



Department of Business and Management

Master of Global Management and Politics

Chair of Tourism Management

Managing Tourism in Cities.

A Multidimensional Model for Destination

Management Organisations' Comparative Analysis.

The Case of FUTOUROMA: The Roman DMO.

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*“Roma non è una città come le altre. È
un grande museo, un salotto da
attraversare in punta di piedi.”*

Alberto Sordi

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Introduction

The Tourism Industry is one of the most relevant and changing realities of recent times. During the last decades, it has obtained more and more centrality in terms of administrative and economic growth, sustainability policy implementations, cultural and heritage protection, and business innovation. The *destination* is the center of this growth, being a complex system of actors, which is perceived as a unique entity by tourists in a determined geographical area. The development of technologies and the changes in the society, which had caused changes in tourists' tastes and habits, had determined a true *revolution* in the tourism industry worldwide. These changes have made it impossible to continue with an old tourism model, mainly focused on profits and consumption, and have created a shift to a network-based model, with the update of hybrid structures: The Destination Management Organisations. DMOs are not new entities, but, over time, their tasks and objectives enlarged from being only marketing and promotion actors, to obtaining a relevant and more complete managerial role.

Destination Management Organisations, in this sense, aim to become one of the main actors in terms of economic growth, social inclusion, and sustainability integration in localities. This is possible by their feature of positioning at the center of the tourism environment, obtaining network centrality, and, consequently, power in setting strategies, priorities, and resource allocation for the industry. Because of this, more case studies and benchmarking are necessary in order to develop effective literature which can act as a base for further projects. In this thesis the objective is double: the first is proposing a novel model for the analysis and comparison of more DMOs, making possible an easy finding of common practices and differences. Secondly, an archetypal project for the city of Rome is proposed, analyzing and integrating the still-developing idea of FUTOUROMA, the Roman DMO. To achieve these objectives, in the first section a literature review with the main issues and findings regarding tourism management, sustainability, urban tourism, and DMOs development, is analyzed and proposed. In the second section, three different European DMOs are analyzed and some best practices are found. visitBerlin, The Vienna Tourist Board, and London & Partners

will be inspected in all their structure, practices, and objectives by using a novel model of research based on the punctual and in-depth description of the three entities obtained through a desk-research. Finally, the case of Rome is discussed and presented, looking for further integrations and suggestions, also having as a benchmark the European successful examples. This study is developed by deep research of main websites and antecedent studies of the cases, trying to develop an original model and aiming in creating a new proposal for the controversial case of Rome, *la città eterna*. Finally, conclusions will be drafted, in which limitations, contributions, and main findings will be explained and assessed, opening the way for further research.

Part I. The Tourism Industry

1.1 Destination Management: Overview

1.1.1 Tourism Industry

The tourism sector is an important economic field in terms of growth opportunities and value of territories. The rising of the importance of this sector, which historically had been more and more weighted under the economic point of view, nowadays results not only organic under the economic point of view, but also an important engine for reaching broader social goals!¹

In more recent years, the tourism industry had become one of the most influenced by social and technological changes: new ICTs, faster transportation at less cost, and a borderless world, which through globalization has given the opportunity to all countries on play the worldwide game of the global economy, in which tourism destinations had started to compete against each other and in which at the same time new necessities and desires of the newest consumers merge with the social changes both in terms of values and lifestyles. The regional context cannot be isolated anymore, but at the same time, they gain importance, coming to the center of societal attention².

All these changes can be assessed and summed in defined megatrends. These trends permit us to better interpret the past, analyze the present and imagine the future.³ The study of these results is fundamental when it comes to strategically anticipating needs, understanding the market, and creating packages.

Numerous studies, which had started in the nineties, tried to both do a summary of these trends and understand the real causes of these. In this section a wide analysis of the most important topics of the current tourism industry-related debate will be assessed, trying to cover the themes of market trends, societal changes, the role of Destination

¹ Crouch G. I., Brent Ritchie J.R., "Tourism, Competitiveness, and Societal Prosperity", *Journal of Business Research* 44, 137 – 152, 1999

² Eckert et al., Strategies and measures directed towards overtourism: a perspective of European DMOs, *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, 2019

³ Menstieri S., Dandini F., "Tourism & Travel: Sviluppi e Scenari Globali per il Turismo che Verrà: Outlook dei Driver e delle Tendenze del Turismo", *Town Meeting per il Piano Strategico*, 2019

Management Organizations (DMOs), urban tourism, and trends in governance and planning of this crossing sector which bridge the worlds of territorial administration, society, and private businesses.

Before looking at the current emergencies, it should be compelling to take into consideration also broader pictures of analyses, in which the general relationship between tourism and society is analyzed and explained. It is worthful to the narration underlining the important and impactful significance which a sector like tourism one has towards the society of a particular “place”, and vice-versa as that society influence the touristic practices, contents, experiences, and consequently the general touristic economy of a particular area. The link between the tourism industry and the country, region, and city, in which this industry develops is indissoluble: tourism as a whole is so influenced by nature, culture, and people, that it could be impossible to imagine it as a sort of standardized industry such as product ones or other kinds of services. In this sense, the relevance of tourism to society could be measured by looking at the general well-being of that society⁴, which can be composed of economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and quality of life. These three aspects are strictly interconnected with each other and with the quality of tourism management in a particular area; indeed, is not a case in which about 4.7 trillion dollars are generated by the tourism industry in 2020 globally, which, should be counted, had been a heavy decrease in the last 3 years due to COVID-19. Nevertheless, the COVID crisis had impacted very negatively upon the industry, both psychologically and economically. People now keep more attention to hygienic conditions, looking for safe areas in order to not be contaminated. Moreover, the transportation restrictions during 2020 and 2021 made the sector globally lose USD 4.5 and 4.7 trillion, its contribution to global GDP fell by 49.1% from 10.6% to 5.5%, and 62 million jobs were lost (18.5%)⁵. Some research also focused on the psychological impact, which made tourists choose less crowded places and resorts, not granting any more attention to single attractors

⁴ Crouch G. I., Brent Ritchie J.R., “Tourism, Competitiveness, and Societal Prosperity”, *Journal of Business Research* 44, 137 – 152, 1999

⁵ Orîndaru A, Popescu M-F, Alexoaei AP, Căescu Ş-C, Florescu MS, Orzan A-O. Tourism in a Post-COVID-19 Era: Sustainable Strategies for Industry’s Recovery. *Sustainability*. 2021; 13(12):6781. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13126781>

signaling a shift towards a more sustainable consumer behavior also when it comes to T&T products purchases⁶. The COVID-19 crisis made tourism actors accelerate the processes of digital transformation and focus on green practices looking to environmental impact, other than taking important measures in terms of cleanliness, hygiene, and security. These two last aspects in particular still meet the growing macro-trends of recent years; surely the COVID-19 crisis enormously accelerated most of them in terms both of public investments and media centrality.

This fundamental connection between tourism, society, and prosperity had been very discussed in the literature, giving birth to numerous analyses and expanding over time. In fact, an important trend that could be also underlined is the significant expansion of the huge opportunities which tourism continues to offer in terms of social and environmental developments, as a lever to reach important objectives in terms of social inclusion, environmental protection, rising job opportunities, and educational developments in the region. Obviously, all these consequences develop towards the objective of prosperity, which more than an objective, is also and especially a consequence of tourism itself. It is embedded in the very nature of tourism shaping lifestyles, societal structures, and the quality of life of residents all around the globe⁷. This idea of prosperity which references also a global concern for the economic future of the world population⁸ perfectly matches some of the megatrends which currently shape not only the tourism sector but the entire society.

As also cited in the previous paragraphs, megatrends are an important tool to study, analyze, and anticipate reality. Looking to them and finding the cause and possible consequences can give the power to analysts, entrepreneurs, and politicians, to intervene in policies and strategies, to better adapt them to society and have positive outcomes. Specifically, regarding the tourism industry, they permit to model products and services, targeting markets with a perfect well-fit offer⁹. These trends, moreover,

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Crouch G. I., Brent Ritchie J.R., "Tourism, Competitiveness, and Societal Prosperity", *Journal of Business Research* 44, 137 – 152, 1999

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Menstieri S., Dandini F., "Tourism & Travel: Sviluppi e Scenari Globali per il Turismo che Verrà: Outlook dei Driver e delle Tendenze del Turismo", *Town Meeting per il Piano Strategico*, 2019

are globally interconnected, changing preferences along with all consumers, and in particular considering the discipline which in this research is discussed, it is a global view the one which it could be preferred to take. These trends cover more span of implications than the only touristic ones, of which in particular some arguments will be made in this section.

1.1.2 Megatrends

Firstly, an important trend which should be taken into consideration relates to the rising of wealth in emerging economies: this process can easily give more access to travel both for leisure and business, determining not only a wider number of consumers but also consumers and travelers which come from different places, which are part of different cultures and traditions. Globalization in this sense had helped on one hand making easier travels and discovering an always more different and cultural-wide world to the new generation of travels, but at the same time making western culture be exported to other less developed countries, making in some cases lose to the latter their unicity. In this scenario, the role of tourism and in particular tourism operators results fundamental in preserving the culture of the destination, and that unicity that globalization risk taking away. Looking at all the recent global phenomena, one of the main actors in changing the vision, habits, and modeling of the entire society is technological development. This had permitted faster information, and now it has evolved arriving at taking part both in the process of production, selling, and consuming a product: they create and raise expectations, permit the very fit and specific product to offer, making introduced new business models. In particular, looking at tourism, some important developments had been made. For the first time, the internet modified the relationship between consumers and players, but also the competition along the supply side of the market, which became more global and more aggressive. Important changes in business models can be also seen in very recent times: Airbnb is maybe one of the most famous examples of this new kind of business which made the new tech opportunities its core business and became an important actor in both economic terms and in changing the vision, modality and reality of travels for consumers too*; changing habits and at the same time adapting to the changing desires of tourists. Now

technological developments focus more on capturing a single customer's wants in order to make tailor-made products and services establishing a personal relationship with the consumer¹⁰. At the same time technologies make it easier for tourists to both personalize their experience and have easier access to lower prices and information regarding the destination. The client can be followed, helped, and then monitored in the whole process of its experience, in order also to provide a unique experience in any detail. Moreover, thanks to technology also the product itself can be modified directly adding new technological components. Always more experience is integrated now with virtual reality or augmented reality which can make it easier for the consumers access to extra information or they can make consumers more protagonists in the place, or simply the opportunity of giving access to a wider range of consumers worldwide, also the ones who can't reach directly the destination physically. Other terms in which the technology the is protagonist relate to the sharing of information regarding a particular place: also in this case the consumer is fundamental to sharing pictures, reviews, and comments about a place: the word of mouth it's one of the most important drivers to the development of brand reputation.

Two of the main megatrends are a very interesting field of analysis because of their nature in finding some important solutions also through tourism management. These trends relate to urbanization and demographic changes, and environmental changes. Both very influence the society and will be in few time, and are now, some of the most discussed issues in the public opinion. Related to the demographic changes, both the migrations and the rising expectations of life, together with urbanization, is the main topic. Moreover, the Z-generation is invading the market from all around the world, making and building a society of a different kind of conception of travel as an experience, and also different kinds of experiences needed, redesigning lifestyles and social order¹¹. In this case, tourism can act as an important asset in terms of inclusivity and cultural meeting: a worldwide vision of the people who will become always more world citizens. Similarly, another trend results to be very embedded in and by tourism

¹⁰ Menstieri S., Dandini F., "Tourism & Travel: Sviluppi e Scenari Globali per il Turismo che Verrà: Outlook dei Driver e delle Tendenze del Turismo", *Town Meeting per il Piano Strategico*, 2019

¹¹ Ibid.

management practices. Environmental damages and climate change result be two of the main issues and dramatic emergencies of our century, and of which the new generation is very active in pushing policies in order to protect the environment and nature. The tourism industry's ecosystem cannot ignore this emergency: primarily because the environment is itself part of the offer, most leisure travels are determined by the willingness of visiting natural and unique sites. Moreover, the general trend in having to relax and natural-related vacancies is at the base of the new touristic demand. Direct contact with places is required and more activism is needed to appeal to the new generation, finally, although some old business models could fall, new job opportunities in terms of sustainability and environmental protection can be created: sustainability will be and currently is one of the most important priorities when it comes to managing a destination. In particular, a sustainable approach is required to avoid one of the most relevant and complex problems of the tourism industry: overtourism. In fact, the excess of tourists in some particular destinations is cause numerous sustainability problems, beyond the environmental side of erosion, pollution, and waste. This excess is also guided by the internationalization of the market, in particular of urban destinations¹². Overtourism also entails the social side, with residents' quality of life which is damaged by the huge number of tourists which creates an unsustainable quantity of people. Because of this, the response is called "undertourism" which makes as a point of strength the fact that those places are not crowded because they aren't the classical crowded and famous locations, but they are the ideal place for the ones who wanted to visit an original place without the noise and the excesses of the crowded destinations. This kind of tourism not only enhances new places and can help their prosperity, but also can take away some tourists from the crowd, making reduce the overtourism process. Nevertheless, it could result reasonable that those places should not become overcrowded too, taking care and attention to the sustainability of the local environment.

As also previously cited, the new generation in particular, but also consumers, in general, tend nowadays to be more informed and careful regarding the production and

¹² Eckert et al., Strategies and measures directed towards overtourism: a perspective of European DMOs, *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, 2019

practices of products and services providers. The social responsibility of brands and economic actors is under the eyes of public opinions and consumers who have the power not only of orienting their choices of buying one product instead of another, or in this case preferring a place rather than another one, but also the power to bring the message if a place is emotionally engaging enough, this through sharing their own experiences on the web. The major ethical priorities of the consumers, under both an environmentally friendly attitude and a social genuine interest in important issues such as cultural and traditional protection of the local communities very influence the tourism market. Traveling now focuses on a changing experience in which the consumer can learn and grow, building himself by approaching new cultures, an experience which is also permitted by platforms such as Airbnb which permits a “shared” lifestyle.

Looking at these trends some important consequences of the social and economic aspects of the tourism industry should be noted. Most of them have been already discussed above, nevertheless, other implications should be ordered in order to better analyze and give a comprehensive vision in the next sections. Looking again at the rising of emerging economies it is possible to assess many important consequences for the tourism sector: new areas can be potentially used to develop a real tourism economy also in the rural regions, which in the next future will have their market enormously rise; and enterprises, operators and actors should prepare themselves to the arrivals of more people with various tastes and priorities. At the same time, this new medium-class is developing in emerging economies, while in developed countries is declining: this created a mixture of numerous choices such as the “discount culture”, the low-cost concept (but not low quality), this, together with the fights against waste and simple consume. In tourism, the main consequences will be the expansion of low-cost air transportation, and new destinations with a smart quality/price relationship. So new investments and strategies should be guided towards medium-class markets, which are more focused on simplicity, eco-friendly products, and a kind of tourism based primarily on local culture and traditions. These different points of view and cultures nevertheless can find their common points in worldwide horizontal interest in different spheres of daily life. On one hand, it entails the consuming choices on a more ethical

concern and attention to the practices and ethicality of providers; moreover, a more shared consumption is called by peers. In practice, this translates directly into the tendency of tourists in choosing always more shared structures regarding accommodations which can also provide more spaces to work, have free time and produce together. Technological evolution perfectly supports this idea, which is giving life to very new and particular business models. Together with ethical decisions in terms of consumer choices and social sustainability support, another lens of the attention is given towards particularly a healthier and wellness-based lifestyle, a true contact with nature also through sport and outside activities. Because of this mental and physical well-being should be a priority also in tourism offers, which should find the synergy between wellness, environmental protection, territorial enhancement, local culture protection, and genuine offers at a relatively low cost. Also food in this context results as an important driver to both wellness of the tourist and the promotion and reinforcement of the culture of the region, through km0 products.

All these trends which entail primarily tourism locations, meet at the same time some changing in the process of acquiring and consuming the product/services. In particular, referring to the price, now the major trend is the willingness of tourists to consume a unique and luxury experience, but looking for a medium price, giving so the “premium” to the single service creating the perfect match between price and *premiumness*. Moreover, the different method of buying these services: numerous platforms now can offer the same products, so very important remains the single touchpoints with the consumers, particularly in service sectors (such as touristic one) the real experience still start with the process of buying. In fact, in recent years the tourism market had had many changes, starting with a tendency to totally eliminate the intermediaries, with the possibility of customers creating their own experience by themselves, until now which so-called “customized travel”¹³. The client will only make requests and give a budget and travel agents will create packages that can meet best their requests. This is because new travelers prefer to find the really true and deep knowledge and immersion of the places, also if it means going to a travel agent to find

¹³ Menstieri S., Dandini F., “Tourism & Travel: Sviluppi e Scenari Globali per il Turismo che Verrà: Outlook dei Driver e delle Tendenze del Turismo”, *Town Meeting per il Piano Strategico*, 2019

it. In this context in which travelers can see and judge so many offers and places, also before buying the experience, any kind means of communication and positioning is fundamental to the relevance of the destination, in order to create from the very first moment, a good relationship with the traveler. This perfectly also meets the new exigencies of this new kind of traveler which is constantly connected and which not only focuses on contents and emotions but also on social media engagement, basing its choices on the suggestions, pictures, and experiences which are shared online. The general idea is that new and future trends will guide a new kind of travel, which is based on the experience, feelings, emotions, and lifestyle which users will live during the vacancy period. It is on “living” which should be focused the travel operators: people now look for the travel as an experience to complete life, as a fundamental part of their own life. Because of this, together with the ethic of the travel, also the sharing vision of spaces in which working, having free time, meeting new people, and having direct contact with new cultures and stories. Travel is now an enrichment experience in which people want to come back with new propositions, ideas, and visions of the world. A kind of travel that needs and calls to be shared, told to the others, through which we can build part of our personality.

1.1.3 Destination Management Organizations

Before having a proper definition and description of what a destination management organization (DMO) is, it should be compelling and complete giving a general overview of the concept of destination and its main characteristics. Tourism destinations can be described by numerous definitions, which can enhance one or the other feature. Generally, when it comes to describing a tourist destination, the reference is usually devoted to describing a *place*, which is not necessarily a single city or region, which have political borders, but could also be comprehensive of more than one city or nation; The Alps are a perfect example of destination which is wider than a country, but at the same time that is perceived as a single place by the users, in this case, the skiers¹⁴. So it can be seen as a package, an amalgam of products that are perceived as a

¹⁴ Nguyen, L., *Towards a Model of the roles and activities of destination management organisations*, Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 2005

unicum and completely connected ecosystem by the client, in this case, the tourist. Inside the *place*, the different actors act in order to develop their own businesses, which, anyway, remain dependent on the others in the destination ecosystem. Each actor is not fully independent, so, any action should be weighted relating to the effects which could be produced on the general outcome, which, in this case, is the experience that tourists have during the travel. Obviously, these different stakeholders and actors who operate in the destination system cannot act alone without a guide, but, in order to be effective, efficient, and harmonized, very importance should be given to the coordinators of these entities. It is needed that these actors develop behaviors like true managers and that the destination should be seen as a unique “firm” with different centers of profit¹⁵. This kind of management operator is also called and defined as a Destination Management Organisation, entities which have the role of coordinating actors, and activities, but also creating and regulating relationships with the whole stakeholders of a destination. World Tourism Organisation defines DMOs as “organizations responsible for the management and/or marketing of destinations”¹⁶. This primary definition can provide some interesting insights. First of all, it is important to discuss the evolution which DMOs had from being a means of promotion, merely connected to marketing practices of a destination, to being something more, in particular related to the sustainability and competitiveness of the destination. Over time DMOs had become more and more relevant in terms of roles. Tourism is not only a matter of promotion of a place in order to attract tourists, but means local development, investments, ecological impact, job creation, and sustainability. All of these contributions which tourism gives to its territory became subject of DMOs, making the turn that M from Marketing into Management. Together with the evolution of tourism’s role, also DMOs changed functions and enlarged their own span of action, becoming the main actor, as aforementioned, in terms of creating a bridge through each stakeholder, enterprise, business, local, that is included in the management, value creation and any kind of activity related to the destination. DMOs in this framework should: create income, new wealth through taxes and employment; give a proper image to attractors and communicate facilities; coordinate industry giving a clear focus and avoiding

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

disaggregation in order to obtain common positive benefits; a representative for industries' interests; and a builder for community union and pride, enhancing primarily the quality of life and maybe pursuing to the yet discussed prosperity¹⁷.

