

Urban Challenges and Sustainable Technological Revolution



Special Session Proposal

Proximity tourism and local development. Theoretical insights and case studies

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Abstract

After the Covid-19 pandemic, increased sensitivity to environmental, ethical, and health problems accelerated the rise of new tourism and tourist practices, distant from international mass tourism. In such a context, proximity tourism is gaining new attention among regional scientists, namely because of its impact on local communities and ecosystems and the local economic system. Intuitively, proximity tourism identifies a type of domestic tourism characterised by limited travel distance and congestion. For this reason, it is also often indicated as sustainable tourism. However, the definitions of proximity tourism are diverse, and a solid debate is still to come. For instance, some authors identify this type of tourism in short-range routes and a duration that goes from a single overnight to a weekend. Other authors, conversely, include in proximity tourism also daily visits of at least 4 hours characterised by innovation and low-impact means of transport. Likely, proximity tourism is poorly debated because of its limited (or underestimated) impact on the local economy compared to international tourism. Moreover, proximity tourists are far more challenging to detect than international ones, due to the often informal nature of close-to-home travels. At the same time, a debate is relevant, especially today, that international mass tourism showed its weaknesses. In the context of the 62nd edition of ERSA Congress, the session will focus on proximity tourism as a central lever to support sustainable local development processes, mainly in marginal, periurban and inner areas. Critical issues in the session are: Proximity Tourism and the local ecosystem; Proximity Tourism and the local economy; Proximity Tourism and the local society; The sustainability of proximity tourism; Policies and practices of proximity tourism. Contributions discussing the touristic attractiveness of marginal, periurban and inner areas from an international perspective will also be considered.