Chapter 7
From Linear to Circular Tourism:
Environmental Challenge for Tourism

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ABSTRACT

There are several relevant studies concerning tourism and environment, some of them studying ecotourism, recreation ecology, adventure tourism, and parks and wilderness management. Many publications on sustainable and responsible tourism described the relationship between environmental and economic growth and considered it important to have to consider them in an integrated approach. Usually, the research highlighted the negative impact of tourism on the environment. However, tourism and environment can be complementary to each other, and sustainable management of tourism may produce positive externalities on the environment. This chapter focuses on the environmental challenges of tourism throughout the passage from linear to circular tourism.

INTRODUCTION

There are several relevant researches concerning tourism and environment, some of them studying ecotourism, recreation ecology, adventure tourism, parks and

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wilderness management. Many publications on sustainable and responsible tourism described the relationship between environment and economic growth and considered it so important to have to evaluate them in an integrated approach. Usually, the research highlighted the negative impact of tourism on the environment. However, tourism and environment can be complementary, and a sustainable management of tourism may produce positive externalities on the environment.

In addressing the issues of environmental economic policy, some specific concepts must be used. The first issue regards the **long-run perspective**, from which decision making process should be arranged. It is now evident that short-run economic decisions cannot face on the problem of natural resources scarcity. The second issue is strictly connected with the first one and concerns the long-run **availability of natural resources (NR)**. For the economists, price is a "signal" of scarcity, when it goes up it means that commodities are becoming more scarce. Unfortunately, for many NR prices are not correct signals of scarcity. Prices come from the relationship among Countries and they do not take into account "external costs". Prices as well as market mechanism are not reliable to achieve "Pareto optimum". Strong externalities, non-competitive condition and public and common goods do not permit an "optimum" use of natural resources and environment. But the question is: the NR allocation is "optimum"? How is it possible to ameliorate it? If environment is polluted due to the production and consumption activities, the future well-being is the maximum possible? To answer these questions should be a priority for those who manage the environmental economic policy worldwide.

Policy makers rarely worry about whether the rate of utilization of natural resources is good for society and what consequences this will have for future generations. Rather, the interest of governments is to know the value of GDP and its growth rate. Although there is no production without the use of natural resources, not even in the tourist product, there is rarely a link between GDP growth and use of natural resources. There is evidence that GDP is misused. It is used as an indicator of the well-being of the community, but it only indicates the value of production. Since GDP indicates the value of the flow of final goods produced in the year, incorporating a Keynesian view of effective demand. Furthermore, the accounting rules need to be reviewed, with regard to natural and environmental resources. In a scenario in which all Countries pursue the objective of GDP growth, it can be expected that all their choices will lead to halting global growth. In fact, natural resources being a finite quantity, they will not be able to sustain the growth of the population, of the consumption per capita and of the production of waste per capita, indefinitely (Medows and Randers, 2006).

Another important issue is the technical progress. It is considered in a positive perspective, since it is able to solve humanity problems.