All the activities can be grouped into two main functions of a general DMO: the External Destination Marketing and the Internal Destination Development. These two main groups suggest the two roles of these organs. On one hand, the external role, which is also the more "classical" one, of promoting to the visitors the destination, attracting and influencing the possible customers, creating curiosity and a good reputation through the word of mouth. The idea is to give a unique message of the destination in a broader sense¹⁸. Another important span of action is related to the relations with stakeholders, which has the objective to unify the whole hospitality community with the DMO itself. Another important element of the communicational side of a destination is the notion of brand. Branding, in this case, seems to be more focused on the experience and on the assurance of quality¹⁹. All these aspects are not fully under the direct control of the DMOs who should be very on the spot in becoming a strong coordinator, "shaping a common vision and developing consistent visitor experiences"²⁰ fulfilling expectations. Many stories of good results are direct consequences of a good destination branding management: all these stressed the importance of reinforcing a unique image and personality creating a true uniqueness and differentiation among competitors. Many activities of a good destination branding are already applied by most DMOs, which should, consistently with trends, also reinforce the emotional connection and reduce the consumer search cost and perceived risk, including actively more stakeholders and visitors in the range of activities²¹. On the other hand, rising importance is given to the Internal Destination Development Area, which bases its functions on coordinating and mobilizing resources across all the entities which compose the destination. It is important to enhance cooperation, also because it could be the same origin and cause of the main threat, which is the diversity

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Blain, C., Levy, S. E., & Ritchie, J. B. (2005). Destination branding: Insights and practices from destination management organizations. *Journal of travel research*, 43(4), 328-338.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

of the interests of the different stakeholders. This coordination is achieved through a series of activities. Firstly, the research results are fundamental in order to support the other activities by, for instance, analyzing the market demands and industry supply; as well as visitor management, which entails all the activities regarding the access of the visitor to the destination.

A relevant set of a DMO's activities perfectly can give an idea of the importance of these institutions when it comes to reflecting on the ideas of DMOs as drivers of local development and sustainability. Human Resources Development is based on having well-trained employees, which translates into an active role of the DMO in influencing public policies regarding education and training and conducts to better local human development of the area and its inhabitants. Resource stewardship, simultaneously, seeks to achieve the sustainability goal. A well-developed coordination system of resources and a single entity that is able to well define consumption and deployment permit having more control over these and makes it easier to avoid waste, pollution, and bio-physical erosion. Centralization is maybe the main strength of having a DMO rather than don't have it. Other advantages, in fact, are better crisis management and assisting stakeholders in financial assistance, providing insights into the whole destination's opportunities for growth, which can attract more investors. An important disclaimer that now should be done is that nevertheless, these aspects are common to all DMOs, or, at least, many of these, the "weight" which is given to any kind of activities differentiates between all the single cases. The specificity of the destinations makes the literature very discuss possible models of benchmarking, which could be useful to have an idea, but always needed a proper contextualization.

Another main area of study is related not only to the internal structure of a DMO but also to its role among stakeholders. The main objective of sustainable growth, which sees tourism as one of its most relevant players, couldn't be possible without any kind of network and collaboration between the different realities which make society as a whole. These networks gain importance in Destination Management practices, in

particular the intra destination ones²². Attention to networks and connections also meets a growing demand in culture and people as part of the tourism product, which to develop needs at this point their active cooperation. Because of this, the old management model is not able enough to be sustainable if faced with the new emergencies and trends. Big companies and the old “tourism village model” are no more matter of the new sustainability objectives which the society wants to reach for its own wellness. Stress on infrastructure, saturation and environmental degradation made everyone conscious of the risks that uncontrolled tourism can give to local communities, making service providers deteriorate themselves. A new paradigm shift is in action, having as new protagonists the local SMEs which have the natural tendency in creating Collaborative Networks in order to respond to the bigger and international players which could eclipse smaller realities²³. These networks are fundamental in the tourism sector, which needs constantly agility in order to respond to the dynamics of the market, which fits with the always higher need for a more personalistic demand by tourists. Tourism service providers all work toward the same objective: development, which is environmental, economic, and social, of the destination. Also, from a purely economic point of view: the CNs model provides more efficiency and makes it more competitive the destination, reducing costs and creating a direct connection between local providers and tourists²⁴. Although this kind of approach calls for a full decentralization of the tasks, making more collaborative and sustainable the exploitation of the resources, at the same time the aforementioned centralization remains and it is necessary under a management and coordination point of view. In this sense, DMOs are the solution to find the right balance through agreements of various nature in a system full of smaller operators, having as an outcome a distributed supply chain control and ownership, and centralized strategic plan, coordination activities, and quality delivering system of every aspect of the visitor’s experience²⁵.

²² Ammirato, S., Felicetti, A.M., Della Gala, M. (2014). Tourism Destination Management: A Collaborative Approach. In: Camarinha-Matos, L.M., Afsarmanesh, H. (eds) Collaborative Systems for Smart Networked Environments. PRO-VE 2014. IFIP Advances in Information and Communication Technology, vol 434. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-44745-1_21

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

1.2 Urban Destination Management

1.2.1 Marketing Cities: the Risk of the Sameness

When it comes to describing the wide practice of destination management, and once arrived at the main idea that some best practices can exist, the conclusion is that each destination could be also seen as a *per se* context and ecosystem. Nevertheless, some common trends have been individuated and analyzed, and some general outcomes and tendencies can unify many of the different contexts worldwide. In particular, the issues which have been just discussed in the previous paragraph are born because of globalization and internationalization practices, which, by definition, created similarities in many of these contexts.

Urban tourism can be defined as people visiting towns and cities²⁶, it has evolved passing through architectural-based tourism, to the event-based one. In any case, cities and urban districts, thanks to their variety and modernity, hosted an always larger number of tourism both international and domestic, with more economic incidence compared to the countryside and coast²⁷. Over time, urban tourism had been subject to much criticism due to its costs to the social community of the town or city involved, but benefits regarding economic development and more turnover made public and private sectors mutually reinforced. Until the very recent times, urban DMOs focused basically only on marketing practices, looking for the core mission of attracting new customers. Many studies confirmed as one of the most common models on establishing a DMO is through the form of PPP (public-private partnership), and the main expenditures have been focused on marketing and event production. A good urban destination marketing should bring in the business, and only a few of the main DMOs can reach a true “good” result. This goodness is defined by: political commitment in terms of strategies and core funding, the possession of real competitive advantage, an organization based on PPP systems, emphasis on performance, and marketing

²⁶ Heeley J., Urban Destination Marketing in Contemporary Europe – What Does “Good” Like?, International Journal of Tourism Cities, 2015

²⁷ Ibid.

orientation in order to achieve high-quality in service delivery making a true difference in terms of tourism turnover and employment²⁸.

In order to achieve all these results, the basis is for the administration, to create a DMO, the organism which makes possible the long-term approach, and of which the public should cover at least the core costs. In many cases this support is not so enhanced or given, creating ineffective structures. Moreover, many administrations could think that the investment is not worth giving enough benefits: because the destination could be “worth seeing, but not worth going to see”²⁹, without finding its true competitive advantage. Each city, conversely, can find its own advantage and also going to see a niche in the tourism market. Only once find its own advantage, marketing promotion will be effective. The PPPs structure for the DMOs results fundamental in order to achieve objectives, with more managerial autonomy and looking to performance-based management. The PPPs structures permit to obtain in one hand more involvement of private actors, which also could better know the necessities of the specific sector but also permit to remain backstepped by the public. Nevertheless, their public influence, DMOs organized as PPPs remain more similar to a business rather than a public institution.

Another interesting insight when it comes to analyze the Urban Tourism field is about the marketing, which was the primary role of DMOs. Marketing of cities, although it is noble the intent of creating a value through representing the niche and particularity of the destination, fails at the moment in which the *sameness* is pursued. In contrast to the theory, according to which the DMO should enhance the particularity and singularity of the destination; the theory which also had met over time the confirmation of the customers and “new” market necessities, in practice DMOs, arrive in marketing the sameness, getting similar images of town and cities. This happens also because public leadership and DMO itself could be unaware of the importance of uniqueness, which is fundamental, and pressure for sameness could come from partners and industries³⁰ which are guided by their own interests. In this case, it results in the importance of the

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

ability of the DMO on having also a lobbying nature, trying to drive all the actors towards destination interests as a whole. Nevertheless, most times it results in “all things to all people”. In contrast to the theory, nevertheless, even in those cases in which theory was followed by DMOs, so differentiating and seeking true competitive advantage, not a significant impact was registered. It should also be noted that these assumptions and objectives, which very look to the “numbers”, entail the definition of DMO merely in the marketing area. More recent studies suggest the importance of a wider role of DMOs, going very far from the “number logic” and looking more at impact, which includes also the marketing objectives.

1.2.2 Overtourism and Sustainable Tourism

Although the numerous advantages that tourism can offer, in urban realities the excess in the presence of tourists, is going to rise because of many of the trends which have been described in the previous paragraph and which generate a potential never-ending stream of new tourists, had been created and still creates one of the main issues of the industry: the overtourism. This particular issue affects all the areas which, conversely, the new strategies of sustainable tourism seek to enhance and defend. Memorable cases of cities which face overtourism are Barcelona, Berlin, and Milan... which have to confront problems of affordable housing, limited capacities of infrastructures, and increased immersion of tourism in the life of the locals³¹. Overtourism means going above the carrying capacity of the destination, which can be also traced by different components: physical, ecological, economic, infrastructural, social, and perceptual³². In practice, it results in numerous problems of environmental damage, cultural degradation, local economies destabilization, and lower exceptional moments for tourists. All these factors create dissatisfaction in both locals and tourists which will see both less quality of life for the first and low quality of the experience for the latter. The necessity now for urban destinations relies on finding new ways of interacting between tourists and locals, DMOs’ role is to be a bridge to finding new ways and becoming designers and accelerators of this sustainable regional

³¹ Eckert et al., Strategies and Measures Directed Towards Overtourism: a Perspective of European DMOs, International Journal of Tourism Cities, 2019

³² Ibid.

development³³. This could happen not only by negotiating and making converge the diverse interests of actors that can conflict in terms of economic vs. ecologic choices but also by informing local society of the positive effects of tourism (if well managed). Overtourism discussion is mainly related to urban contexts, in particular where the problem has been already underlined by the media. In these cases, some first actions have been taken, such as restrictions and fees. The important lesson which gave the overtourism case is successful tourist indicators cannot be only based on increasing numerical growth³⁴, and this conclusion also helps in developing a framework in which DMOs aren't anymore simply marketing organizations, but, take the role of important strategic actors in terms of management.

The role of DMOs results, after this long analysis, being in primary line for the promotion and implementation of Sustainable Development. This objective requires necessarily collaboration between the public sector, a private one, and the local community. In order to enhance this collaboration, it is strongly fundamental making an analysis of the key stakeholders, analyzing the network of the destination. Urban destinations are characterized by a complex web of stakeholders³⁵, which differentiate in nature, objectives, and area of interest, which can be diverse and also conflictual. In this case, it is important not only to individuate the key actors which are legitimated by their network position. The centrality is fundamental and represents how well connected is the actor inside the network: a good centrality can give access to more information, and gives the power to manage exchanges with also the less central entities³⁶. This role had been given from the literature to DMOs, and it is one of the main tasks which these entities should accomplish in order to pass from a marketing to a more management perspective. In fact, it could be impossible to imagine truly sustainable development without effective collaboration and a chain of relations among single stakeholders. Moreover, also as reminded in the previous paragraph, both the ideas of decentralization of operational activities and enhancing local economic

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Timur S., Getz D., A network perspective on managing stakeholders for sustainable urban tourism, International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 2008

³⁶ Ibid.

realities, fits with the idea of a strong local network which at the same time necessitates the intermediation and management of a central entity that can set strategies and allocate resources. Timur and Getz's study shows an important fact in the current networks: DMOs are at the center of any network analyzed, but other critical stakeholders change according to the single destination³⁷. This finding supports the idea that destination management is very complex because of its specific nature: any destination is diverse by others, and although they could find similar issues, e.g. overtourism, maybe the solution could be diverse for any of these. Also, the size of the destination is an important variable, a larger size determines a more complex bow of relationships, with fewer and limited relationships³⁸. Results also demonstrate that DMOs have the highest centrality, which is the ability to manage information and influence others, having an advanced position also in terms of dependency. Other stakeholders depend upon DMOs which maintain enough influence for taking decisions and setting the goals. This influence makes it possible and realistic that DMOs are the first and best actors in terms of local sustainable development, also hotel sector is seen as an influential stakeholder, as a major contributor to the superstructure of urban destinations, which results dependent on that product³⁹.

Sustainability development is the main way in order to better fight against the overtourism issues in urban destinations: setting goals in terms of environment protection, social inclusion and development, and cultural maintenance is the best way to develop the destination without affecting negatively the resources which make unique the destination itself. Moreover, this trend has not only captured the attention of the supply side but also of the demand one: customers are more careful regarding policies about environmental protection and are always more in need of very natural and local-based experiences in order to be deeply in contact with the real soul of the destination. These two main issues and trends, having also in mind the general megatrends of more communication, enlargement of medium class in developing countries, and decentralization by the "old" classic tourism industry system with global

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

international players, find their solutions in DMOs. These entities, which were born with an idea of promotion and marketing, used to have a marginal role, and many times failed in their objectives of enlarging customer numbers by falling into the “marketing of sameness”. The idea of sustainable tourism and generally speaking thanks to the literature studies and observations, became the central managerial actor. Thanks to their nature of being a bridge between private, public, and community, their centrality position in social networks permits them on representing the perfect actor for the management (and not only marketing anymore) of the whole destination contacts and internal relationships. The main success is unifying all the different interests, giving the market an image of a unique, aligned, and well-organized proposition, which can follow the tourist in all the passages of the vacation, and which finds in the perfect, unique, and real experience of the customer, its best result.

1.2.3. Tourism Governance and Planning

Another interesting level of analysis that could be created in this pattern regards particularly the evolution over time of the idea and subject of Tourism Governance and Planning. The aforementioned megatrends are not only a tool for mere analyses and summaries of socio-economic tendencies, but they heavily influence all the tourism-related disciplines. Looking more to the governance of tourism, some studies focused on these specific issues and characteristics of governance, also helping in better understanding some nodes which the simple literature regarding tourism management, trends, and sustainability had not yet untied. Nobody can deny the importance which that public intervention has in tourism funding and policymaking. Nevertheless, the roles are constantly changing, remembering that tourism depends on social circumstances, which makes a pertinent issue the effectiveness of institutions⁴⁰. Moreover, it is also fundamental to remember that policymaking is not only an internal process given by analyses of the results but the sector is strongly influenced by the external forces from which a response should be taken. Economic and social development guide the general lines of tourism governance: the economic ratio of

⁴⁰ Ramikissoon, H., & Hristov, D. (2018). Tourism institutions and agencies. In C. Cooper, S. Volo, & W. C. Gartner (Eds.), *The sage handbook of tourism management* (pp. 485-501). SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526461452.n29>

exploiting the value of tourism products (destinations) should meet the social development one, in which the creation of community ties and local cultures centrality needs a more educational approach towards stakeholders by the coordinator and the institution⁴¹. It has been mentioned many times above that the role of DMOs in this process of being a central node in networks setting direction and strategic objectives for the destination development, but it should be also mentioned the political involvement of tourism institutions which are basically influenced by government officials and politicians⁴².

Trust is another element that is very interconnected with the power one which acts on one hand as a means of government, on the other hand as an antecedent for destination loyalty. Having trust means good effectiveness in the governance system, and its role is so important it can drive changes in practices and governance models. In particular, looking at the network-based models⁴³, trust in governments plays a key role in influencing tourism policies⁴³. Also, policy networks act as a non-hierarchical structure, in which trust is the base for collaboration and towards which DMOs tend to incorporate because they “recognize the resource and knowledge interdependency within their network”⁴⁴. Although the trust element could be present and strong in a network, the conflicting interests remain one of the most complex issues for which a DMO is essential to drive the sector. Another key theme is the governance for sustainability which requires a tailored and effective action by innovation and cross-disciplinary frameworks⁴⁵. The governance paradigm for tourism is now shifting: passing from a government organization-based model to a one more based on networks and partnerships, which many times looks to the private businesses in a “more commercial approach to destination, where trust and power remain essential to develop

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ de Araujo, L., & Scott, N. (2018). Tourism governance. In C. Cooper, S. Volo, & W. C. Gartner (Eds.), *The sage handbook of tourism management* (pp. 524-537). SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526461452.n31>

committed relationships, specifically with regards to the governance of tourism activities and stakeholder's management"⁴⁶.

The objective of this literature analysis is to have a clear understanding of the trends, roles, previous studies, and what currently is happening regarding tourism management and the role of government and DMOs. Before going through a deeper analysis of single cases in which DMOs will be studied, an important mention should be made regarding tourism planning. This argument is intrinsically connected with both urban and local planning, nevertheless, tourism goes beyond the mere territorial planning, including also economic and social dynamics⁴⁷. Tourism planning, moreover, "emerged as a need to bring a better balance between the economic objectives of tourism"⁴⁸, this because of during time tourism has evolved both in numbers, and it is still happening, with an always more numerous plethora of tourists, and in economic and environmental impact. Since the 1990s tourism became an important development tool⁴⁹ with which the government had the opportunity to evolve from classical product-based logic, to one which looks more to experience. This willingness needs to be possible through planning. Different models and visions had been discussed and analyzed over time; models which had evolved from the rational model, more technical, to the systemic which stays between the organization of the territory and the way in which economic agents operate in the tourism economy⁵⁰, bridging between the territory and the business; product models, differently, have a more market-oriented approach, trying to specify the destination and segment it. The complexity of the tourism phenomenon had been tried to be included in these models; nevertheless, the necessity of also identifying effective future-oriented planning had given origin to the

⁴⁶ Ramikissoon, H., & Hristov, D. (2018). Tourism institutions and agencies. In C. CooperS. Volo, & W. C. Gartner The sage handbook of tourism management (pp. 485-501). SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526461452.n29>

⁴⁷ Costa, C., & Brandão, F. (2018). Tourism planning: evolution and trends for the future. In C. CooperS. Volo, & W. C. Gartner The sage handbook of tourism management (pp. 538-555). SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526461452.n32>

⁴⁸ Costa, C. (2020), "Tourism planning: a perspective paper", *Tourism Review*, Vol. 75 No. 1, pp. 198-202. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-09-2019-0394>

⁴⁹ Costa, C., & Brandão, F. (2018). Tourism planning: evolution and trends for the future. In C. CooperS. Volo, & W. C. Gartner The sage handbook of tourism management (pp. 538-555). SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526461452.n32>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Strategic models, associating the previous ones with a strategic vision of the future⁵¹. Looking to the most recent trends, tourism planning will change giving always more attention to the management of overtourism in historic towns, which will be more relevant; a holistic perspective of tourism, which will be totalizing in terms of time; uniqueness of destination will make their success and their ability on giving something more to the tourism⁵². Tourism planning will face and is facing an always more convergence of political tourism governance and economics and management of the tourist sector, which are always more interconnected⁵³.

Again, DMOs seem to be the structures through which all these issues, plans, objectives, and strategies could be fulfilled. Their nature of connectors, information hubs, strategists, and resource allocators give them the opportunity to become the structures that are at the basis of both touristic and urban development. The objective of this work is trying to identify the best practices and management tools of some of the most important European DMOs in order to develop a scheme for giving a future DMO to the city of Rome. In the next section the process of benchmarking of destinations and DMOs will be described by analyzing different existing models. Then, a novel model will be explained and utilized for the desk analysis of the three DMOs chosen (visitBerlin, London & Partners, and Vienna Tourist Board). Finally, some conclusions are going to be extracted with an eye to their application to the reality of Rome.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Costa, C. (2020), "Tourism planning: a perspective paper", *Tourism Review*, Vol. 75 No. 1, pp. 198-202. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-09-2019-0394>

⁵³ Ibid.

PART II. Models of Analysis: Destinations and DMOs. A Novel Approach.

