Consortium were identified. Within the Val d'Ayas Tourist Consortium it is clear that one of the main problems is the overlapping of roles and the lack of harmony in tourism development activities. In this case, both the Consortium and the Municipality of Ayas, Monterosa Spa, and the Office du Tourisme (hence the regional administration) organize events and entertainment activities independently and without consulting each other, creating first of all redundancy in the events, confusion in the consultation of information and waste of resources. First of all, this causes a redundancy of events, it often happens that similar or high-interest activities are organized on the same day, thus forcing the tourist to choose one at the expense of the other. Since this is a highly seasonal destination, it would be more appropriate to take advantage of the period of greatest influx every day rather than suggesting different variants for the same day. Greater coordination between all operators in the area would make it possible to create a broad offer capable of involving tourists by offering products that are easier to access and for every interest, thus attracting a wider audience. Furthermore, the presence of different entities offering products independently creates confusion regarding the consultation of information. Since there is no basic cooperation, each institution promotes its own initiatives on its own portals, forcing a tourist who wants to be informed about the events/activities of the week to browse the various web pages in search of information. Finally, this represents a waste of both monetary and physical resources that could be used in further local promotion initiatives to revive tourism in the destination. Therefore, a rich picture emerges of subjects directly involved in making decisions that have an impact on the tourist offer and consequently on the competitiveness of the destination generally characterized by: fragmentation of the actors and activities, which prevents the exploitation of economies of scale involves a duplication of efforts and suboptimal use of financial resources; lack of coordination between the various subjects and the absence of a directing role that can favor the exploitation of synergies and direct efforts in a single direction; lack of the necessary skills on the part of subjects who have different roles and responsibilities in tourism, with inevitable repercussions on the quality of the decisions themselves;

limited financial resources available to institutional actors to carry out effective interventions on such a vast number of aspects. It is clear that in a context like this it is not immediate to give birth to a unitary management logic at the destination level, which has as its ultimate goal the development of the entire territory, in a typical Destination management perspective. Again, the identification of a Destination Management subject would manage local information in an organized way on a single portal in order to make information easier and more accessible.

In addition, what is observed in the locality is a general sense of fragmentation, an attitude of scarce cooperation between the actors of the receptivity. In fact, in most cases the owners of hotels, even if affiliated with the Consortium, promote and propose services and activities independently without opening up to collaborations or partnerships with other public or private entities, thus allowing a more usable consumption of the territory. In fact, it is possible to observe how everyone thinks more about the profit of his own structure as much as about the possibility of cooperating in order to increase demand and thus increase the profit for the entire destination. A phenomenon that could be overcome over time by inserting an architect of the destination, superpartes, able to guarantee a wider participation of the Tourist System in promotional-marketing initiatives in the common interest.

As described above, it is clear that there is a need for coordination and guidance from the many actors involved, to successfully conduct an activity, that of Destination management, which is a person as described above, which is by its nature complex, which requires valuable resources and skills, which requires a systematic attention to obtain those results tourism development that everyone expects. International experiences have shown us how the identification of a subject specifically dedicated to this can represent an interesting working hypothesis in this direction, as the DMO would have clear responsibilities, a well-defined field of activity and would inevitably represent the point of reference of the other operators. Furthermore, regardless of the identification of a subject that becomes the reference point, each destination is, in fact, a network made up of many actors, more or less directly involved in the provision of services and in the tourism development process. These are public and private entities, individual companies, trade associations or consortia, groups of individuals. These subjects, which may be internal or external to the destination, relate to each other in different ways, which make the nature of the network more fascinating and complex. They allow the exchange of information, represented for example by the communications that the consortia circulate to their members, to the analysis of data on the trend of tourist flows and allow

the municipalities to participate in projects having as object the realization of a communication campaign, the participation of a mission abroad, the construction of a tourist package, the carrying out of market surveys. A network is therefore configured, made up of actors and relationships which inevitably represent a distinctive feature of a destination and which requires to be managed with the attention. Even if this would favor the formal establishment of a DMO, there would be no elimination of the network and underlying, but simply a change of its structure, with the introduction of a subject that, among other things, should improve the effectiveness of operation.