The complexity of the tourist industry and its management has been made evident in the previous section, which tries to sum up many areas and the main hot topics of the current debate regarding how and if DMOs management can be effective in tourism and territorial development. In order to solve these questions, over time many models had been created and theorized regarding both destinations and DMOs. Now some existing models will be analyzed and a novel structure will be introduced. From the following analyses, important conclusions will be driven out to develop the best possible idea for the development of the city of Rome and its own new DMO. Activities of benchmarking are fundamental in order to obtain the best base from which this novel institution could start. So, in this chapter, a deep analysis of the best practices of three DMOs will be conducted. The model which will be used is a novel approach in description and comparison of the different structures, strategic priorities, and implementations between different DMOs.

2.1 Destination Models

In the previous chapter, an analysis of trends, roles, and main issues of urban tourism and DMOs have been made in order to better have sufficient know-how of the current landscape and environment in which DMOs act. Benchmarking is an important process and step of industry analyses, through creating a benchmark, best practices and indicators of industry leaders are compared with the other actors in the sector⁵⁴. Tourism benchmarking, in particular destination one, is the subject of relatively recent studies, which had been pushed by the EU since 1997 with the “Integrated Quality Management of Tourism Destinations” and whose aim was to create some quality standards including both demand and supply-side indicators⁵⁵. Benchmarking remains also in the tourism case the technique through which is it possible to identify the leader in terms of practices and performance and fill the gaps by changing the practices if

⁵⁴ Assaf, A. G., & Dwyer, L. (2013). Benchmarking international tourism destinations. *Tourism Economics*, 19(6), 1233-1247.

⁵⁵ Kozak, M. (2002). Destination benchmarking. *Annals of tourism research*, 29(2), 497-519.

necessary, going beyond the location⁵⁶. Performance remains at the center of the benchmarking idea which sees good performance as strongly related to customer satisfaction. These two concepts are in fact interrelated because good performance is the one that creates more satisfaction in the customer, the destination with the highest satisfaction is the one which should be taken as standard, and others with less level of performance should imitate the leader⁵⁷. Nevertheless, it should be considered how different are the customers between the different destinations: it is erroneous to compare different kinds of customers who could have decided on one destination instead of another not necessarily because of the less performance of the latter. The individuation and analyses of best practices cannot ignore the many differences which can occur between destinations, also in terms of culture, background, and traditions⁵⁸. All of these variables make difficult more linear and direct confrontations between destinations, which, nevertheless, can meet in the DMOs practices analyses a good terrain in which bridging through a model could be possible. Additional integrations can be made through the element of sustainability, which, over time, has taken the lead in being the main goal in terms of destination development. Also considering the evolution of the role of DMOs, a benchmark model can't refuse the idea of trying to include all the different and wide nature of these actors, which are now the main ruler in terms of coordination, management, and resource allocation.

Diverse models over time had tried to manage and benchmark destinations and/or DMOs. Basically, some important analyses had been based on productivity and competitiveness, moreover, the new sustainable paradigm had been making introduced this new measure as an integration of models and quality assessment tools. Given all the different complications which a destination can comport: less "natural" comparative advantages, more competitiveness, and rapid transformation, a mere list of competitive factors is not sufficient to analyze a destination, but it is necessary to integrate the

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

relationships and interplay between factors of competitiveness within a systemic model⁵⁹.

2.1.1 Ritchie and Crouch Competitive Model

In order to solve this issue and include any particularity in a model that, nevertheless, should remain synthetic, Ritchie and Crouch developed a *conceptual model of destination competitiveness* which enhances the link between tourism and quality of life, and the significance of the destination competitiveness concept⁶⁰. The model firstly puts the destination inside a global environment and into a competitive one. Both should be monitored constantly, because changes in these two sides could imply adaptation and changes inside the destination, and management, in order to maintain competitiveness. The main and fundamental element for the competitiveness of the destination is the Core Resources and Attractors. These represent the key elements that make tourists choose one destination instead of another and in particular relate to natural environment and climate, which could create particular aesthetics and on which there is little control by humans; historical and cultural span, in particular, the local one which should be exalted in order to be unique. While these two elements cannot be influenced by the management, other activities such as market ties, activities, and special events are influenced by both the management and the actors of a destination. In particular activities and events should be very focused on the local culture and residents, remaining also a very wide space for creativity and initiatives of diverse genres and looking for an international resonance, but without falling into the aforementioned “marketing of the sameness”. The final element which could be taken into consideration is the tourism superstructure, on which DMOs can exert good control and which can be considered as the multitude of productive actors of the industry, comprehensive of food and transportation facilities. All these core elements couldn't operate properly if not supported by resources which through a secondary effect can provide the foundation for successful tourism industry⁶¹. In particular, infrastructures and facilities can be a good support in creating more sense of enterprise,

⁵⁹ Crouch G. I., Brent Ritchie J.R., “Tourism, Competitiveness, and Societal Prosperity”, *Journal of Business Research* 44, 137 – 152, 1999

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

which permits more SMEs and competitiveness, which, accordingly, can lead to a better quality of life. Above all these “sub-structure” operated the management itself. This implies that the managerial actor (e.g. DMOs) should work in order to better use and enhance the value of resources and attractors. The main actions of management over time evolved very far from the simple marketing area, promotion and targeting; but it has arrived to include many activities of servicing, information, and resource stewardship. The last elements regarding the effective potential are the qualifying determinants, or situational conditions, which by definition affect the experience and the general potential and limits of a destination: location, dependency, safety, and costs, and which can be influenced by other and bigger international socio-economic trends⁶². Nevertheless, Crouch and Ritchie’s model is an important base for the evolution of the topic, in particular considering the many issues and difficulties which benchmarking destinations could include. It is not a case that more recently this model had been integrated applying the sustainability element to the Ritchie’s work arriving to this novel version⁶³ showed in Figure 1:

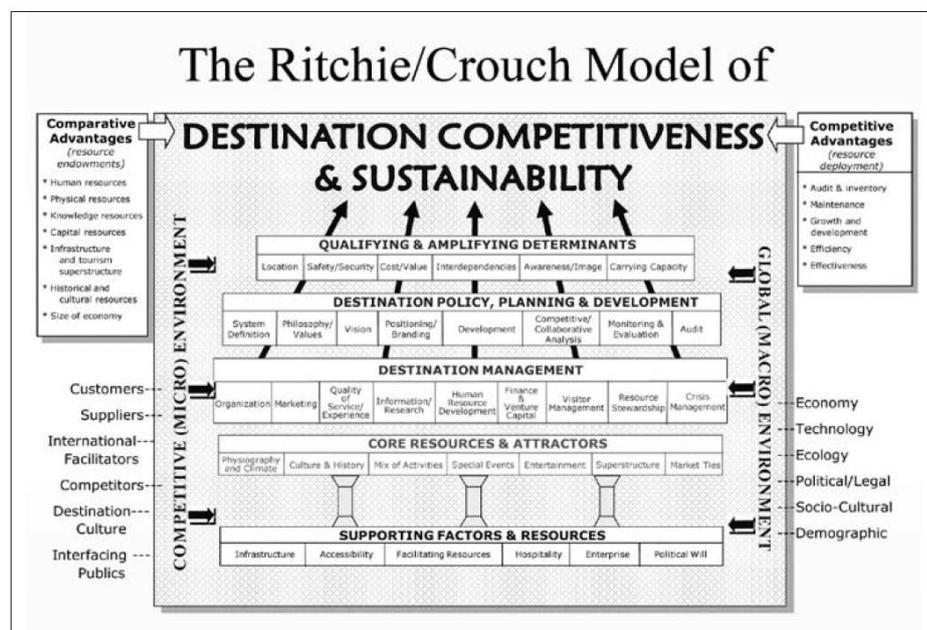


Figure 1: Ritchie & Crouch Model for Destination Competitiveness. Source: Ritchie (2010)

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ritchie, J. R., & Crouch, G. I. (2010). A model of destination competitiveness/sustainability: Brazilian perspectives. *Revista de Administração Pública*, 44(5), 1049-1066.

2.1.2 Integrated Model for Sustainability

Over time the topic of sustainability had been always more included and had become the main objective and policy of political and managerial entities. Concepts such as carrying capacities and effective resources management and allocation entered into the basic language of the “good” management practices. In this sense, a more modern version of the competitive model could be constructed, integrated with sustainable policies, and that enhances the long-term competitiveness and vision of a destination⁶⁴. Moreover, also keeping in mind the classical definition of competitiveness, it couldn't be correct enough not to include in the competitive analysis also key stakeholders such as tourists and internal ones, which need the maintenance and development in the long term for the attractiveness and competitiveness of the destination. It is a practice, of tourist sustainable development, which could address both the present and future needs of tourists as well as host communities⁶⁵, including the aforementioned concept of prosperity which could remain towards proper management of environmental resources. Together, residents' attitudes, tastes of tourists, and social and economic problems at both micro and macro scale can reduce the competitiveness of a destination; because of this, of great importance is considering all these factors simultaneously. Only by considering all the stakeholders involved and trying in finding a good balance and harmony, it is possible to achieve successful tourism development. This is important because the competitiveness itself is both given by the belief that tourists have regarding the experience in a destination and the satisfaction of stakeholders and actors within the destination. If management is weak and doesn't provide good performance in giving attention and monitoring environmental and social problems, in the long run also the better known and famous destinations could suffer from decreasing in quality of services and attractors and consequently in the number of visitors⁶⁶. In order to avoid this negative epilogue, many models which include the sustainability paradigm had been created. One of these could be taken as an example, in which it is possible to analyze contributory factors in

⁶⁴ Nadalipour, Z., Imani Khoshkhoo, M.H. and Eftekhari, A.R. (2019), "An integrated model of destination sustainable competitiveness", *Competitiveness Review*, Vol. 29 No. 4, pp. 314-335.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

destination competitiveness and their relationship⁶⁷. The sustainable objective should be realized in all the different categories simultaneously obtaining real and consistent positive impacts. In this model five areas are analyzed and evaluated, as also displayed in Figure 2: economic competitiveness; sociocultural competitiveness; environmental competitiveness; sustainable policy-making and management; tourists' satisfaction and behaviors⁶⁸. It is interesting to analyze that this model follows a division of areas that differs from Crouch and Ritchie's model and enhances the competitiveness according to different thematic areas which then included more specific aspects of the destination. Economic competitiveness is included enterprises, infrastructures, jobs, and prosperity, while in the sociocultural all the cultural attractions, but also hospitality and security-related actors. Environmental relates to the ability of resources, and energy management, together with the natural attractions and climate. A last important element is that in this model also the demand side has been included⁶⁹, tourists' satisfaction and behaviors are very related to sustainability and competitiveness, and their actions can determinedly influence the supply side too, also considering that the stakeholders have the decisional power in the destination and their consciousness regarding the

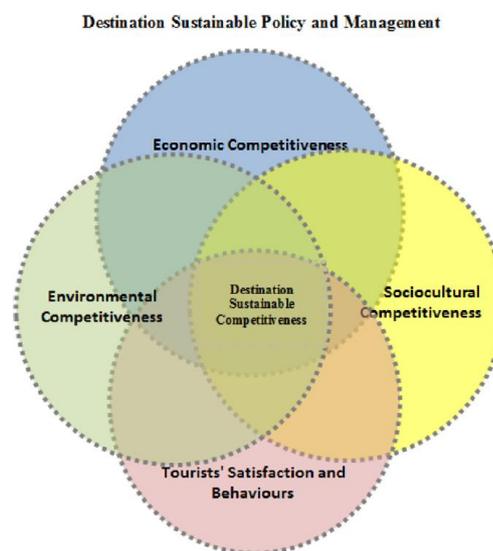


Figure 2: Sustainable Competitiveness Management Model. Source: Nadalipour (2019)

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

importance of tourism and its positive effects on economic development and societal prosperity affects the attractiveness of destinations. This model has the merit of contributing to a mixed evaluation of sustainability and competitiveness, but obviously, it can also be adapted to the specificities which each destination can present.

2.1.3 Assaf's Productivity Model

A final model which can be analyzed in the literature is based on different roots. Considering the growing importance of the tourism industry as a contributor to national economies, it had become of primary importance to measure and benchmark the productivity of the whole industry in order to evaluate tourism sustainability and reshape tourism activities⁷⁰. Moreover, it should be also considered when it comes to studying productivity that international destinations are heterogeneous, because of this, a good model should take into consideration this aspect. These kinds of studies are more focused on numeric data over environmental and managerial considerations. The productivity model considers many measures to analyze the input and outputs of a destination: starting from these, different locations are grouped according to the worldwide travel and tourism competitiveness index, in order to entail the heterogeneity, and having a “fair” benchmarking. Inputs taken in consideration are the number of employees, capital investments made by governments, and the total number of accommodations; as outputs, it had been used the number of international tourists, total number of domestic tourists, and length of stay of both categories⁷¹. The productivity model represents a different way of benchmarking destinations considering that the competitive model still remains a good and reliable way of assessing destination management and environment. Nevertheless, these model which had been discussed are still based on a destination paradigm and includes DMOs as an actor within the model itself, but without being models through which it is possible to benchmark the DMO too.

⁷⁰ Assaf, A. G., & Dwyer, L. (2013). Benchmarking international tourism destinations. *Tourism Economics*, 19(6), 1233-1247.

⁷¹ Ibid.

2.1.4 Bornhorst Model

It could be enough thinking that a model for the destination benchmarking could act as a basis for the good practices of DMOs. In the literature, few models also for the DMOs exist, in particular, there is a lack of investigations regarding their role and studies about determinants of their success⁷². The main challenge of DMOs is the one of transforming a fragmented industry such as tourism into a consistent product, moreover, as discussed previously, the formation of networks with the DMO as a manager is another element in order to give a unique direction and enhance sustainable development and, then, competitiveness. Because of this central role of DMOs, it results fundamentally not only analyzing the destination, its environment, and potential, but also directly the DMO of that destination, its contribution to the development of the destination, and how this contribution is successful or not⁷³. In order to analyze how properly a DMO should work, it is possible to base on how it could be evaluated successfully by its stakeholder. The Bornhorst model uses as main dimensions the networking capabilities in promoting internal stakeholder relations; performing activities in professional manners; sufficient personnel and funding; and transparent evidence of performance⁷⁴. Another part of this model focuses on the governance authority and hierarchies. Traditional management approaches could be ineffective in an environment that is characterized by many independent actors, which also could not want to collaborate. Because of this, another element is the ability of the DMO in creating and enhancing collective interests. The cooperation degree affects DMO success, and the networking capability gave it power and authority, which, in this case, can be considered socially acceptable, and thus, positive to DMO success⁷⁵. From the analysis of this model, the main idea which can be carried out is that the success of the destination is closely linked to the DMOs one, which can lead to an increase in competitiveness for the whole destination⁷⁶. With his model Bornhorst arrives more to

⁷² Michael Volgger, Harald Pechlaner, Requirements for destination management organizations in destination governance: Understanding DMO success, *Tourism Management*, Volume 41, 2014, Pages 64-75, ISSN 0261-5177, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.09.001>.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

demonstrate that, not completely, but in an important measure, DMOs success and Destinations one has common roots, seeing also to the DMOs as the only “organization that currently has the ability to develop both holistic strategies to deal with the multitude of stakeholders involved in the tourism system and to develop marketing programs that will draw visitors to the destination”⁷⁷. Figure 3 can easily give a logic and summarized view of the functioning of this framework:

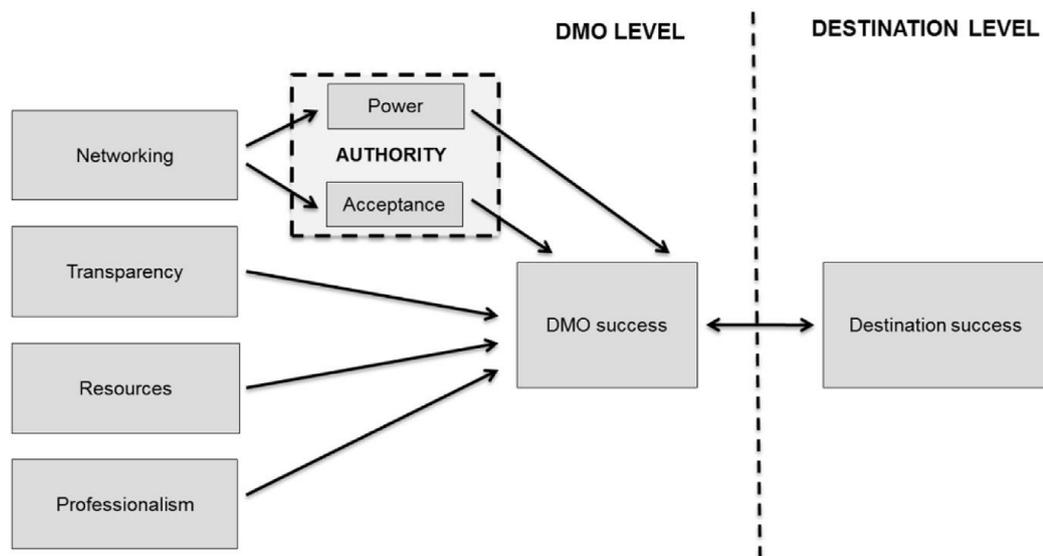


Figure 3: Bornhorst Model for DMOs success. Source: Bornhorst (2010)

Although the structure of this model can be valid to assess good destination management, another model had been developed in order to enrich the literature regarding the benchmarking of DMOs.

2.2 Case Analysis: confronting three DMOs.

The literature regarding the analysis model of the Destination Management Organizations, their role, and functioning has been created in the very recent times, and still this field results without a true dominant approach. In particular, many of the models are always developed on the destination and seldom on the Organizations which

⁷⁷ Tom Bornhorst, J.R. Brent Ritchie, Lorn Sheehan, Determinants of tourism success for DMOs & destinations: An empirical examination of stakeholders' perspectives, *Tourism Management*, Volume 31, Issue 5, 2010, Pages 572-589, ISSN 0261-5177, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.06.008>

have the mandate of managing these. This innovative model can try to provide a more internal and deep vision of the DMO. Bornhorst, in fact, very focused his study on trying to assess the success factors of DMOs and their influence on destination success too. The model which has been developed for this research, differently, is very focused on the Organization, looking more at the qualitative analyses of each DMO, permitting also to estimate comparisons between them.

2.2.1 Methodology

The research which will be developed in this paragraph has been carried on by profound research of the main information by looking at websites, articles, and reports of the three DMOs. Once looked at the websites of each, which are comprehensive of almost all the information needed for completing the schemes of analysis, it has been commented on and explained the results. As many times told during the study, this model has the objective of being a collector of information in order to, then, give a punctual analysis and confrontation which aim to set a benchmark.

This analysis will be conducted on three mains European DMOs, each having both similarities and differences from which some assumptions and “rules” can be traced. The three organizations analyzed are

- 1) visitBerlin;
- 2) the Vienna Tourist Board;
- 3) London & Partners.

This choice is guided by both the reputation that these entities have internationally and by the necessity of having consistent parallelism between the general environment of the destinations in which the DMOs operate and the one in which the conclusions of this analysis will be used and developed.

Thanks to the model, the deep analysis and confrontation of the structure, policies, and objectives of the DMOs can be commented on and used in order to have a clear framework in which the best practices and benchmarking can be developed. Moreover,

with the results of the analysis, it is then possible also to develop a SWOT analysis of the different DMOs, in particular evaluating them separately can provide us with a good lens on both strengths and weaknesses of these realities.

This original tool can provide more insights and points of view, permitting comparisons between different European DMOs and giving the opportunity of trying to develop a scheme of the best practices. The objective of the further analysis is to find critical factors which lead the DMOs to success. The model which will be used tries to entail different dimensions of a DMO, but at the same time also provides a scheme that can be read and which permits a rapid difference overview. Structurally, more tables are used as summaries of key information, which, if fulfilled, can provide the researcher with a complete framework of the entire institution in terms of structure, governance, policies, and network.

In the first table (the whole model is presented in complete form in Appendix A), the organization model and account data are analyzed: type of company, which can be private or public. Shareholders, which can suggest from who main funds come. Finally, the main balance sheet data, which, if published, can be the very first ideal performance-related data regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization itself. The second panel is focused on governance and composition. It is important in this sense to look to the Administrative Organ, the Governance Style, the Composition of the organ, and the members' backgrounds. Composition and governance in the cases of DMOs, and in particular of this study, result crucial to develop in future section an ideal structural model for novel organizations. Because of the same objective, the model subsequently presents the organizational chart of the DMOs, through which more evaluations can be conducted. The third panel is more oriented toward the intentions and actions of these realities. In fact, purpose, or mission, is presented, followed by the institutional mandate and the strategic objectives. The choice of these three variables could result obvious. Setting a strategy that should lead all the tourist actors of a destination is a standing point of a DMO. Moreover, by analyzing different purposes and objectives, it is possible to make comparisons between different kinds of mentalities which are at the basis of the strategic patterns of each organization. A fourth panel is comprehensive of the other two main souls of a DMO if inspired by the "good

rules” that the aforementioned studies and literature provide. In fact, having an idea of who the main stakeholders of a DMO are, is a basis to understand which kind of institutions or companies are the better partners and allies the organization should have. Secondly, giving a look at the main key or success factors is another method to better study the DMOs. It is necessary underlying that success factors not only depend on entity practices, but also on the environment in which this entity act, and on which policies and strategies should be constructed on. The final area is wide and divides activities following the pattern:

- 1) Data Management & Business Intelligence;
- 2) Sustainable Tourism Strategy;
- 3) Destination Marketing;
- 4) Advocacy & Lobbying;
- 5) Tourism Product Development.

All these activities can be evaluated as policies that the DMO can implement directly when it sets the practices once the strategy had been chosen. Nevertheless, it is necessary to modulate these practices and their efficiency also according to the other dimensions of the model, and, in particular, also looking at the destination itself. The research in this specific study will be applying this new model to a set of three international DMOs which operates in three different European capitals and analyzing them. Then, the results will be used to develop a SWOT analysis and take the results in order to create a pool of best practices that will be used as a benchmark for future DMOs projects.

This analysis results functional in creating a benchmark for the assessment and the further development of the Roman DMO, which will be discussed in the final section of this thesis. The main objective in this case is both collecting information regarding effective DMOs, confronting them, and finally taking the best practices, which are applied by almost each of the analyzed DMOs, and finally giving a complete insight of the Roman DMO draft, to which suggestions and assessment will be provided.

2.2.2 Analysis and Facts. The Cases of Vienna, Berlin, and London.

2.2.2.1 Organization and Account Data.

Looking at the structural side, the kind of companies chosen reflects perfectly the literary analysis of the previous chapter, finding the *Non-Profit Public-Private Partnerships* as one of the most efficient and used organizational models, together with the idea of driving on a non-profit base. The choice of being a PPP (Public-Private-Partnership) is consistent with the literature, which, as mentioned in the first part, is one of the most effective kinds of structures that the organization could choose. The necessity of remaining a public company is, in this way, incorporated into the necessity of the DMO on being a bridge between the public, administrative, and private sectors. At the same time, the private nature permits managerial autonomy and corporate value. It is not a case that all the three DMOs are organized following this prototype. Shareholders in both cases of visitBerlin and London & Partners are mainly statal entities and organs. The first includes the public authority, trade fair, investment bank, the airport, the regional DMO, and the hotel association. The latter travel association, chamber of commerce and the society of theatre and hospitality. The Viennese only the public organ (City of Vienna). The presence of not only a single statal shareholder (at least in two out of three elements), but of a multitude of different investors justifies the idea that these novel structures should enhance a wide engagement of the different realities of tourism, which is at the basis of numerous characteristics which it will be found later. Looking at the profit, all the earnings should be used to reinvent the activities and invest more in local development, without any profitable intention. Also, this choice is surely a strength point of all the three organizations: public money is necessary to fund these structures, which, however, can also base on a considerable part of their money coming from reinvestments of earnings, as happens in the case of Visit Berlin⁷⁸. The same happens, in minor part, also in Vienna Tourist Board and London & Partners. Public funding is necessary to permit the true sense of these structures: acting as a value creator through the networking and connection of the whole touristic supply chain, generating more profit, jobs, and development. The other data regarding

⁷⁸ <https://www.gstcouncil.org/berlin-joins-gstc/#:~:text=visitBerlin%20is%20funded%20by%20the,in%20promotional%20campaigns%20for%20Berlin.>

shareholders and sheet insights can provide a general idea that all the three companies register both high income and costs, in particular, the Vienna Tourist Board registered 2019 superior costs, which reinforces the idea that the public should remain the main source of funding for these kinds of entities, which sometimes could not earn enough money by themselves. The numbers directly show how important these businesses represent for the economics of these cities: all the three DMOs have funding and earnings which stay around twenty million euros/pounds. An investment like this is justified by the numerous demonstrations that the empirical studies and the theoretical literature had given over time about the importance of tourism as a generator of both social and economic development.

2.2.2.2 Governance and Administration.

Looking at the Administrative and Managerial roles, the three agencies are organized through committees or boards, which are composed of numerous people. The use of boards and committees is not a case: these entities should accord and maintain active constant attention to the different interests of the whole industry, and always more and more diverse expertise is required. Because of this, the organization in boards and committees can permit a better preparation in many areas, and it's also evident looking at the different backgrounds which have the numerous management actors in these DMOs: men of politics, communicators, managers, members of finance and education realities, mainly young people are chosen. More particularly in the case of visitBerlin, the Supervisory Board is composed of nine members appointed by the different shareholders including the Land of Berlin. In the case of the Vienna Board, the Province of Vienna directly appoints the president and 14 members out of 17, while the other 3 are appointed by other public organs (Economic Chamber, Chamber of Labour, and Chamber of Agriculture)⁷⁹. Moreover, governance is given practically to five distinct departments, namely: Destination Management, Brand Management, Market Management, Media House, and Commercial Services. London & Partners results are less government-oriented, the Mayor of London appoints only the chairmen and one director, and the others are appointed by the members⁸⁰.

⁷⁹ <https://geschaeftsbericht2019.wien.info/en-us/article/struktur--budget>

⁸⁰ <https://www.londonandpartners.com/about-us/how-we-are-run>

In the model which is proposed, an analysis also of the organizational structures is necessary before looking at the practices themselves. It is important to notice the different styles in which the DMO is organized. In this specific case, the three companies are not so very differently organized and structured. London & Partners is a more developed likely a private company, with a CEO and the different directors. Same visitBerlin, in which the CEO is supported by the public body (Representative for Cultural Affairs) and the Marketing coordination. In this case, is evident how the marketing role is considered as important as the direction itself, it appears both on an upper and then on a lower level. In the case of the Vienna Tourist Board, the public hand is more relevant, the president is the Vienna's Executive City Councillor of Finance, Business, Digital Innovation, and International Affairs, and together the supervisory board and the expert committees are above the Managing Director, who directly relates with the five operational areas.

2.2.2.3 Purpose, Institutional Mandate, and Strategic Objectives.

Looking at the different missions, they focus on different ideas which, together, are an extremely relevant role in how DMOs are conceptualized in literature. Looking at visitBerlin the purpose is to inspire the world for Berlin, promoting the city as one of the main European destinations, Vienna's Board looks more for the objective of experiencing the city and a very important focus on the visitor economy as a contribution to the city's quality. London & Partners focuses more on the sustainability side, looking for "good" growth for Londoners and London⁸¹, but there's also a look on resilience and inclusivity.

The mandate justifies in some sense the power and the roles which are attributed to the DMO in order to fulfill its objectives. The visitBerlin mandate describes the company as the "official promotional organization for tourism and conventions visitBerlin produces creative ideas and marketing campaigns for Berlin delivered around the world"⁸², and, then, "We also provide support services for all those joining us in actively promoting Berlin as a world city"⁸³. These two statements give

⁸¹ <https://www.londonandpartners.com/about-us>

⁸² <https://about.visitberlin.de/en/who-we-are-and-what-we-do>

⁸³ Ibid.

the DMO both the authority and invite other actors in joining the promotion of the city, positioning the DMO as an intermediate between the private sector and statal activity.

In the case of the Vienna Tourist Board, also, the institutional mandate is oriented toward giving to the organization the role of representing the destination internationally; occupying tourist information and services; integrating tourism policies taken by the municipality; and educating locals on the social, economic, and cultural significance and the impact that tourism has on the destination and its inhabitants. In this case, differently by the German equivalent, this mandate is more likely a set of objectives, trying to create roots above which the DMO should move. In this sense the visitBerlin one chooses to be less direct, giving more space to creativity and external ideas, which is a good approach of *openness* towards the industry and external environment. The mandate of London & Partners enhances the role of the company in making appear appealing the city to an international audience and having partnerships with the main stakeholders when it comes to discussing London's promotion. This last mandate is more similar to the first one than to the one of Vienna's Board. The promotion is at the center, together with the partnership that the DMO should establish with main engaged actors in the industry and its international eye. All the mandates have in common the idea of giving a network centrality to the DMOs, making them connectors, promoters, and pro-active managers of many aspects of the destinations. Nevertheless, is also evident how much the past times of being destination *marketing* organizations continue in giving them more relevant marketing-based mandates, in spite of the more managerial ones.

This fallacy is recovered by the strategic objectives which are inspired but more destination-based than the mission and the mandate. For instance, the visitBerlin ones are focused on Berliners' benefits which tourism can bring to their life, and a focus on quality, also reached by keeping the attention on ecological impact which should be as low as possible. More deeply, four objectives are drafted and indicators are developed.

1) Positive interactions between tourists and Berliners. The encounters between these two groups are measured by looking at conflicts, distribution of demand along with the hotspots, and the level of tourism acceptance. Working on these variables can help in ameliorating the general interactions of locals and tourists.

- 2) Berliners benefit from tourists' spending and tourism does not lead to price increases. To measure these positive effects it needs to measure the net income, but also the induced price increase (which should be avoided), and the number and quality of young people which specialize in tourism-related activities.
- 3) The service offered meets or even exceeds the minimum standards and tourists can rely on the quality promised along the service chain. To evaluate the quality of service, customer ratings are at the base, together with reputation and satisfaction.
- 4) The ecological impact of the trip is as low as possible along the service chain⁸⁴, which is measured with the CO₂ footprint.

Vienna Tourist Board strategy is all entailed in the so-defined *Visitor Economy Strategy*, through which the DMO seeks to achieve a “city added value”⁸⁵. The agenda is set with three actions which can be defined as the strategic objectives for the next years. A line is oriented toward the concepts of Place Making & Place Marketing which entails the idea of creating new locations within the destination in order to better distribute the positive effects of the visitor economy⁸⁶. A second root is the Meeting Destination Vienna: the Austrian DMO's objective is to make Vienna the main leader destination in congresses and business events segment, making increase international visibility and competitiveness. The last strategic pillar is the development of Smart Solutions which enhances the “careful and sustainable use of natural resources and developing smart solutions so that the destination will continue to offer the quality of life to future generations that sets it apart today”⁸⁷. This point enhances the centrality that sustainability has in determining future plans.

London & Partners' strategic objectives follow four areas that cover different spans of actions of the DMO. Firstly, the Focus on High Growth Sectors aims in supporting scale-ups, events, programs, and FDI promotion. These newborns start-ups businesses are developed with sustainable models and a net-zero target. Moreover, collaborating with universities can make creating talents and new R&D opportunities.

⁸⁴ https://about.visitberlin.de/sites/default/files/2021-05/Handout-Qualitaetstourismus-en_final.pdf

⁸⁵ <https://b2b.wien.info/en/strategy-brand/tourism-strategy>

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

The second strategic point is more related specifically to tourism: the visitor economy. The main idea is to work with the sector and with the main public authorities to position London as a world-class destination. Key priorities for the city are the post-Covid recovery; providing the sector with insights, data, and training to grow business; focusing on digital channels of communication to arise the audience; bringing new occupiers, and improving accessibility, welcoming to international visitors, and developing sustainability propositions. Another important point is working with the business tourism industry also by providing industry leadership, advisory, and support⁸⁸ in recovering and improving the London product. The collaboration with the business tourism industry results crucial for the role of the DMO, by definition itself of DMO. Together with this, major events remain a driver in creating economic benefits, attracting investments, and high-impact opportunities⁸⁹. The third pillar is the London Brand, which consists of enhancing the global reputation for economic and growth opportunities. In particular next stages will be focused on enhancing the Creative Energy⁹⁰ of the city by creating content, and a focus on PR and communication/message activities. Last, the creation of income growth opportunities by partnerships and ventures with an emerging portfolio also with a focus on resilience, sustainability, and inclusivity. Strategic objectives are for sure part the most relevant information and inspirations from which is possible to try to extract some important *rules* or *best practices*. Simply also looking to the most common or to the most effective ones in this pool of only three DMOs.

The most common objectives looking at all these DMOs focus more on:

- Benefit of the locals. Through monitoring of positive data such as the impact of tourist activity, but also by developing destination spots themselves to enlarge this impact.
- Quality in all the chain of services offered to the tourists. This objective is very related to customer satisfaction and the quality of the supply chain in each step

⁸⁸ https://files.londonandpartners.com/l-and-p/assets/about-us/london_and_partners_business_plan_2021_22.pdf

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

and the ability also of DMO in managing the various stakeholders by advising and giving support.

- Supporting the international position of the destination. Also, this point relates to the entire part of event planning of international relevance and enhancing both the reputation of the destination and its ability in becoming a congress destination too. This happens through content creation on one hand, together with PR and messages, and hosting international events on the other; becoming a center of attention, the city can be better narrated and discovered by the entire world.
- Creating innovation through partnerships and ventures. This point relates to the role of DMO not only in a promotional way but also in creating new value and new business opportunities in the destination, barely looking to the economic developer role and creating a true economic portfolio.
- Ecological Sustainability objectives by developing a Smart Destination, monitoring the ecological footprint, and enhancing a sustainable portfolio of businesses to support

2.2.2.4 Network and Success Factors.

Another important and strategic role of these realities is the creation of a wide network that can give them enough authority and power through and thanks to their numerous ties. By analyzing strategic partnerships an important idea of “good alliances” can be traced and created. Looking at Visit Berlin, its strength relies on the partnership with Berlin Partner for Business and Technology, which can provide assistance to investors, and together with Visit Berlin cooperate on their presence at selected international fairs and trade events⁹¹. Having as the main partner the executive body is another important claim in terms of promotion of the city and the brand. Supporting the airport moreover permits to acquire of new flights and increases the flux of visitors, while cooperating with the public transport had permitted to create the local welcome card and enhances quality, moreover, inclusion in the main partners also the *Partnerhotels* association permitted in making a platform of promotion, which is the larger stakeholder of visitBerlin itself. Finally, visitBerlin is included in the BestCities

⁹¹ <https://about.visitberlin.de/en/strategic-and-sector-partners>

Global Alliance, creating an international network for the positioning of the city. A very similar model is followed by the Vienna Tourist Board, which looks for maintaining relationships with the Public Institutions, airport authorities, the accommodation sector, and in this case Shopping Bodies too. Also, London & Partners had individuated in these main actors the more relevant stakeholders: the City of London, the ExCel (main exhibition center), the hospitality industry, and the business alliance. It is interesting at this point to notice that all the three DMOs rely upon very similar kinds of networking partners, trying to include mainly the public authority, the shopping bodies, the international community, and the transportation authority. Also, technological development and accommodation areas are included in the high-valued partnerships. This attitude represents the necessity of these structures in acting as a bridge between the many souls which are embodied in the tourism industry, creating through these linkages synergies and sharing objectives and priorities. Each of the DMOs analyzed has a story of success behind its current status, they distinguished over time thanks to some of their best-developed skills which determined their strengths. Some of the more important assets are given their network capabilities, their internal expertise, and strategies. In particular, visitBerlin can rely on a great data collection capacity, an updated website, and any kind of packages that enhance the variety of the city of Berlin. The tourist-centered approach and international reputation are the most important assets of the Vienna Tourist Board, while London & Partners can rely upon a well-developed marketing insights area, the strong expertise, and the passion of the staff.

2.2.2.5 Main Activities

This model in the last instance analyzes areas the main practices of the DMO dividing them in five areas according to the most relevant roles which an entity like that should have. These areas are respectively: Data Management and Business Intelligence, Sustainable Development Strategy, Destination Marketing, Advocacy and Lobbying, and Touristic Offer Development. Looking both at the literature and at the previous part of the analysis, it is easy to convey how fundamental all these areas are in order to develop a good positioning, product, local development, and marketing of the destination. Main common practices which could be seen as a basis for generally the good management of similar realities can be taken from the model:

- 1) **Data Management and Business Intelligence.** Providing market insights is the main data-related activity that the DMOs carry on. The basics of marketing are made of constant monitoring of markets and their changing in order to then apply the results in concrete changes to policies and strategies. It is not only a marketing “outside-in” but the DMOs also provide economic impact analysis of their activities, reports, and assessment. visitBerlin, moreover, provides constant cultural monitoring, which is well-fit with the more diverse plethora of consumers towards which the tourist market is always more oriented. Many of these data are obtained by taking from third parts, nevertheless, in some cases could not be. For instance, visitBerlin has a private system, the Visitor Insights, an original market research tool. Vienna Tourist Board relies also on TourMIS⁹², developed by the University of Vienna as an international system of market research; moreover, annual reports about performances are drafted and six KPIs are used to evaluate the success of practices and strategies. Data, in this case, are taken both by the Statistics Austria and Austrian Institute of Economic Research Vienna (WIFO) and the Regional Tourism Satellite Account (RTSA). London & Partners is coherent with its colleagues creating with its experts market insights with data collected by other parties (e.g. visitBritain, the regional DMO). Together with the data collection, impact assessment together with GLA (Great London Authority) measuring Gross Value Added.

- 2) **Sustainable Development Strategy.** In this case, more specificities are developed by the different DMOs. Sustainability is very related to the territory and each DMO focuses on some aspects over others. London & Partners focuses more on the zero-emission objective and the decarbonization of the industry, making London one of the main cleantech hubs, and trying to educate through workshops. Vienna looks more for ecologic transportation and a Smart City approach and enhancing the sustainable visitor economy approach by introducing principles of sharing economy and the use of the Global Destination

⁹² <https://b2b.wien.info/en/statistics/benchmarking/tourmis-data-361884>

Sustainability Index looking for classification of accommodation providers according to sustainability criteria and green meetings⁹³. visitBerlin is in charge of many objectives which look also to the city development together with the touristic one, the idea of visitBerlin itself as a socially responsible employer, and giving the image of Berlin as a sustainable destination globally. In practice in the case of visitBerlin, one of the policies relates to using sustainability criteria in the product range and product development. Moreover, visitBerlin is very focused and keeps great attention on the inclusion and diversity issues, looking for making Berlin also a great destination for the LGBTQI+ community.

- 3) Destination Marketing. This is maybe the most developed area because of the origin of DMOs as marketing operators. Also, in this case, practices are different. The promotion of Berlin is made through international trade fairs; meetings and congress hubs; and very important is the element of Berlin as a tolerant city and open-minded location, safe for everyone. Vienna Tourist Board looks to the destination under the statement “Place Making and Place Marketing”: making new locations within the destinations. This is communicated through an important campaign on social media and with a detailed study on how people travel and how much time they stay in the city. London & Partners enhances the focus on the international market, underlying the importance of experience in culture and nightlife, promoting through social media, especially in France and the US.
- 4) Advocacy and Lobbying. Apart from marketing, another important aspect is contacts and partnerships with the most relevant stakeholder in the area. Networking is fundamental, according to the literature, for the best result in terms of impact and local development of the destination. Because of these main lobbying activities, all three DMOs include local citizens, airports, and institution organs (e.g. districts). Looking at visitBerlin, Hotel Industry, Citizens, Districts (public administrative structures), and general lobbying

⁹³ <https://b2b.wien.info/de/presse/unternehmens-presse-info/strategie2025-en-360230>

activities are the main ideal ways of actions and partners to collab. Also, in a similar way, Vienna Tourist Board seeks the collaboration of local businesses, promoting the city as a hub for start-ups and enterprises. Same, London & Partners programs with ventures and new businesses are very related to their action in pursuing constant contact with the tourism industry.

- 5) Touristic Offer Development. It is necessary to be always changing and developing new formulas and kinds of offers in order to maintain the interest of tourists in the destination. DMOs have to constantly innovate and make easier and of more quality the product, always new ideas are at the basis of this process. visitBerlin found in the Berlin WelcomeCard a very well-developed product for having flexibility in touristic experiences giving discounts on attractions and public transport which is managed and created by the DMO itself. Another interesting policy is Hier in Berlin, namely “a platform for discussions with Berlin boroughs, policy-makers, Berlin initiatives and businesses in the tourism sector”⁹⁴. Vienna Tourist Board enhances new direct flights and new urban hotspots, promoting enterprises and innovation. Also, new means of transportation. All these activities in Vienna will be conducted through a collaborative approach, which sees already an example in the Vienna City Card, which, similarly to the Berliner alter-ego, makes encounter transports and activities, being perfect for a complete experience of the city. London and Partners’ strategy to develop the tourist product is through the development of new technologies with an open innovation fellowship together with the Royal College of Art. Moreover, one of the most relevant projects in terms of offer development is the London Alliance, which provided “a boost for business backed by the Mayor of London, Transport for London, local councils, big businesses and major brands across the city”⁹⁵.