Furthermore, in places where tourist activities already exist, such as that of Monterosa, it may be appropriate to intervene strategically through a planning of the requalification of the offer or the realization of promotional and marketing interventions, so as to encourage flows and improve the target of tourists of reference. In such circumstances, a defined leadership is required, a person who takes on the functions of coordination and/or promotion of the local offer. It is therefore a question of identifying a figure of architect and control room of the destination who should provide for the participation of the main representatives of the categories of public and private operators who are, for various reasons, participating in the development and promotion of the offer system destination. This subject, as seen in previous chapters, is the metamanagement body. One of the proposals could be to enhance the activities of the Consortium in integration with the functions carried out by the Office du Tourisme for the organization of the destination's incoming, also by taking into account all the actors who manage the accommodation offer.

The destination needs a rebalancing of the supply on a seasonal basis leading to the creation of services in currently marginal periods in this respect. In particular, it is intended to lead to a greater tourist offer in the low season. The rebalancing of the resort's tourist offer on a seasonal basis largely depends on destination management interventions and interventions by individual operators. Unlike winter, the low season is a tourist period in which the offer system cannot focus mainly on a specific product, such as snow. The competitiveness for the low season offer is very high as some alternatives come into play such as a stay in the cities of art and short seaside stays. For this reason, the suggestion is to undertake initiatives that tend to highlight the specificities of the destination on the market, in particular with regard to traditional mountain practices. From the point of view of the accommodation offer, the "low season" strategy should rely on greater integration between the various structures, integrating the shelters in a functional way and adequately enhancing nature. With this in mind, even vacation homes can strengthen

the number of beds that the destination places on the market during the low season. The reference model, from which operators could draw useful suggestions and example is the Canadian one, which despite having a core business in the winter period has in recent years known an excellent tourist offer for the low season by focusing on the phenomenon of foliage and thus breaking down the concept of seasonality of the tourist offer. Canada, as well as New England are just a few examples of destinations that have been able to exploit the natural phenomenon of the change of color of autumn leaves to lengthen the summer season and connect it with the winter one. Other examples are fishing or hunting in Slovenia or New Zealand. The low season program must be substantiated by an agreement with hoteliers to ensure the opening of a sufficient number of accommodation facilities to ensure the image of the station and the financial balance of general tourist services. In general, given the situation of the management of the Monterosa destination, more specifically that of Val d'Ayas and compared with what happens in other national and international locations, it is winning to focus on:

- Awareness-raising and territorial animation activities: this consists of planning a sustainable development path for the territory in a shared and participatory manner;
- Harmonization of product strategies: product assets must make integration and harmonization the true innovative way of the destination in terms of partnership, resources, public-private relations;
- Public-private co-marketing actions: strengthening the relationship between hospitality operators, organizers of the overall offer and public institutional systems to allow demand to use the territory;
- Accompanying and technical support actions: provide for analysis and study of the tourism system to support the planning of the sector;
- Creation and development of institutional relationships facilitating tourism promotion - marketing, competitiveness and internationalization: strengthening collaboration with the main regional and national bodies responsible for economic promotion (Unioncamere, Invitalia, Enit, trade fair systems, etc.) in order to share objectives and intervention strategies and guarantee a wider participation of the Tourism System in promotional-marketing initiatives in the common interest of the national and international projection of the territory.

Conclusion

From the analysis carried out in the previous paragraphs, it is possible to draw in this part of the work some conclusive considerations on the role played by the management of the tourist destination and on how a well-played governance can have positive return effects on the competitiveness and image of the same destination and on the individual companies operating on it.

After a brief overview of the industrial districts and how they were fundamental for the development of tourist districts, the work focused on the importance of the territory and local tourism systems before analyzing the tourist destination. From what has been observed, it emerges that the success of the companies involved in the tourism supply chain adds the no less important factor of the destination to the typical business and sector determinants. That is, it passes through the ability to make coherent choices and able to determine an effective positioning within the sector to which it belongs but finds an essential condition in the characteristics of the destination as a whole, of which the individual company is not the author exclusive. In other words, it is the destination, understood as a local system of tourist offer, that constitutes a first level of competition between different geographical areas, which influences the ability to compete and the development possibilities of individual players.