Accordingly, the analysis results deep and punctual in giving numerous information regarding each of the DMOs. With the objective of giving an order to this information,

⁹⁴ <https://about.visitberlin.de/en/hier-berlin>

⁹⁵ <https://www.londonandpartners.com/what-we-do/london-alliance>

Figure 4 has been created with the aim of being a summary of the best practices which have been implemented by the DMOs and on which the benchmark had been created for the following analysis.

BEST PRACTICES	VISITBERLIN	VIENNA TOURIST BOARD	LONDON & PARTNERS
Public Private Partnership	✓	✓	✓
Administrated through a Board	✓	✓	✓
City's executive body as Main Partner	✓	✓	✓
Tourism and City Development Synergies	✓	✓	
Local Businesses Growth as Main Objective	✓	✓	✓
International Reputation as Main Objective	✓	✓	✓
Insights and Report Production	✓	✓	✓
Visitor Economy Approach		✓	✓

BEST PRACTICES	VISITBERLIN	VIENNA TOURIST BOARD	LONDON & PARTNERS
New Location within Destination		✓	
City Card	✓	✓	✓
Collaborative Approach	✓	✓	✓
Diversity and Inclusion Focus	✓		
Race to Zero Emissions and Sustainability Criteria	✓	✓	✓
Conventions and Meetings Leadership	✓	✓	✓
Innovation Programmes		✓	✓

Figure 4: Main Findings of the Analysis. Source: Author Elaboration

This last table tries to give a summary of the most important points of the analysis which can also be identified as the best and most used practices by the three DMOs. Looking at this, some important milestones of the “good” destination management can be exalted and, then, repurposed for implementation in the final sections.

2.2.2.6 SWOT Analysis.

Using this model now it is possible having an outlook and general overview of each of the DMOs which are the object of this study. Being leaders in the sector, it is very difficult to identify fallacies or threats, just because many of the practices and strategic choices are very coherent with the general literature suggestions and with the macro trends analysis. Nevertheless, some reflections which go beyond the mere description of the practices could be done, by looking at each DMO in a SWOT view. visitBerlin can count on numerous strengths on its own. It has for sure one of the widest portfolios in terms of a variety of single activities. Nevertheless, the growth in numbers of the city is making difficult the management of the locals; the approach is very related from a marketing view, the objective is to give the image of berlin and Berliners and have a positive impact, but the marketing-based approach still remains strong in the general way of acting. Because maybe of facing the problem of overtourism, one of the main focuses is on the ecological sustainability, which is an important standing point of the literature.



Figure 5: visitBerlin SWOT. Source: Author Elaboration

Vienna Tourist Board's strength is its unique visionary strategy, centered on visitors and the quality of the city as the most livable city in the world. In addition, Vienna Tourist Board has one of the most complete websites in terms of description, it doesn't have the differentiated packs organized by interests of the Berlin one, but it is complete of any activity which is possible to do in Vienna. Moreover, the variety of the board (the most numerous) is evidence of many points of view and backgrounds. A "negative" aspect is the participation as a shareholder of only the public authority, which involve less than other DMOs in the private sector. Also, the threat of overtourism is a reality in Vienna, in which the center can remain the only visited area⁹⁶ in the destination, without the opportunity of having a true cultural immersion in the Austrian or simply Viennese cultural substrate.



Figure 6: Vienna Tourist Board SWOT. Source: Author Elaboration

London and Partners, looking in particular at the other two DMOs, is maybe the one that is most corporate-alike. It has a part dedicated totally to the London experience but made in a more classical way, we have linkages directly to all the singles activities. Moreover, the London Card is on the website but powered by a third entity. There is not so much focus on the impact on Londoners' life, remaining very brand-minded in

⁹⁶ <https://www.tourism-review.com/over-tourism-is-bothering-vienna-news10889>

the idea that London should be promoted in the EU and overseas. London & Partners, nevertheless, can result under a certain point of view more “complete”. Starting from the fact that the idea is very economic-based, looking to economic growth over the touristic one. In this sense, London goes beyond the idea of being a destination, underlying the business growth, which is a part of London’s branding.



Figure 7: London and Partners Tourist Board. Source: Author Elaboration

SWOT analyses remain one of the best instruments in terms of having a pragmatic and clear overview of any kind of company. Also, it is fundamental to underline that tourist management is a relatively novel discipline and all the practices which DMOs are currently carrying on are important steps that can help in the creation of models and tools to meliorate the industry.

These suggestions and analyses are made by observing the different DMOs and trying to catch the best ideas and practices based also on the current literature regarding tourism management. Until now in this analysis, the focus had been firstly creating a literature base, then analyzing existing cases in order to develop a set of practices under which a novel DMO could be created. In the sext section, after a brief analysis of the Roman context, the case of FUTOUROMA will be discussed, adding to the existing, and still in progress, project, more suggestions, and ideas, in order to theorize possible aspects and innovative solutions for the touristic management of the capital.

Part III. The Case of Futouroma: a Roman DMO.

3.1 Tourism in Italy: State of the Art.

Once applied the model to the three foreign examples of effective DMOs, the lens shifts to Italian country. One of the objectives of this study is, through the model which had been used in Part II, making an effective analysis and evaluation of the FUTOUROMA project, which aims in creating a DMO for the Italian Capital. In fact, in this section, after a brief description of the current general data and trends of Italian tourism industry, a contextualization of Roman Tourism History and policies of previous administrations will be provided. Finally, the project of the new Roman DMO will be discussed by making a benchmark analysis using the model which had been applied in the previous chapter.

Previous analyses of general trends and conditions regarding the tourism industry can make us think that Italian tourism is in a controversial, but still, potential position if related to the new megatrends. In fact, although Italian tourism is in the maturity phase of its lifecycle⁹⁷, this does not mean that the Italian context preserves its numerous varieties of new opportunities for growth and for new kinds of approaches. Moreover, Italian tourism now is facing always more competitors, and, looking for new forms of tourism in order to rejuvenate its approach⁹⁸.

3.1.1 Main Data

Historically, thanks to its own cultural and natural heritage, Italy had always been one of the most important and famous destinations of the whole international

⁹⁷ Trunfio, M., Petruzzellis, L. and Nigro, C. (2006), "Tour operators and alternative tourism in Italy: Exploiting niche markets to increase international competitiveness", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 18 No. 5, pp. 426-438.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/09596110610673556>

⁹⁸ Ibid.

tourism. In 1982 it had almost the 8% of the entire global tourism market shares, being second only to the US⁹⁹. Nevertheless, in the last decades market share had reduced considerably, also due to the rising of new destinations worldwide and the changing in tastes of the new tourists. Looking more deeply at the European framework, Italian results are not so downgrading. The global crisis of 2008 generally had made decreased most the tourism activities, but yet in 2012 Italy had recovered most of its losses, having, in 2015, more than 50 million visitors¹⁰⁰. Looking directly at the typology and at the motivations which make tourists come to Italy, some data can be useful to better analyze the situation. Some important data follow the general trend, starting with the growth in the number of travelers, mainly young people, which arrive in Italy, but with a reduction in the duration of the trip¹⁰¹. Stating that the tourism management distinguishes leisure travel from business ones, in Italy almost the 67% of travels were leisure ones in 2017¹⁰², nevertheless, it is useful to consider that, although, with fewer numbers, business travels are more profitable. Most visited locations in Italy are the cultural urban sites which are concentrated mostly in the cities of Rome, Florence, Milan, Venice, and Naples. Those data are mainly referred to a period which is before the COVID-19 pandemic, which had caused the tourism sector the most harmful decrease which ever happened. In 2021, data seems to be optimistic, but still low, if compared to the pre-pandemic ones. In fact, the general Italian trend in tourists' presence results less negative than the EU mean; accordingly, it counts about an increase of 22,3% if compared to 2020, but still a -38,4% if compared to 2019¹⁰³.

3.1.2 Trends

As cited many times during this discussion, recent general worldwide trends have been in the very few years determinant in changing radically most of the aspects

⁹⁹ Breda, Emanuele and Cappariello, Rita and Romano, Valentina, Il turismo internazionale in Italia: recenti tendenze, domanda potenziale e confronto con i principali concorrenti europei (International Tourism in Italy: Recent Trends, Potential Demand and a Comparison With the Main European Competitors) (December 14, 2018). Bank of Italy Occasional Paper Numero 475 – Dicembre 2018, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3355410>

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ ISTAT (2022), "Movimento Turistico in Italia | Gennaio – Settembre 2021", https://www.istat.it/it/files//2022/01/REPORT_MOVIMENTOTURISTICO_2021.pdf

of the tourist sector as we had known until now. Italy in this phase is not the newborn destination that can represent a threat in the sector, but, conversely, had always been one of the main and most important countries in terms of tourism, and it is also confirmed and demonstrated from the data. This results in the necessity of taking new approaches to tourism that can meet the most recent trends. New approaches can result in better integration of the different activities, giving quality output; this integration is possible through the creation of structures that can connect and integrate the different tourist activities, namely, the DMOs. In this sense, “the lack of a competitive distribution system is probably the main weakness the Italian destinations will have to face strategically in the near future by co-marketing actions among transport companies and destinations”¹⁰⁴. Although this managerial fallacy, could be recovered through the creation of a strategy and implementation of DMOs along with the national territory, fortunately, Italy has an important heritage that meets the cultural, enogastronomic, and environmental motivations which are typical of current tourism trends. These characteristics enhance heavily the competitiveness of both accommodations in rural and coastal areas and their historical centers, in particular in Southern Italy, increasing its sustainability.¹⁰⁵ A key strategic line in this sense could be also the creation of new typologies of tourist products; fortunately, the basis from which our country starts is full of particularities, nature, and food variety, which perfectly meets new trends. It is not a case, in fact, that Italy had showed significant market shares in niche products such as itineraries, enogastronomic, and sports tourism¹⁰⁶. Because of this, the strategic outline is particularly important in order to exploit these advantages with a focus on new tourist products which need to anticipate international customers, with high standards of quality of life, leisure, and updated cultural offer, enhancing local specificities and interaction with territories¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁴ Trunfio, M., Petruzzellis, L. and Nigro, C. (2006), "Tour operators and alternative tourism in Italy: Exploiting niche markets to increase international competitiveness", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 18 No. 5, pp. 426-438.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/09596110610673556>

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

3.1.3 Last Strategic Guidelines

This general trend, which regards primarily Southern Italy with a focus on rural areas, could be taken as an important step regarding the general focus that the National strategy could follow. In fact, the Italian fallacy of not being strategic enough in terms of tourism guidelines had been interrupted in 2017, when, for the first time, a *National* and shared policy has been implemented¹⁰⁸. This first plan assumes an important relevance if compared to the fragmentation that tourism had had until that time, being an exclusive subject of regional administrations. The Strategic Plan has been constructed with the meeting of many entities (public and private) of institutions and the tourism industry. The plan articulates numerous objectives which can be summarized in four macro-areas:

- Innovation projects to promote and integrate the national offer. In particular, the recovery of old and dismissed structures to integrate landscapes, and the integration of the current most frequented areas (beaches and big cities) as accesses to emerging new territories;
- Boosting competitiveness through a simpler normative system, promoting innovation and digitalization;
- Effective Marketing, particularly by promoting UNESCO sites;
- A new and more participatory governance system.

These strategies have the objective of maintaining both the sustainability of bigger destinations and enhancing and improving the presence in boroughs, environmental itineraries, and, more generally, the enlargement of quality of services¹⁰⁹.

In particular, an important point of the strategy regards the bigger destinations, which are mainly the most famous cultural cities which make the country unique in terms of density of heritage (Rome, Milan, Naples, Venice, Florence...). These *top destinations* represent a very important site of management: they are usually the very first Italian experience that tourists have, and, because of this, the experience should be focused on

¹⁰⁸ Francesco Palumbo, 2018. "2017-2022: Even in Italy Tourism is planned. Updating the new season in Italian policies of tourism," *Economia della Cultura*, Società editrice il Mulino, issue 1-2, pages 91-106.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

both creating a reputation and making sustainable tourism avoiding overcrowding. The plan provides in this sense a solution: directing the flux also to secondary destinations, reducing, on one hand, the weight on the single city, and on the other widening the offer and maintaining competitiveness¹¹⁰.

In this first section, a brief look at some Italian data and context had been given, in the next paragraph, the analysis will occur regarding specifically the Roman environment, firstly discussing some literature about the Italian Capital, secondly developing a focus on the FUTOUROMA project and suggesting practices and strategies for the incumbent Roman DMO.

3.2 Rome

3.2.1 Focus on Rome: Studies and Facts

Rome is maybe one of the most iconic and famous destinations worldwide. It is world-renowned because of its cultural, historical, and artistic heritage. It counts nowadays about 340 architectural and historical assets and 188 archeological ones, declared in 1980 a World Heritage Site by UNESCO¹¹¹.

Origins of this phenomenon are not new, Rome since the times of the Roman Empire had always been at the center of world history and events. The idea of Rome as the Eternal City, or better, *città eterna*, had navigated space and time arriving until nowadays and still stays strong deep inside everyone's minds. In a wider framework, it is possible to consider Italy as a permanent place: "an old-world unchanged for centuries, a peninsula anchored by Rome, *la città eterna*"¹¹². This idea of Rome, which had been secularized over time, gave the city itself its own meaning. Rome appears as a static space of the past¹¹³ in which most of the history of the world had been

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Gemmiti, Roberta. 2019. "Neoliberal Rome—The Role of Tourism" *Social Sciences* 8, no. 6: 196. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci8060196>

¹¹² Hom, S. M. (2010). Consuming the View: Tourism, Rome, and the Topos of the Eternal City. *Annali d'Italianistica*, 28, 91–116. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24016389>

¹¹³ Ibid.

sedimented over time. This long time had seen the city under a diverse lens: firstly, being the imperial city, then the center of Christianity, and, finally, the Eternal Tourist City¹¹⁴. Over time, surprisingly, in fact, the idea of Rome as antiquity has overcome the idea of Rome as a religious center. Guidebooks too had used in the last two centuries the topos of the Eternal City, giving importance to the multiple pasts of Rome, which, also, contributed to the vision of the city as a Museum of western culture and civilization, or, at least, an archive, a repository for preserving the past¹¹⁵, and it is this orientation which contributes in making the city eternal. Nowadays some guidebooks lament the plethora of tourists who everyday assault Rome, shouting about the overtourism problem which could compromise the city. It could seem, from a particular point of view, contradictory: tourism had become an integral part of the city, and maybe, without that constant presence, the eternal myth of Rome could slowly decrease.

This huge historical value can suggest that the resulting city is a complex system of different layers¹¹⁶ in which relations between operators and institutions are tangled. One of the main aspects of the city regards the land and the construction sector, which many times had been unregulated and without a true city orientation, but always focused on creating new wealth through the construction of buildings. Also, another important and fundamental aspect to focus on is the gap between the city and peripheric areas. Rome always failed in providing the various municipalities with enough autonomy and funds to make develop themselves¹¹⁷, enlarging the gap between these areas and the center of the city. After unification city knew a long period of uncontrolled growth in terms of buildings, without following a true plan, but which at the same time became the real engine of the city's economy¹¹⁸. Consequently, this growth in terms of buildings cannot be unrelated also to the tourism development, parallel and complementary to the former process. In particular, the institutional weaknesses in imposing its authority make possible a spontaneous growth and development not only of the city in spatial terms, but in tourism ones too, which trained itself over time thanks to the enormous

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Gemmiti, Roberta. 2019. "Neoliberal Rome—The Role of Tourism" *Social Sciences* 8, no. 6: 196. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci8060196>

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

concentration of both cultural, historical sites, and of many public and private function of national and international importance¹¹⁹. Closely linked to this issue, also, the unwieldy presence of a few families which control the main buildings and hotels, which many times had refused the presence of international chains, also being influencing the political life of the city and tourism policies too and that, as a last consequence, make the gains of tourism finishing in the hand of few people, with most of the population of Rome receiving very little¹²⁰. One of the main causes of this gap is the governance and Centre-Periphery gaps. The surface of Rome municipality is the largest Italian one, and, because of the uncontrolled growth of previous decades, the gap between the center and periphery (the area which surrounds the GRA). The lack of adequate planning had created an absence of proper infrastructures which makes valuable peripheries, making also concentrating most of the resources in the center of the city (more than 64% of the accommodation service are located in the historic center, just the 1,5% of the whole surface of Rome)¹²¹, with very few wealthy areas. In Figure 7 the map clearly shows both the big area which Rome Municipality occupies, and the relative Tourism Clusters, Metropolitan Centralities, Urban Centralities, and interested areas for tourism development. It is clear looking at this picture, the high potentiality which the city can offer which are not currently properly utilized. This brief description of the roman context can provide many reflections on how difficult could be, but at the same time how necessary is, the development of a truly valid and value-spreading, which can include the whole city and give more value to every citizen.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

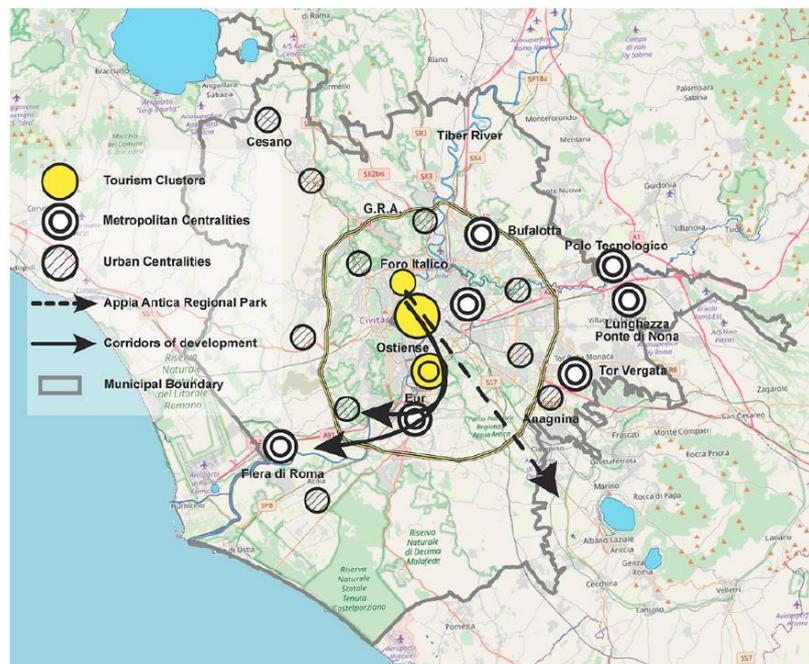


Figure 7: Rome Municipality with a focus on Tourism Interested Areas. Source: Gemmiti (2019)

As mentioned in previous sections, an important issue that many big cities had faced up to is globalization, which had obliged many cities in trying new systems in order to remain competitive. In particular, the Roman administration had followed a more entrepreneurial and neoliberal approach, during the period between 1993 and 2008, to manage urban planning and implement tourism policies¹²². The neoliberal administration gave the city the opportunity of enlarging its effectiveness in terms of tourism policy implementation, territorial administration, and economic growth. General tendencies were giving more autonomy to the metropolitan areas, introducing public-private partnerships, enhancing growth and competitiveness through big events, and following a more polycentric model in terms of territorial spatial development¹²³. The central area was extended, the natural parks promoted and conserved, and several interventions were made in the corridor from the city center to the Fiumicino Coast creating a cultural and economic vivacity that can increase the average staying of tourists in the city. Another area interest of in these policies is the Foro Italico one and the Flaminio Quarter. During this period both the Music Auditorium by Renzo Piano and the MAXXI Museum by Zaha Adid' had been

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

established, giving prestige and new architecture in that area. Moreover, during this period also the EUR quartier was at the center of the tourism policies, in particular focusing on its business nature and becoming the main area related to business tourism in the capital, also thanks to its proximity with Fiumicino Airport. Although these neoliberal policies gave a great launch to the economic growth of these areas, the main interventions were all focused around the city center and the corridor to the Airport, lacking adequate policies in other areas such as the Appia Antica one. This neoliberal period had given benefits to the city, trying to follow the principles of the global city, but many controversial factors influenced the general opinion regarding the decision-making process. Moreover, many problems had not been treated, such as poverty, the lack of affordable houses, the inadequacy of infrastructures in many areas, energy, and waste. Starting from 2008, nevertheless, the administrations had not given any more intervention in tourism policies, conversely, the public hand slowly faded, and inhabitants have become victims of a tourist system completely left alone, without any kind of return for themselves and for the society¹²⁴.