In analyzing the tourist destination more specifically, issues such as the tourism product were raised by studying both the perspective of demand and offer and the holistic approach; the different types of destinations that can be encountered and, finally, great space has been left to the actors of the tourist destination who, united in a network, represent one of the winning aspects of the governance of a territory. In essence, these are both private operators who, individually or in aggregate form, offer specific tourist services, and public entities that with their activity not only contribute to creating the favorable context conditions for the functioning of businesses, but contribute directly to define some characteristics of the global tourist product by modifying its attractiveness factors and, consequently, the level of attractiveness among the public.

The importance of the destination in the competition between tourism systems, together with the multiplicity of subjects of different nature involved in the process of creating the tourism product, make a superordinate level of management (or metamanagement) desirable, which allows to formulate a vision of development of the destination, favors the creation of suitable conditions for the development of entrepreneurial activities, takes care to intervene directly in the completion of the tourism product system for the part that cannot be attributed to individual companies. Therefore, in defining the integrated development strategies of tourist destinations, the role of destination meta-management is of fundamental importance, in order to define appropriate coordination processes for the activities managed by individual actors, public and private, present in a territory. In addition, from the perspective of analysis defined in the work, the growth and development of a destination is mainly due to the ability of those responsible for governance (DM) to mobilize deeply rooted intangible resources and to guide the process of integrated enhancement of the tourist destination itself. Among these, the image of the destination affects the tourist's choice process and loyalty and is also one of the factors that influences the overall evaluation of the holiday. Ultimately, based on these considerations, it emerges that the creation of networks guarantees the constitution of an integrated tourism offer at the destination level capable of responding to the growing expectations expressed by specific segments of demand. And this is what a touristic area should develop, thus allowing individual companies to overcome the fragmentation, typical of the sector examined, by presenting themselves on the market with an adequate minimum size (critical mass) suitable for facing the current competition. Since, therefore, the importance of the integrated governance of the destination on the purchase decisions of tourists is clear and given the importance assumed by aggregative forms in tourism competition, the managerial problem is no longer whether or not to create territorial or network products, but to establish who should do it and with what resources. In other words, it is a Destination Management problem. Therefore, managerial and political skills are needed capable of building consensus within the territorial system and of conveying the identity and values of the tourist destination to national and international tourist markets. In fact, the strategic and development responsibility of a destination cannot be attributed exclusively either to public operators, due to the lack of skills and abilities typically possessed by private organizations, nor to private ones, due to the difficulties that they would encounter in seeking to catalyze legitimacy and consensus around their initiatives. In this perspective, most of the Destination Management scholars agree with the idea that the attraction and competition capacity of a

destination grows as the level of integration and inter-organizational coordination between the various operators involved in various capacities increases or not directly, in the development of the tourist offer.

In the wake of this consideration, is becoming more and more concrete the idea according to which the optimal situation can be found where the tourist destination is expressly conceived and managed in the same way as a governed inter-customs network, namely a network in which is relevant the presence of a lead organization (the metamangement body) which has the specific task of strategically coordinating the variety of resources and operators detectable in the locality. The metamangement body, architect and control room of the destination, should in fact foresee the participation of the main representatives of the categories of public and private operators who are, for various reasons, participating in the development and promotion of the destination offer system. This body therefore represents the organizational form and integration tool which, ex-ante with respect to the supply of the product, favors the emergence from the structure of the territory of an offer system that is competitive with respect to that of competing tourist resorts and, therefore, capable of attracting tourist flows compatible with its own resources.

At this point, the work took on a practical imprint in which the Monterosa destination, the subject of analysis, was specifically analyzed. In fact, data was researched and processed in order to give to the locality a well-defined study context necessary for the second part of the research. Subsequently, with the help of research tools such as interviews, desk analysis, comparisons and matrix, the main bodies responsible for destination management that shared structural and territorial characteristics with the Monterosa area were analyzed, in order to create a behavior model of successfully destination management to be applied to less praiseworthy cases. Once the model was created, the same was applied to the Consorzio Turistico Val d'Ayas Monterosa case to identify gaps and possible solutions.

The analysis conducted, undoubtedly, revealed the difficulties in implementing a destination management process, especially due to the fact that within the Monterosa locality, forms of competition develop between the actors that are difficult to compress within concerted decisions. However, as noted in the case of the Monterosa under analysis, a precise articulation of tasks, associated with sharing of know-how, unity and sharing of purposes, can certainly allow positive results on the market, even in the presence of some structural weaknesses.

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