Fortunately, after some time, a new light seems to come from the institutions. Looking outside mainly at other European capitals, it seems evident the fact that Rome currently presents enormous opportunities and potential which had not been exploited yet. In fact, the most recent touristic trends are showing the potential which a country like Italy could have in its completeness. Moreover, some important ideal objectives of the precedent administrations could be nowadays recovered and applied to a renewed context, in which a more strategic approach and a different market can help in struggling with the Roman static reality. It is not new that the museum cities should innovate in order to offer an always more variety of activities, from the culture to the pure leisure, to the business necessities; in addition, if all these activities are spread towards the whole “region” of competence of the destination, positive effects can be provided to every citizen. The focus now should be on setting a second-tourism-based system¹²⁵ (trade fairs, conferences, golf courses, theme parks, seaside resorts) all related to the core of the roman tourism (the historical center), but at the same time which can

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Valeri, M. (2015). Sustainability development and competitiveness of Rome as a tourist destination. *Tourism and hospitality management*, 21(2), 203-217.

enhance other areas of the city and surroundings. The integration of these second layer activities, nevertheless, meets many of the issues of the city, first of all, the absence of a truly powerful managerial and governance structure, the lack of coordination among government and association, the high bureaucracy, and the absence of a mechanism of business networks creation¹²⁶. The presence of all these factors can also make evident how weak were the policies taken during the neoliberal period, and, how less powerful still is the institutional authority in the capital. A new approach is required, which is able to go beyond the mere marketing and incorporate and coordinate the large numbers of people who are involved in more sustainable and developmental projects¹²⁷.

For these reasons, the idea of an official Roman intervention with the structure of a DMO started to be developed in 2019: FUTOUROMA. Although the COVID-19 pandemic, which on the other hand had driven many funds to the peninsula, the project still remains valid and could be continued by making integrations and suggestions.

3.2.2 FUTOUROMA: A Roman DMO

«*FUTOUROMA è il timone di una rotta ben precisa, che traccia le modalità ottimali di definizione, promozione e fruizione dell'offerta turistica capitolina fino al 2025*»¹²⁸. With this statement, the project of innovating the management and the strategic approach of Rome has been declared, and defined, as a strategic *iter* with the aim of promoting and enhancing the destination from any point of view. The general objectives underline the necessity of the city in renovating its offer, being not only a pole in terms of culture and heritage, but also making come out its many souls, which vary from sports to events, music, and business. Because of this, some important themes are defined: sustainable tourism; international and national sports events; quality and “minor” tourism; digital tourism.

In order to develop this strategic plan, which is based on the idea to be drafted for the temporal scope of 2019-2025, a town meeting for analysing the major issues and themes

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ <https://www.turismoroma.it/it/notizie/nasce-futouroma>

related to the tourism sector is a fundamental step. Moreover, the organization itself of one or more town meetings suggests the participatory approach that this process has taken and will take, remaining coherent with the trends and ideas of DMOs as bridge and network-based structures across the industry. It is not a case that *Participatory Governance* is itself one of the milestones of the Plan, which seeks to build a shared Regional monitoring system for the plan. Other important lines of action are the *Infrastructure* development in the region, *Digital Tourism* to enhance sharing economy; *Marketing*; *Tourist Product Development*; *Hospitality Management*.

The creation of a DMO can make possible many of the objectives and ideal visions which over time, particularly in recent ones, researchers had developed looking for the best result in tourism management of the Capital. The aim of creating starting basically from zero a DMO can seem very ambitious, resulting in an opportunity that, if not properly managed, could become the umpteenth wasted project which the city itself is not able to apply, although the unique objective could be only the ameliorating of the city reputation, wealth, and social well-being. Because of this, the importance of creating a structure that is able to both have international relevance and accountability, but without leaving the reality of the Roman context, is fundamental.

3.2.3 Until Now: Project Analysis

The project of FUTOUROMA had seen and, currently, sees the intervention of many realities and contributions in the process of analysis, development of objectives, and planning on how the newborn DMO should act and its direction. It was a collective process, which has also involved universities and experts, and which could act as an important propulsor to the creation of new value throughout the whole city. It remains important in this sense to remain very realistic and linked to the Roman antecedents regarding tourism management attempts. The failure of neoliberals can suggest how important is not only to look to the main area's development, but also to enhance the transparency and society involvement in the decision-making process, and in the general shares of the gains that policies can drive.

In order to better describe and evaluate at least the plan¹²⁹ according to which the new DMO should be constructed, it is possible to analyze it through the model which has been previously used to compare the three DMOs which had been described in the precedent section. Following that path, it will be natural not only to organize information in a well-defined scheme but also will give the opportunity to underline differences that can occur between the three foreign DMOs and the Roman one. These differences can derive not necessarily from a fallacy of one or other managerial structure but simply can derive from the context in which these operate.

According to the previous analyses, which suggest both the diffusion of the PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships) model as the most adept one, also to preserve a network and collaborative approach, also in this case, the newborn DMO should consider its application. In fact, also the Strategic Plan in many areas repeats the necessity of developing a Public-Private system, which is identified now as weak, but in an environment that informally presents many networks and collaborations between actors. Regarding the shareholders, maybe the solution, in this case, is to give the entire holding to “Roma Capitale” which is yet the promoter of the entire project. Nevertheless, two main actors in this sense could be taken into consideration. First, the Zètema Cultural Association is currently one of the main actors in the Roman cultural environment and manages the public museums and all the related events and initiatives¹³⁰. Second, the Roma & Lazio Convention Bureau occupies the main role in managing the most important mice events in the main venues of the capital¹³¹. Passing to the administration and governance ideal model of the DMO, a board commission could be the ideal model to follow, also because the project itself is looking for a collaborative and plural-voices approach; which can be transferred directly into a board in which, experts of the sector, political personalities and members of creative industries and business can decide together policies and actions. More specifically, a general board could include a President, followed by a division into the single

¹²⁹ Ejarque J. (2019), IL PIANO STRATEGICO DEL TURISMO DI ROMA CAPITALE, F Tourism & Marketing, <https://www.turismoroma.it/sites/default/files/IL%20PIANO%20STRATEGICO%20DEL%20TURISMO%20DI%20ROMA%20CAPITALE.pdf>

¹³⁰ <https://www.zetema.it/societa/#>

¹³¹ <https://www.turismoroma.it/sites/default/files/CONVENTION%20BUREAU%20DI%20ROMA%20E%20LAZIO.pdf>

municipalities which can together relate and improve collaboration without being fully dependent on the central managerial actor. As previously analyzed, one of the main issues in terms of management in the capital is the weak power of the single municipalities. In this way, a representative, which not necessarily should be a politician, can also function as a bridge between central coordination and peripheral administration. Governance is maybe the most relevant aspect because is both the solution and the obstacle that, if passed, can really provide an important unlock in terms of strategic management of the destination.

One of the main outcomes of the projects, in addition to the numerous suggestions, arrived in terms of *what* should be the implementations, also arrived under the terms of *where* the objective of the DMO should look. In particular, following the model, the **purpose** and vision seem to be clear in positioning Rome in the first 3 European Destinations applying a strategy based on sustainable growth which can benefit the whole city and its inhabitants. The Big Aim is to make Rome the Eternal Touristic City thanks to its past, but also for its innovation, sustainability and attractivity, without losing its roots. The mandate of this new organ is to establish integrated governance of touristic strategies and processes by planning communication campaigns and marketing actions, with the aim of promoting Rome as a plural destination and involving diverse targets¹³². Strategic objectives can be summarized in general guidelines which are the milestones of the good governance and of the plan itself:

1. Proper and strategic destination management;
2. Destination promotion;
3. Diversification of tourist products;
4. Development and incentive for entrepreneurial activities;
5. Territorial devolution of tourist activities;
6. Identity and lifestyle-enhancing;
7. Increasing competitiveness;
8. Respecting the environment and locals;
9. Multicultural values and international standards for services;

¹³² <https://www.comune.roma.it/eventi/it/bilancio-di-mandato-turismo.page>

10. Effective Public-Private Governance;
11. Green, Smart, and Glamour destination;
12. Building a Global Reputation to attract investments, tourists, and talents.

These strategic objectives seek to be developed with more specificities and in a more practical way, also, their “romanization” should be developed in order to be effective and tailor-made in the city context. In this environment, the DMO will not act alone, but a great number of stakeholders and their collaboration are fundamental to achieving changes and prosperity. In this sense, the main stakeholders can follow the same patterns of foreign DMOs, key partners are the administration (Roma Capitale), the Municipalities, Regione Lazio, Roman Chamber of Commerce (CCIAA), the Convention Bureau, Aereoporti di Roma (Air Transportation Authority), Public Transport Authority (ATAC), but also Private Associations, Main Private Train Companies (Italo, Trenitalia), Accommodation and Restoration sectors, Retail and Tourist Services. These key partnerships are necessary to propose and carry on the objectives. Although the model prescribes to also individuate the key success factors, with the newborn DMO the plan limits to individuation only some of the possible success factors which are necessary to reach the desired effects: cooperation between public and private, proactivity, customer-centered approach, clear value proposition, and co-responsibility and action.

Once given a look at the strategies, stakeholders, objectives, and structure of the Roman DMO, it arrives (also following the pattern of the model) the part in which all these intentions find a practical realization. Apparently, the effects of these possible policies are not currently adopted, but the success in diverse contexts, counting on also on the capacity of adapting to the Roman reality, helps in imagining a series of activities that can perfectly meet this necessity.

Data Management activities: some ideal objectives are the open data shared with the sector for taking a strategic decision and the creation of an original and valid statistical database. These objectives can be reached through:

- Establishment of a tourism observatory;
- Destination Reputation Monitoring;

- Tourist data monitoring on time;
- Transparent platform;
- Satisfaction Index Monitoring.

Sustainability remains at the center of most of the policies and strategical objectives of all the DMOs which had been taken into consideration during this study. It is not a case that also the general plan many times focus on sustainability, which is not only referred to as environmental sustainability but also as a social and economical one, oriented to fight overtourism. In this sense, some actions had been considered:

- Implementation of the European Tourism Indicator System;
- International Sustainability Projects Participation;
- Sustainable Mobility;
- Certificated Tourism Activities
- More accessibility to all categories;
- Roma for All;
- European Network for Accessible Tourism.

All these operations seek in creating starting from zero a sustainable culture in Rome, which has one of the main problems in waste management and sustainable transport. A huge part of planning has been given to Marketing actions. It is not new that DMOs were born as marketing institutions, which over time had integrated more roles. Focusing on Rome, the absence of a precedent structure obliges working twice with the aim of creating a strong marketing structure. Because of this, the destination marketing strategy has its own dedicated pillar. This is not a completely irrational choice, also looking at the other DMOs analyzed, marketing is one of the most developed areas.

The Destination Marketing plan results wide and basically at the research of precise objectives: diversification, positioning, and creating a consistent value proposition characterized by a multi-product design. The value proposition, accordingly, is conceptualized as an experience that can provide satisfaction, emotions, happiness, and memorability. In particular, the memorability of positive feelings is fundamental to creating an experience that could be repeated over time. The relevant insight of this process is the way in which in this case marketing the product is completely merged

with the product development itself. It is through creating packages, specific for each target, that the destination can better market itself. Numerous marketing destination activities had been proposed:

- Development of a multiproduct system in which each segment can find its own space;
- Focused segmentation along with the different interests of the different targets;
- Adapting communication systems and strategies to the specificities of the target;
- Communicating Rome enhancing its identity based on spontaneity, creativity, and the contrast between traditions and modernity, trying to give a new soul which is different from the Eternal City or Christian Capital;
- Integrated Communication and Branding;
- Commercialization through a digital ecosystem (VisitRoma), App, Online catalog, Social Factory, Partnerships, Photo shootings, B2B Rome Around the World, Rome as Italy's Door.

This ambitious project needs, particularly in a context like the roman one, the sustain most of the actors which populate the wide environment of Roman economic life. In particular, many interests of strong actors are present in the Roman context and are able to heavily influence the city's life. Some main partnerships have been yet described, nevertheless, an important work in terms of Lobbying and Advocacy should be made:

- Involving the hospitality industry, which in Rome is composed not only of important and international chains but also of important family-driven activities;
- Involving the population: in particular citizens should be involved and then compensate for their work, making seeing true changes, in particular in the most rural areas which have been abandoned by the previous administrations;
- Involving Municipalities: also, by giving them more power, a more direct implementation should be obtained and concrete effects better executed and monitored;
- Political life is one of the most important drivers of interest in the city, a good work could be the promotion of the entire DMO structure along with the

different parties, making evident the benefit for all which this structure can offer;

- Education is fundamental: including operators and employees in new professionalization programs, together with the promotion of the positive effects of tourism, can make the population more proactive and involved in touristic value creation.
- Mobility: an important focus on mobility is necessary, given the problems which this sector had presented in the Capital. An important work in both coordination with the most important interest group and the most critical ones (Taxis Lobby at first) should be done.
- Tourist Task Force: to contrast illegal activities¹³³

Finally, the **Touristic Offer Development**, which, in this case, relates to the creation of new offers, together with developing existing ones.

- Roma Start-Up Accelerator
- Roma Taxi Voucher
- Roma Pass Empowerment
- Web Tourism System and Reinforcing Online Presence (Website, App, Virtual Assistance...)
- *Made in Rome* Brand¹³⁴

All these objectives and specificities can be summed in the model used in the previous section. In addition, the Plan had provided a business model, in Figure 8, in which more insights regarding the FUTOUROMA project are summarized:

¹³³ <https://www.comune.roma.it/web/it/notizia.page?contentId=NWS462657>

¹³⁴ ibid.

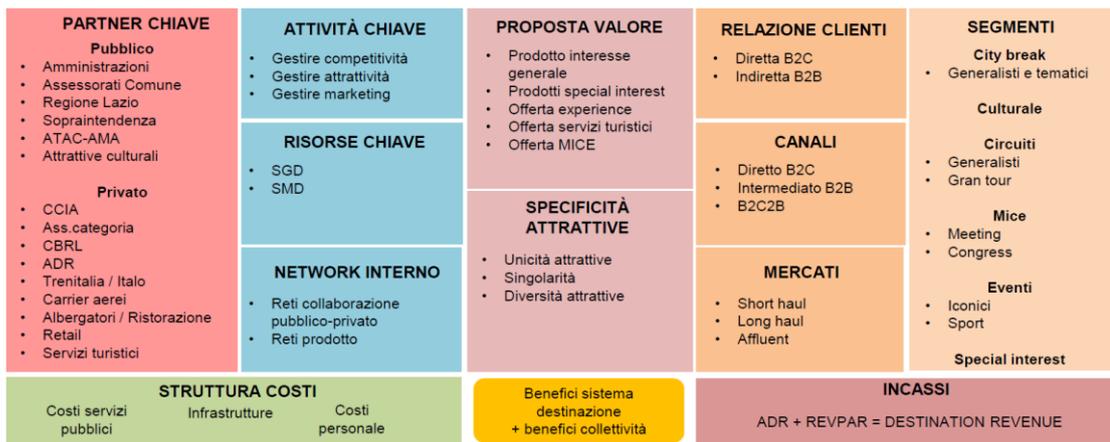


Figure 8: Desired Business Model for Futouroma. Source: Ejarque (2019)

3.2.4 What Else? Suggestion and Stimulus.

FUTOUROMA is an ambitious project, it entails many of the most approved and literature-based assumptions of ideas and practices which a good DMO should follow in the current global context. Many practices, which have been drafted in the guidelines, try to conceal most of the problems that are typical of the Roman context with a more strategic and international lens, nevertheless, some important suggestions can be made in order to enhance some important features and aspects which could be deepened and developed. Also, making a comparison with the other European DMOs, previously analyzed, maybe some ideas can come over in terms of management and practices. This comparison has been made with the results of the analysis of Section 2 (Figure 4), compared with the theorized best practices in FUTOUROMA project. Through this, an assessment of possible improvements can be depicted.

BEST PRACTICES	VISITBERLIN	VIENNA TOURIST BOARD	LONDON & PARTNERS	FUTOUROMA
Public Private Partnership	✓	✓	✓	✓
Administrated through a Board	✓	✓	✓	✓
City's executive body as Main Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tourism and City Development Synergies	✓	✓		✓
Local Businesses Growth as Main Objective	✓	✓	✓	✓
International Reputation as Main Objective	✓	✓	✓	✓
Insights and Report Production	✓	✓	✓	✓
Visitor Economy Approach		✓	✓	

BEST PRACTICES	VISITBERLIN	VIENNA TOURIST BOARD	LONDON & PARTNERS	FUTOUROMA
New Location within Destination		✓		✓
City Card	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collaborative Approach	✓	✓	✓	✓
Diversity and Inclusion Focus	✓			
Race to Zero Emissions and Sustainability Criteria	✓	✓	✓	
Conventions and Meetings Leadership	✓	✓	✓	
Innovation Programmes		✓	✓	
Focus on retaining tourists				✓

Figure 9: Comparisons between the previous analysed DMOs and Futouroma practices, based on the drafted project. Source: Author Elaboration.

This brief comparison suggests that a well actual and competitive project has been designed, but also that some betterment can be done such as a focus on the visitor approach method, and a more powerful diversity and inclusion program, which in Italy could present numerous limits in terms of cultural biases. Also, the possible

improvement in some important focuses such as a true *race to zero* emissions program in the sustainability objective and more focus on innovation programs looking to not only start-ups but to a general digitalization and development, which could have an important shared benefit to the city. Although these points, the general plan seems to be well developed and ambitious. The real question could be focused on the feasibility of this project in an environment like the Roman one, which is characterized and famous for being hostile to changes since its very foundations. The answer relies maybe on the education programs, telling Romans that only if they change, the city can really know a new kind of livability not only for tourists but in particular for Romans themselves. The key is trying to translate practices into the roman reality, adapting them to the administrative fallacies and bureaucracy, which makes them less elastic in some implementations. Conversely, the touristic revolution could be a good chance to try a true reassess of Roman administrative structures, creating a new vision and urban asset of the city, which can create a strong separation (in terms of managerial administration culture) with the past, making strong economic and re-evaluation investments.

3.2.5 Further Directions and Development.

The current project of creating a true and well-established DMO for the capital seems now as never one of the very next steps in the tourism policies of the city. Although the COVID-19 pandemic had obviously interrupted many processes, in particular touristic ones, now with the PNRR in which an important objective for tourism is the promotion of a resilient and modern touristic offer, reinforcing competitiveness, also through digitalization and more environmental sustainability of tourist services¹³⁵. In this context in which the local administration is trying to put an order, Rome always remember the world that, if not the institutions, Roman are perfectly able in take the lead and auto-administrate their city. This is the case of the newborn DMO *ES.CO. Esquilino Comunità, Porta di Roma*. This reality had been promoted with the fund of the Regional administrations and carried on by the various actors (public and private associations) that animate one of the most various and

¹³⁵ <https://www.digital4.biz/executive/pnrr-turismo-cos-e-gli-incentivi-e-come-fare-domanda/>

multicultural neighborhoods thanks to the numerous regeneration policies¹³⁶, which now is identified as an alternative must-see area in the capital.

The case of ES.CO can represent an important point of view for further specific studies regarding this structure in terms of tourist management. In fact, this structure regards not a city, but it is the first case of Neighborhood DMO, which aims to entail all the citizens and actors and acts as instrumental for a future co-working with Roma Capitale. So, in the meanwhile, a project which blinked an eye to the foreign DMOs was ready to be born, but a new approach could take spontaneously the lead. In this sense, FUTOUROMA could change its plans, giving space to the creation of sub-DMOs that can be coordinated from a central structure. Nevertheless, an approach like this could be controversial because represents the “classical” Roman style of creating bureaucracy and layers, an approach that could easily lead to corruption and impediments. On the other hand, nobody is able to assure that taking the best international policies can give the best outcomes; it could be necessary to remember that it is the *timelessness* that makes Rome unique. For sure, sustainability seems to remain the concept towards which different visions and opinions can merge together. General objectives of creating new kinds of tourism, expanding the area of influence of tourism, giving benefit to citizens by avoiding overtourism, and having a digital and sustainable policy in terms of transportation and environment are some *diktat* from which no-one should detach.

¹³⁶ <https://www.aslroma1.it/comunicati/destinazioni-turistiche-del-lazio-nasce-dmo-es-co-esquilino-comunita-porta-di-roma#>

Conclusion

The tourism industry is acquiring rising importance in the economic life of destinations. Through tourism, it is possible to give economic and social stimuli to cities in a sustainable way, overcoming the problem of overtourism, which had characterized the old style of tourism management practices. The most recent trends show a true revolution of tourists, which look for new kinds of tourism, more focused on the territory, sustainability, and self-care, seeing leisure as an opportunity to grow and change themselves. Moreover, the enlargement of the medium class in developing countries had been rising the number of tourists but also widened the different tastes which these tourists can have, enhancing a multicultural target, and opening the way to new, and less-known destinations which enhanced the competitiveness of the sector. In this context, the most famous and crowded destinations have been forced in reshaping themselves, with new spots and look for more sustainable policies. All these processes have been developed thanks to the Destination Management Organisations, structures aimed at the management of the actors, networking them by their public nature, and setting the common strategy. This analysis had tried to develop both a benchmark of existing best-positioned DMOs, namely the Vienna, Berlin, and London ones, and to obtain an ideal model for the newborn Roman DMO, which is a complex environment, that will take the lead in making the Eternal City again competitive in Europe. Through a punctual analysis of the best examples which European DMOs scenario hosts, it had been possible not only to deeply ordinate the different policies and objective of these entities, but also to compare them and extract the best practices. The analyses involved the use of a novel model, and of an in-depth analysis of the websites and report of the subjects of the research. Moreover, the research continued by integrating the analyses of the foreign DMOs with the ones of the Roman one. Through this process, it had been possible to contribute both in creating a benchmark model and in proposing new solution and a formalization for the future, and only theorized, Roman DMO. The outcome of the analysis has given the evidence that the drafted project of Rome is coherent with the best practices which had been identified analysing its European equivalents. Although the similarity of strategic patterns, proposals, or objectives, it

should be considered in any case the Romanization process which any of the possible implementations should operate. Roman context is controversial and characterized by a sort of immobility which gives Rome its charm, but which is becoming its main enemy when it comes to discuss about changes and new developments. In this sense the complexity of the Capital of Italy should be punctually and deeply analyzed, keeping attention in considering the numerous opportunities which the city offers, and the different realities which animate the destination. Because of this, this study can contribute to formalize the idea and exploring the feasibility of a managerial reality for the Roman tourism. But further studies will be necessary for developing more defined analyses, which could deepen single disciplines and eventual implementations to this base. Limitations of this study primarily relates to the complexity of a theorization which is based on a draft, and using a novel model of analysis which in this study finds its first application. Moreover, only three DMOs had been analysed to extract the practises, making few the possibilities in finding a great variety of results. The DMOs are very similar each other, being the three based on the management of European Capitals, but this is justified by the second objective of the study, the possible preventive analysis and evaluation of a novel DMO established in another European Capital. Nevertheless, a real contribution is given, not only posing the attention on the necessity of developing a Roman DMO, a problem which had been presented since previous time, but in the formalization of this project and its eventual assessment if compared to the European successful realities. From these analyses the literature had find more than one confirm: the DMOs instrument had become central in the new paradigm for the destination management, evolving from a mere marketing nature to a more administrative and territorial development one. The difficulty in finding common practices could seem high, but, nevertheless single realities could differ each one, some best practices had been found in the study. This can suggest that a set of best practices can be drafted and which that it could be instrument of inspiration for further DMOs development. Looking at Rome, some solutions had been drafted, but the way is still long and difficult, and arriving at a true implementation could seem impossible, but the spontaneous rising of a Neighbourhood DMO can open the way to numerous spontaneous phenomena, which, in Rome, could see a unique process which will need of further research.

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Sitography

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Organization and Account Data

	Type	Shareholders	Main Balance Sheet Data
visitBerlin	Public – Private – Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Land of Berlin -Messe Berlin (Trade Fair); -IBB Unternehmensverwaltung (Investment Bank); -TMB (Brandenburg DMO) -Berlin Brandenburg Airport. -visitBerlinPartnerhotelse. V. 	General Earnings: 26,2m
ViennaTourist Board	Non Profit Public Private Partnership	City of Vienna	In 2019 Funding: 29.6m Revenues: 26.2m Costs: 28m
London & Partners	Non Profit Public Private Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mayor of London -The Travel Association (ABTA) -London Chamber of Commerce and Industry -Society of London Theatre and UK Hospitality 	Revenues: 26.2m Costs: 22.6m Funding: 13,136,000

Appendix

A: Model of Analysis

Governance and Administration

	Administration	Governance	Composition	Members' Background
visitBerlin	The Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH Supervisory Board		9 members	Communication, Marketing, Politicians, Economists, Hotels Directors
ViennaTourist Board	Board	Five Departments: Destination Management; Brand Management; Market Management; Media House Commercial Services.	President and 17 members	Finance, Business, Digital Innovation, and International Affairs, Creative Industry
London & Partners	Board and Committees	Management Committee	13 non-executive directors and two executive directors	Entrepreneur, Important personalities of corporate and public institutions. Active in young people promotion, education world. Multinationals marketing. Events, finance and technology.

Purpose, Institutional Mandate, and Strategic Objectives

Purpose

visitBerlin

To inspire the world for Berlin

As Berlin's official promotional organisation for tourism and conventions visitBerlin produces creative ideas and marketing campaigns for Berlin delivered around the world. We also provide support services for all those joining us in actively promoting Berlin as a world city.

- Positive interactions between tourists and Berliners
- Berliners benefit from tourists spending without price increasing
- Focus on quality of all the services along the chain
- Ecological impact as low as possible

Mandate

ViennaTourist Board

The Vienna Tourist Board is the official destination marketing and management organization for Vienna. It provides many service offers, tips and much information for Viennese tourist businesses.

Representing the tourist interests of the city, promoting the destination worldwide, assisting visitors with information and services, contributing to tourism measures instigated by the municipality, and promoting an understanding among local residents for the tourism industry and its economic, cultural and social significance.

- Place Making and Place Marketing
- Meeting Destination
- Smart Solutions

London & Partners

Our work helps achieve "good growth" for London and Londoners

We tell London's story brilliantly to an international audience in partnership with organisations and people who have a stake in London's promotion.

- High-growth sectors – supporting international and domestic businesses in high-growth sectors to scale through our investment, trade, growth and innovation programmes.
- Visitor economy – attracting visitors and events, and developing London as a world-class destination.
- London brand – growing London's global reputation to support economic growth.
- Partnership and ventures – creating partnerships and profit-making ventures to reinvest into our economic growth activity.

Network and Success Factors

Main Stakeholder and Partnerships

Success Factors

visitBerlin

- Senate of Berlin, the city's executive body
- Berlin Partner for Business and Technology
- Company Flughafen Berlin Brandenburg GmbH operate Berlin's the new Berlin Brandenburg Airport (BER)
- visitBerlin Partnerhotelse. V. represents the interests of the Berlin accommodation companies
- The not-for-profit organisation Kulturprojekte Berlin GmbH

- Very differentiated touristic packages
- Great Data Collection
- Developed and updated websites
- Politically involved

ViennaTourist Board

- Public institutions
- International community
- Shopping bodies
- Accomodation
- Vienna Airport

- Tourist centred approach
- Global reputation and international outlook
- Visionary Strategy

London & Partners

- City of London
- EXcel London (exhibitioncentre)
- Radisson Blu (hotel)
- Westfield London/Stanford City (stores)
- Science Museum
- Shakespeare Globe
- Heart of London Business Alliance

- Strong expertise
- Passion of the staff
- Pride in quality
- Customer and Market Insights
- International Business Experience
- Industry experts network

Main Activities (1)

Data Management and

Business Intelligence

- Touristic stats
- Economic Impact Analysis
- Cultural Monitoring

Sources: both Public Institutions (e.g. Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg) and private system, the Visitor Insights, an original online market research tool

Sustainable

Development Strategy

- Synergies between growth in tourism and city development
- specifically heightens awareness of internal aspects of sustainability
- Establishing visitBerlin as an attractive, ecological, and socially responsible employer.
- Establishing Berlin's sustainable image globally
- sustainable and city-friendly Berlin tourism
- sustainability criteria in the product range and product development

Destination

Marketing

- International trade fairs
- Target group activities for schools and sports events
- Meetings and Congresses promotions
- Promoting the image of a tolerant and open minded city
- Promoting Berlin as a must-see destination

visitBerlin

ViennaTourist

Board

- TourMIS is a tourism marketing information system that provides market research data for your management decisions free of charge and in electronic form
- Annual Reports about performances and objectives
- Source: Statistics Austria and Austrian Institute of Economic Research Vienna's (WIFO) Regional Tourism Satellite Account (RTSA)
- Uses 6 KPIs to evaluate success.

Sustainable Visitor Economy Approach
Smart City Approach
Environment Friendly Transportation

- Place Making and Place Marketing: new location within destinations
- Working with all partners, engage travellers with the most quality
- Studies regarding how people travel and how much time they stay
- B2C Marketing: communication campaigns, data-driven contacts, personal communication and social media

London & Partners

Insights of market and key audiences made by London & Partners Experts.
Sources: data collected by third parties (e.g. visitBritain).
Impact assessment together with GLA Economics through Gross Value Added measurement.

- London as leading cleantech hub
- Race to Zero emissions encouragement, also through educational workshops
- Support hospitality industry towards decarbonisation

- Promoting London as an international leading city
- Focus on experience in culture and nightlife, especially in France and US

Main Activities (2)

Advocacy and Lobbying

visitBerlin

- Hotel Industry Involvement
- Citizen Participation
- Districts Participations
- Lobbying and Networking Activities

Touristic Offer Development

- Berlin WelcomeCard: flexible transportation and attractions discount.
- Managed directly by visitBerlin
- Digital Accessibility
- Hier in Berlin: developed by visitBerlin, a platform for discussions with Berlin boroughs, policy-makers, Berlin initiatives and businesses in the tourism sector

ViennaTourist Board

- Collaboration with local business
- Long term collab between the Board and Airport
- Promote Vienna as an hub

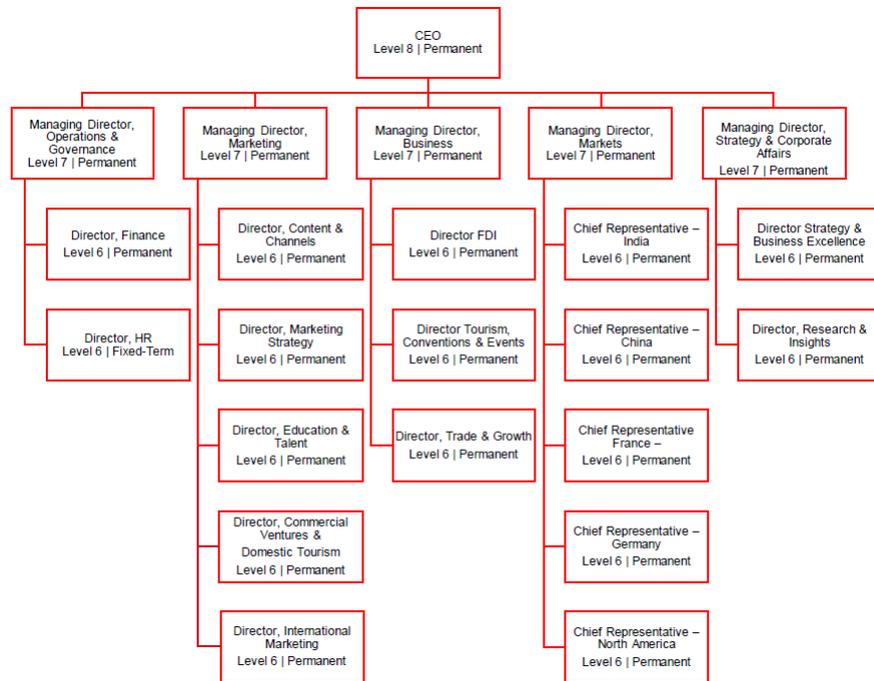
- New urban hotspots
- Promoting Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- New direct flights
- More environmentally friendly means of transport will be promoted
- Activities carried on with a collaborative approach: economy ecosystem including municipal district leaders, urban and property developers, retailers, mobility providers, and universities.
- Vienna CityCard: Transports and Activities included and provided by the board.

London & Partners

- Collaboration with the whole tourist supply chain
- Transparency policy regarding lobbying and decision making

- Developing new tech to boost productivity
- Open innovation fellowship, run together with the Royal College of Art
- London Pass: powered by a third actor.
- London Alliance: a project created in order to bridge together London's businesses

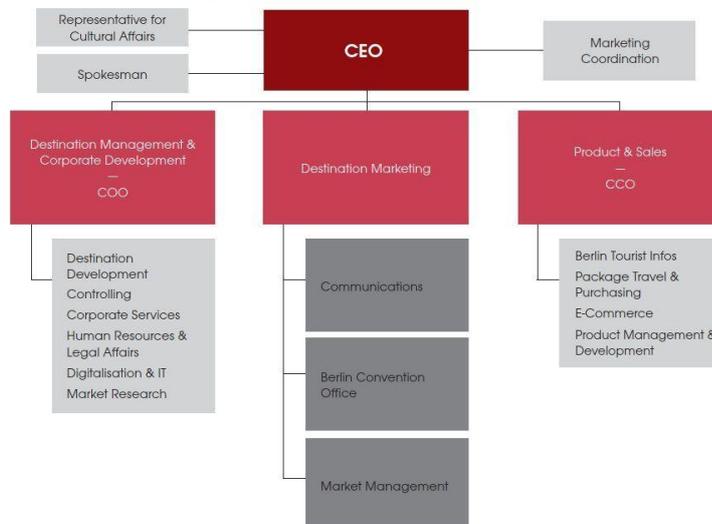
London & Partners Organisational Chart: https://files.londonandpartners.com/l-and-p/assets/HR%20docs/senior_leadership_team_chart.pdf



visitBerlin Organisational Chart: <https://about.visitberlin.de/en/our-corporate-structure>

Organisational Structure

Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH



Vienna Tourist Board Organisational Chart:

<https://b2b.wien.info/en/viennatourism/departments>



Summary

Introduction: The discipline of tourism management had evolved over time, starting from being a marginal reality of the economic life, until becoming, in more recent decades, one of the pillars in which the worlds of economic growth, business development, sustainability, cultural and heritage protection, and local administration can meet. The destination is the centre of this process, being the unit on which strategies are set and practices are implemented. Application and implementations of these practices, the strategic direction and pillars that should be followed had recently passed a phase of transition which has determined the growth and expansions of Destination Management Organisations. These structures had over time obtained a more central role in the management of tourist destinations, passing from being mere marketing entities into transforming in true managerial and network-central institutions. Although many models exist for the analysis of Destinations and DMOs, literature is constantly changing, mainly because of the environmental changes of recent times, which had seen important shifts in tourists' tastes and habits. This work tries to be part of this literature, and seeks to fulfill a double objective. Firstly, proposing a novel model for the analysis and comparison of more DMOs; secondly, using this model to assess and obtain an analysis of the still-developing project of FUTOUROMA, a DMO for the city of Rome. To achieve these objectives, this work follows this path: in the first section, a literature review with the main issues and topics of tourism management is developed. In the second section, models of analyses are described and the novel model, with methodology of analysis, will be introduced, proposed and used on three European DMOs (London & Partners, Vienna Tourist Board, and visitBerlin), extracting then the best practices. This will be the base on which the Roman project, in the third section, will be analysed, discussed, and implemented. Finally, conclusions will explain limitations, findings, and suggestions for further research.

Part One: In more recent years, the tourism industry had become one of the most influenced by social and technological changes: new ICTs, faster transportation at less cost, and a borderless world, which through globalization has given the opportunity to

all countries on play the worldwide game of the global economy, in which tourism destinations had started to compete against each other and in which at the same time new necessities and desires of the newest consumers merge with the social changes both in terms of values and lifestyles.

The link between the tourism industry and the country, region, and city, in which this industry develops is indissoluble: tourism as a whole is so influenced by nature, culture, and people, that it could be impossible to imagine it as a sort of standardized industry such as product ones or other kinds of services. In this sense, the relevance of tourism to society could be measured by looking at the general well-being of that society¹³⁷, which can be composed of economic prosperity, environmental stewardship, and quality of life. Obviously, all these consequences develop towards the objective of prosperity, which more than an objective, is also and especially a consequence of tourism itself. It is embedded in the very nature of tourism shaping lifestyles, societal structures, and the quality of life of residents all around the globe¹³⁸. This idea of prosperity which references also a global concern for the economic future of the world population¹³⁹ perfectly matches some of the megatrends which currently shape not only the tourism sector but the entire society.

Being a constant changing environment, megatrends are an important tool to study, analyze, and anticipate reality. Looking to them and finding the cause and possible consequences can give the power to analysts, entrepreneurs, and politicians, to intervene in policies and strategies, to better adapt them to society and have positive outcomes. Globalization had helped on one hand making easier travels and discovering an always more different and cultural-wide world to the new generation of travels, but at the same time making western culture be exported to other less developed countries, making in some cases lose to the latter their unicity. In this scenario, the role of tourism and in particular tourism operators results fundamental in preserving the culture of the destination, and that unicity that globalization risk taking away. Technological

¹³⁷ Crouch G. I., Brent Ritchie J.R., "Tourism, Competitiveness, and Societal Prosperity", *Journal of Business Research* 44, 137 – 152, 1999

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

development had permitted faster information, in particular, looking at tourism, internet modified the relationship between consumers and players, but also the competition along the supply side of the market, which became more global and more aggressive. Important changes in business models can be also seen in very recent times: Airbnb is maybe one of the most famous examples of this new kind of business which made the new tech opportunities its core business and became an important actor in both economic terms and in changing the vision, modality and reality of travels for consumers too. The Z-generation is invading the market from all around the world, making and building a society of a different kind of conception of travel as an experience, and also different kinds of experiences needed, redesigning lifestyles and social order¹⁴⁰. In this case, tourism can act as an important asset in terms of inclusivity and cultural meeting: a worldwide vision of the people who will become always more world citizens. Environmental damages and climate change result be two of the main issues and dramatic emergencies of our century, and of which the new generation is very active in pushing policies in order to protect the environment and nature. The tourism industry's ecosystem cannot ignore this emergency: primarily because the environment is itself part of the offer, most leisure travels are determined by the willingness of visiting natural and unique sites. Consumers in general, tend nowadays to be more informed and careful regarding the production and practices of products and services providers. The social responsibility of brands and economic actors is under the eyes of public opinions and consumers who have the power not only of orienting their choices of buying one product instead of another, or in this case preferring a place rather than another one, but also the power to bring the message if a place is emotionally engaging enough, this through sharing their own experiences on the web. The major ethical priorities of the consumers, under both an environmentally friendly attitude and a social genuine interest in important issues such as cultural and traditional protection of the local communities very influence the tourism market. Traveling now focuses on a changing experience in which the consumer can learn and grow, building himself by approaching new cultures, an experience which is also permitted by platforms such as Airbnb which permits a "shared" lifestyle. Looking at these trends some important

¹⁴⁰ Menstieri S., Dandini F., "Tourism & Travel: Sviluppi e Scenari Globali per il Turismo che Verrà: Outlook dei Driver e delle Tendenze del Turismo", *Town Meeting per il Piano Strategico*, 2019

consequences of the social and economic aspects of the tourism industry should be noted. New areas can be potentially used to develop a real tourism economy also in the rural regions, which in the next future will have their market enormously rise; and enterprises, operators and actors should prepare themselves to the arrivals of more people with various tastes and priorities. The general idea is that new and future trends will guide a new kind of travel, which is based on the experience, feelings, emotions, and lifestyle which users will live during the vacancy period. It is on “living” which should be focused the travel operators: people now look for the travel as an experience to complete life, as a fundamental part of their own life.

Tourism destinations can be described by numerous definitions, which can enhance one or the other feature. Generally, when it comes to describing a tourist destination, the reference is usually devoted to describing a *place*, which is not necessarily a single city or region, which have political borders, but could also be comprehensive of more than one city or nation. Inside the *place*, the different actors act in order to develop their own businesses, which, anyway, remain dependent on the others in the destination ecosystem. Each actor is not fully independent, so, any action should be weighted relating to the effects which could be produced on the general outcome, which, in this case, is the experience that tourists have during the travel. It is needed that these actors develop behaviors like true managers and that the destination should be seen as a unique “firm” with different centers of profit¹⁴¹. This kind of management operator is also called and defined as a Destination Management Organisation, entities which have the role of coordinating actors, and activities, but also creating and regulating relationships with the whole stakeholders of a destination. Over time DMOs had become more and more relevant in terms of roles. Tourism is not only a matter of promotion of a place in order to attract tourists, but means local development, investments, ecological impact, job creation and sustainability.

Urban Tourism has evolved passing through architectural-based tourism, to the event-based one. In any case, cities and urban districts, thanks to their variety and

¹⁴¹ Nguyen, L., *Towards a Model of the roles and activities of destination management organisations*, Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 2005

modernity, hosted over time an always larger number of tourism both international and domestic, with more economic incidence compared to the countryside and coast¹⁴². Regarding the framework, many studies enhance the Private Public Partnership model as a good structure on which a DMO could be established, it permits to obtain in one hand more involvement of private actors, which also could better know the necessities of the specific sector but also permits to remain backstepped by the public. Another interesting insight when it comes to analyze the Urban Tourism field is about the marketing, in practice DMOs tend to arrive in marketing the sameness, getting similar images of town and cities. It should also be noted that assumptions and objectives that very look to the “numbers”, entail the definition of DMO merely in the marketing area. More recent studies suggest the importance of a wider role of DMOs, going very far from the “number logic” and looking more at impact, which includes also the marketing objectives.

Although the numerous advantages that tourism can offer, in urban realities the excess in the presence of tourists, is going to rise because of many of the trends which have been described in the previous paragraph and which generate a potential never-ending stream of new tourists, had been created and still creates one of the main issues of the industry: the overtourism. This phenomenon results in numerous problems of environmental damage, cultural degradation, local economies destabilization, and lower exceptional moments for tourists. All these factors create dissatisfaction in both locals and tourists which will see both less quality of life for the first and low quality of the experience for the latter. The necessity now for urban destinations relies on finding new ways of interacting between tourists and locals, DMOs’ role is to be a bridge to finding new ways and becoming designers and accelerators of this sustainable regional development¹⁴³. This role had been given from the literature to DMOs, and it is one of the main tasks which these entities should accomplish in order to pass from a marketing to a more management perspective. In fact, it could be impossible to imagine truly sustainable development without effective collaboration and a chain of relations

¹⁴² Heeley J., *Urban Destination Marketing in Contemporary Europe – What Does “Good” Like?*, International Journal of Tourism Cities, 2015

¹⁴³ Eckert et al., *Strategies and Measures Directed Towards Overtourism: a Perspective of European DMOs*, International Journal of Tourism Cities, 2019

among single stakeholders. The main success is unifying all the different interests, giving the market an image of a unique, aligned, and well-organized proposition, which can follow the tourist in all the passages of the vacation, and which finds in the perfect, unique, and real experience of the customer, its best result.

Another interesting level of analysis that could be created in this pattern regards particularly the evolution over time of the idea and subject of Tourism Governance and Planning. The governance paradigm for tourism is now shifting: passing from a government organization-based model to a one more based on networks and partnerships, which many times looks to the private businesses in a “more commercial approach to destination, where trust and power remain essential to develop committed relationships, specifically with regards to the governance of tourism activities and stakeholder’s management”¹⁴⁴. Looking to the most recent trends, tourism planning will change giving always more attention to the management of overtourism in historic towns, which will be more relevant; a holistic perspective of tourism, which will be totalizing in terms of time; uniqueness of destination will make their success and their ability on giving something more to the tourism¹⁴⁵. Tourism planning will face and is facing an always more convergence of political tourism governance and economics and management of the tourist sector, which are always more interconnected¹⁴⁶.

Part Two. Tourism benchmarking, in particular destination one, is the subject of relatively recent studies, which had been pushed by the EU since 1997 with the “Integrated Quality Management of Tourism Destinations” and whose aim was to create some quality standards including both demand and supply-side indicators¹⁴⁷. Benchmarking remains also in the tourism case the technique through which is it possible to identify the leader in terms of practices and performance and fill the gaps by changing the practices if necessary, going beyond the location¹⁴⁸. The individuation

¹⁴⁴ Ramikissoo, H., & Hristov, D. (2018). Tourism institutions and agencies. In C. Cooper S. Volo, & W. C. Gartner The sage handbook of tourism management (pp. 485-501). SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526461452.n29>

¹⁴⁵ Costa, C. (2020), "Tourism planning: a perspective paper", *Tourism Review*, Vol. 75 No. 1, pp. 198-202. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-09-2019-0394>

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Kozak, M. (2002). Destination benchmarking. *Annals of tourism research*, 29(2), 497-519.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

and analyses of best practices cannot ignore the many differences which can occur between destinations, also in terms of culture, background, and traditions¹⁴⁹. All of these variables make difficult more linear and direct confrontations between destinations, which, nevertheless, can meet in the DMOs practices analyses a good terrain in which bridging through a model could be possible.

Diverse models over time had tried to manage and benchmark destinations and/or DMOs. Basically, some important analyses had been based on productivity and competitiveness, moreover, the new sustainable paradigm had been making introduced this new measure as an integration of models and quality assessment tools. In order to solve this issue and include any particularity in a model that, nevertheless, should remain synthetic, Ritchie and Crouch developed a *conceptual model of destination competitiveness* which enhances the link between tourism and quality of life, and the significance of the destination competitiveness concept¹⁵⁰. The second model analysed is a more modern version of the competitive model, integrated with sustainable policies, and that enhances the long-term competitiveness and vision of a destination¹⁵¹. Only by considering all the stakeholders involved and trying in finding a good balance and harmony, it is possible to achieve successful tourism development. In this model five areas are analyzed and evaluated: economic competitiveness; sociocultural competitiveness; environmental competitiveness; sustainable policy-making and management; tourists' satisfaction and behaviors¹⁵². A final model which can be analyzed in the literature is based on different roots. The productivity model considers many measures to analyze the input and outputs of a destination: starting from these, different locations are grouped according to the worldwide travel and tourism competitiveness index, in order to entail the heterogeneity, and having a "fair" benchmarking.

Because of the central role of DMOs, it results fundamentally not only analyzing the destination, its environment, and potential, but also directly the DMO of that

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Nadalipour, Z., Imani Khoshkhoo, M.H. and Eftekhari, A.R. (2019), "An integrated model of destination sustainable competitiveness", *Competitiveness Review*, Vol. 29 No. 4, pp. 314-335.

¹⁵² Ibid.

destination, its contribution to the development of the destination, and how this contribution is successful or not¹⁵³. The Bornhorst model uses as main dimensions the networking capabilities in promoting internal stakeholder relations; performing activities in professional manners; sufficient personnel and funding; and transparent evidence of performance¹⁵⁴. With his model Bornhorst arrives more to demonstrate that, not completely, but in an important measure, DMOs success and Destinations one has common roots, seeing also to the DMOs as the only “organization that currently has the ability to develop both holistic strategies to deal with the multitude of stakeholders involved in the tourism system and to develop marketing programs that will draw visitors to the destination”¹⁵⁵.

Methodology: The model which has been developed for this research, differently, is very focused on the Organization, looking more at the qualitative analyses of each DMO, permitting also to estimate comparisons between them. Once looked at the websites of each, which are comprehensive of almost all the information needed for completing the schemes of analysis, it has been commented on and explained the results. The analysis is conducted on three European DMOs: visitBerlin, the Vienna Tourist Board and London & Partners. The objective of the further analysis is to find critical factors which lead the DMOs to success. The model which will be used tries to entail different dimensions of a DMO, but at the same time also provides a scheme that can be read and which permits a rapid difference overview. Structurally, more tables are used as summaries of key information, which, if fulfilled, can provide the researcher with a complete framework of the entire institution in terms of structure, governance, policies, and network. In the first table, the organization model and account data are analyzed. The second panel is focused on governance and composition. The third panel is more oriented toward the intentions and actions of these realities. A fourth panel is comprehensive of the other two main souls of a DMO if inspired by the “good rules” that the aforementioned studies and literature provide. The final area is wide and

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Tom Bornhorst, J.R. Brent Ritchie, Lorn Sheehan, Determinants of tourism success for DMOs & destinations: An empirical examination of stakeholders' perspectives, *Tourism Management*, Volume 31, Issue 5, 2010, Pages 572-589, ISSN 0261-5177, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.06.008>

divides and orders the main activities and practices. Then, the results will be used to develop a SWOT analysis and take the results in order to create a pool of best practices that will be used as a benchmark for future DMOs projects. The main objective in this case is both collecting information regarding effective DMOs, confronting them, and finally taking the best practices, which are applied by almost each of the analyzed DMOs, and finally giving a complete insight of the Roman DMO draft, to which suggestions and assessment will be provided.

Results: Looking at the structural side, the kind of companies chosen reflects perfectly the literary analysis of the previous chapter, finding the *Non-Profit Public-Private Partnerships* as one of the most efficient and used organizational models, together with the idea of driving on a non-profit base. Shareholders in both cases of visitBerlin and London & Partners are mainly statal entities and organs. The first includes the public authority, trade fair, investment bank, the airport, the regional DMO, and the hotel association. The latter travel association, chamber of commerce and the society of theatre and hospitality. The Viennese only the public organ (City of Vienna). The presence of not only a single statal shareholder (at least in two out of three elements), but of a multitude of different investors justifies the idea that these novel structures should enhance a wide engagement of the different realities of tourism, which is at the basis of numerous characteristics which it will be found later.

Focusing on the Administrative and Managerial roles, the three agencies are organized through committees or boards, which are composed of numerous people. The use of boards and committees is not the case: these entities should accord and maintain active constant attention to the different interests of the whole industry, and always more and more diverse expertise is required.

The different missions focus on different ideas which, together, are an extremely relevant role in how DMOs are conceptualized in literature, particularly in enhancing the image of city internationally, focusing on local wellness and collaboration between actors. The mandate justifies in some sense the power and the roles which are attributed to the DMO in order to fulfill its objectives. All the mandates have in common the idea of giving a network centrality to the DMOs, making them connectors, promoters, and pro-active managers of many aspects of the destinations.

Most common objectives seem to converge in these aspects: Benefit of the locals; Quality in all the chain of services offered to the tourists; Supporting the international position of the destination; Creating innovation through partnerships and ventures; Ecological Sustainability objectives by developing a Smart Destination.

All the three DMOs rely upon very similar kinds of networking partners, trying to include mainly the public authority, the shopping bodies, the international community, and the transportation authority. Also, technological development and accommodation areas are included in the high-valued partnerships.

Activities can be summarized in the application of the main objectives and projects which had been described: Innovation Programmes, Sustainability Criteria, Report Production, Synergies between Tourism and City Development.

Using this model, it is possible having an outlook and general overview of each of the DMOs which are the object of this study. visitBerlin can count on numerous strengths on its own. It has for sure one of the widest portfolios in terms of a variety of single activities. Nevertheless, the growth in numbers of the city is making difficult the management of the locals; the approach is very related from a marketing view, the objective is to give the image of berlin and Berliners and have a positive impact, but the marketing-based approach still remains strong in the general way of acting. Because maybe of facing the problem of overtourism, one of the main focuses is on the ecological sustainability, which is an important standing point of the literature. Vienna Tourist Board's strength is its unique visionary strategy, centered on visitors and the quality of the city as the most livable city in the world. Moreover, the variety of the board (the most numerous) is evidence of many points of view and backgrounds. A "negative" aspect is the participation as a shareholder of only the public authority, which involve less than other DMOs in the private sector. Also, the threat of overtourism is a reality in Vienna, in which the center can remain the only visited area¹⁵⁶ in the destination, without the opportunity of having a true cultural immersion in the Austrian or simply Viennese cultural substrate. London and Partners, looking in particular at the other two DMOs, is maybe the one that is most corporate-alike. It has

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.tourism-review.com/over-tourism-is-bothering-vienna-news10889>

a part dedicated totally to the London experience but made in a more classical way, we have linkages directly to all the singles activities. Moreover, the London Card is on the website but powered by a third entity. There is not so much focus on the impact on Londoners' life, remaining very brand-minded in the idea that London should be promoted in the EU and overseas. London & Partners, nevertheless, can result under a certain point of view more "complete". Starting from the fact that the idea is very economic-based, looking to economic growth over the touristic one. In this sense, London goes beyond the idea of being a destination, underlying the business growth, which is a part of London's branding.

Part Three: Historically, thanks to its own cultural and natural heritage, Italy had always been one of the most important and famous destinations of the whole international tourism.¹⁵⁷ Most visited locations in Italy are the cultural urban sites which are concentrated mostly in the cities of Rome, Florence, Milan, Venice, and Naples. recent general worldwide trends have been in the very few years determinant in changing radically most of the aspects of the tourist sector as we had known until now. Italy in this phase is not the newborn destination that can represent a threat in the sector, but, conversely, had always been one of the main and most important countries in terms of numbers. This results in the necessity of taking new approaches to tourism that can meet the most recent trends. New approaches can result in better integration of the different activities, giving quality output; this integration is possible through the creation of structures that can connect and integrate the different tourist activities, namely, the DMOs. Because of this, the strategic outline is particularly important in order to exploit these advantages with a focus on new tourist products which need to anticipate international customers.

The Italian fallacy of not being strategic enough in terms of tourism guidelines had been interrupted in 2017, when, for the first time, a *National* and shared policy has

¹⁵⁷ Breda, Emanuele and Cappariello, Rita and Romano, Valentina, Il turismo internazionale in Italia: recenti tendenze, domanda potenziale e confronto con i principali concorrenti europei (International Tourism in Italy: Recent Trends, Potential Demand and a Comparison With the Main European Competitors) (December 14, 2018). Bank of Italy Occasional Paper Numero 475 – Dicembre 2018, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3355410>

been implemented¹⁵⁸. The plan articulates numerous objectives which can be summarized in four macro-areas: Innovation projects to promote and integrate the national offer; Boosting competitiveness through a simpler normative system, promoting innovation and digitalization; Effective Marketing, particularly by promoting UNESCO sites; A new and more participatory governance system. In particular, an important point of the strategy regards the bigger destinations, which are mainly the most famous cultural cities which make the country unique in terms of density of heritage (Rome, Milan, Naples, Venice, Florence...). These *top destinations* represent a very important site of management: they are usually the very first Italian experience that tourists have, and, because of this, the experience should be focused on both creating a reputation and making sustainable tourism avoiding overcrowding.

Rome is maybe one of the most iconic and famous destinations worldwide. It is world-renowned because of its cultural, historical, and artistic heritage. Over time, surprisingly, in fact, the idea of Rome as antiquity has overcome even the idea of Rome as a religious center and has enhanced the vision of the city as a Museum of western culture and civilization, or, at least, an archive, a repository for preserving the past. This huge historical value can suggest that the resulting city is a complex system of different layers¹⁵⁹ in which relations between operators and institutions are tangled. Moreover, the institutional weaknesses in imposing its authority make possible a spontaneous growth and development not only of the city in spatial terms, but in tourism ones too, which trained itself over time thanks to the enormous concentration of both cultural, historical sites, and of many public and private functions of national and international importance¹⁶⁰.

Fortunately, a light seems to come from the institutions. Looking outside mainly at other European capitals, it seems evident the fact that Rome currently presents enormous opportunities and potential which had not been exploited yet. In fact, the most recent touristic trends are showing the potential which a country like Italy could

¹⁵⁸ Francesco Palumbo, 2018. "2017-2022: Even in Italy Tourism is planned. Updating the new season in Italian policies of tourism," *Economia della Cultura*, Società editrice il Mulino, issue 1-2, pages 91-106.

¹⁵⁹ Gemmiti, Roberta. 2019. "Neoliberal Rome—The Role of Tourism" *Social Sciences* 8, no. 6: 196. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci8060196>

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

have in its completeness. The focus now should be on setting a second-tourism-based system¹⁶¹. Nevertheless, the integration of these second layer activities, meets many of the issues of the city, first of all, the absence of a truly powerful managerial and governance structure, the lack of coordination among government and association, the high bureaucracy, and the absence of a mechanism of business networks creation¹⁶². For these reasons, the idea of an official Roman intervention with the structure of a DMO started to be developed in 2019: FUTOUROMA.

The project of innovating the management and the strategic approach of Rome has been declared, and defined, as a strategic *iter* with the aim of promoting and enhancing the destination from any point of view. In order to better describe and evaluate at least the plan¹⁶³ according to which the new DMO should be constructed, it is possible to analyze it through the model which has been previously used to compare the three foreign DMOs. From the analysis it comes out that FUTOUROMA is an ambitious project, it entails many of the most approved and literature-based assumptions of ideas and practices which a good DMO should follow in the current global context. Many practices, which have been drafted in the guidelines, try to conceal most of the problems that are typical of the Roman context with a more strategic and international lens, nevertheless, some important suggestions can be made in order to enhance some important features and aspects which could be deepened and developed. Some betterment can be done, focus on the visitor approach method, and a more powerful diversity and inclusion program; important focuses such as a true *race to zero* emissions program in the sustainability objective and more focus on innovation programs looking to not only start-ups but to a general digitalization and development, which could have an important shared benefit to the city. Regarding the feasibility of the process, The answer relies maybe on the education programs, telling Romans that only if they change, the city can really know a new kind of livability not only for tourists but in particular for Romans themselves. The key is trying to translate practices into the roman

¹⁶¹ Valeri, M. (2015). Sustainability development and competitiveness of Rome as a tourist destination. *Tourism and hospitality management*, 21(2), 203-217.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ejarque J. (2019), IL PIANO STRATEGICO DEL TURISMO DI ROMA CAPITALE, F Tourism & Marketing, <https://www.turismoroma.it/sites/default/files/IL%20PIANO%20STRATEGICO%20DEL%20TURISMO%20DI%20ROMA%20CAPITALE.pdf>

reality, adapting them to the administrative fallacies and bureaucracy, which makes them less elastic in some implementations. Conversely, the touristic revolution could be a good chance to try a true reassess of Roman administrative structures, creating a new vision and urban asset of the city, which can create a strong separation (in terms of managerial administration culture) with the past, making strong economic and re-evaluation investments.

In this context in which the local administration is trying to put an order, Rome always remember the world that, if not the institutions, Roman are perfectly able in take the lead and auto-administrate their city. This is the case of the newborn DMO *ES.CO*. It is the first case of Neighborhood DMO, which aims to entail all the citizens and actors and acts as instrumental for a future co-working with Roma Capitale. So, in the meanwhile, a project which blinked an eye to the foreign DMOs was ready to be born, but a new approach could take spontaneously the lead. In this sense, FUTOUROMA could change its plans, giving space to the creation of sub-DMOs that can be coordinated from a central structure.

Conclusions: This analysis had tried to develop both a benchmark of existing best-positioned DMOs, namely the Vienna, Berlin, and London ones, and to obtain an ideal model for the newborn Roman DMO, which is a complex environment, that will take the lead in making the Eternal City again competitive in Europe. The analyses involved the use of a novel model, and of an in-depth analysis of the websites and report of the subjects of the research. Through this process, it had been possible to contribute both in creating a benchmark model and in proposing new solution and a formalization for the future, and only theorized, Roman DMO. Because of this, this study can contribute to formalize the idea and exploring the feasibility of a managerial reality for the Roman tourism. But further studies will be necessary for developing more defined analyses, which could deepen single disciplines and eventual implementations to this base. Nevertheless, a real contribution is given, not only posing the attention on the necessity of developing a Roman DMO, a problem which had been presented since previous time, but in the formalization of this project and its eventual assessment if compared to the European successful realities.

DMOs instrument had become central in the new paradigm for the destination management, evolving from a mere marketing nature to a more administrative and territorial development one. The difficulty in finding common practices could seem high, but, nevertheless single realities could differ each one, some best practices had been found in the study. This can suggest that a set of best practices can be drafted and which that it could be instrument of inspiration for further DMOs development.