

ECOLOGICAL MODERNISATION OF THE TOURISM

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***Abstract:** The article examines the capacity of the Ecological Modernisation Theory (EMT) as a paradigm for environmental policy making within the tourism destinations to improve their sustainability, competitiveness and commercial success. To cope with the challenges and threats the tourism faces, of great importance is setting-up an innovative policy-making model, to bring new perspectives, interactions between stakeholders and policy instruments to balance the economic growth and environmental concerns. While the ecological modernisation within the tourism industry makes necessary the introduction of new technologies and management strategies at the company level to bring about economic and environmental benefits, the state needs new policy instruments and approaches to deal with these new paths. Policy making process and ecological restructuring of the tourism sector is analysed using as a tool the "policy network" analysis.*

Keywords: Environmental Governance, Sustainable Tourism, Ecological Modernisation, Environmental-oriented Innovation, Policy networks, Romania;

JEL Classification: C78; D78; D85; O21; O31

I. INTRODUCTION:

Tourism is one of the most important economic sectors that can help recovering the economies during economic crisis, especially in the countries with significant natural and anthropogenic amenities. Even if the economic crisis affected all the sectors, including tourism, the reality shows that the tourism market has a growing share in the global market, the competitiveness and development strategies being the key of success. In this regard it is clear that the tourism industry must assume more responsibility for the environment and quality of life in tourism destinations. Furthermore, the local authorities have a central role to play in achieving sustainable responsible tourism through commitment to supportive policy frameworks and adequate funding.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg called upon local authorities and tourism administrations to develop through multi-stakeholders processes-destination management strategies and responsible tourism guidelines to create better places for the host communities and tourists.

Tourism sector in Romania is currently attempting to deal with various complex environmental problems that cannot be neglected, because the environmental conditions determine the demand for tourism products. Ensuring the economic, social and environmental sustainability of Romanian tourism is crucial both as a contribution to "sustainable development" in Romania and for the viability, continued growth, competitiveness and commercial success of this economically highly important sector. Many environmental problems in tourism resorts are associated with mass tourism in high season, pressure on the local resources, low infrastructure development and a weak environmental policy agenda. The challenges for sustainable tourism are linked on the one side to the consumption patterns (in particular considering the seasonality, consumer/tourist behaviour and tourism travel) and to the other side to its production patterns (i.e. the supply of tourism products, services and activities in tourist destinations, including mobility).

Tourism destinations in Romania are characterized by a high population density in a small area, an extraordinary ecological importance and a high economical value. Thus, there are intensive and multiple uses and various actual and potential conflicts. At the same time, the tourism destinations show a great dynamic and a further intensification of the activities in the future is predicted. The pressures exerted by tourism on the tourism areas are even more damaging as these are fragile zones: ecosystems are disrupted by tourist developments, or may even disappear once roads, holiday homes, dykes, marinas, amusement parks, sky slopes, etc. develop. Moreover, underground water supplies may run dry after heavy use of fresh water (hotels, swimming pools, showers on beaches, golf courses, urban-style parks, etc.). The consumers' behaviour, backed by environmentally sound practices and behaviour on the part of producers (tourism industry and local administration) is an important factor that contributes to the quality of tourism destination.

This paper sets out critical responses to the challenge of changing the nature of tourism development to a more ecological, sustainable model. These dimensions have at their core the issue of "greening the tourism sector", and therefore focuses mainly on policy making process at local level within so called „*policy networks*”, which builds up on a case study that will be discussed on within next sections. Broadly speaking this article attempts to analyse the institutional structures within which tourism operates; to identify the environmental, organisational, management and finance issues involved in the development of sustainable tourism; to assess the role of public and private institutions in facilitating, promoting, managing and distributing the benefits from the

development of sustainable tourism in conjunction with local entrepreneurs, resource controllers, tourists and communities; to examine the extent of, and potential for, the formation of partnerships in creating effective institutional structures; to identify institutional good practices and innovation against the background of the opportunities and constraints tourism faces; to identify changes and innovations in institutional arrangements, discourses and practices, and to formulate models of the structural patterns which best allow tourism to make effective contributions to regional development. The study investigates what strategies will further this reorientation and if these strategies will accelerate sustainable tourism in general.

The paper is of particular relevance to tourism destinations in wealthy nations and to those fast-growing prosperous tourism destinations in low- and middle-income nations. Moreover, the investigation looks on the extent the tourism sector in a tourism destination in Romania has ecologically restructured and what policies approaches are suitable for the greening of tourism industry.

2. TOURISM- ENVIRONMENT RELATIONSHIP AND THE POLICY MAKING PROCESS

The tension between economic growth and environmental protection lies at the heart of environmental politics. Considering the challenges and threats the tourism is facing with, of great importance for the tourism destinations in Romania is the innovation in setting up tourism policies in order to enrol in competition with Western European tourism destinations. These policies should involve new perspectives, interactions between stakeholders and policy instruments to achieve the strategic goal of sound tourism development while considering the environmental concerns. The local governments in tourism destination have direct influence over the major supply side decisions that both directly and indirectly influence tourism demand.

There is increasing evidence that the local governments (local councils) can not manage the environmental management of the tourism destinations without devolving a part of their tasks to the private sector. This means that the three actors involved in tourism and environmental management: the state, the private sector and civil society have to be reformed to promote good governance- a process whereby societies or organisations, with local government at its core, make their important decisions, determine whom they involve in the process and how they render account.

Over recent years, the tourism industry has increasingly pressured governments around the world to liberalise trade and investment in services and is likely to benefit tremendously from the General Agreement on Trade in Services - a multilateral agreement under the World Trade

Organisation (WTO). Meanwhile, the voices of the tourism industry are urging for a cautious approach towards globalisation, also in terms of environmental impact. There are voices that are questioning the tourism globalisation in what concerns the preserving of the environment, and implementing sustainable development programmes.

“If the tourism development is dominated by the public sector then is unlikely to be developed at the optimal rate from the economic point of view” (Cooper, et. al., 1998, p.130). In this regard, the private sector could play the most powerful role in managing tourism in tourism destinations. Profit and business survival on long term depends on maintaining an attractive and clean environment in tourism destinations while specific operational costs savings can be achieved with improved technology for energy, waste reduction and low water consumption. Furthermore, the role of consumers (tourists) must not be neglected. According to Lipman (1994, p.1), “with increased number of consumers becoming more environmentally conscious in their purchase behaviour, environmental practices will become a decisive factor in travel and tourism purchases”. The solution is a balance between public and private sector involvement in the tourism planning. Adequate policies and management interventions can play an important role in modifying the rate and direction of the interactions between tourism "producers" (local governments and tourism industry that provide tourism services, infrastructure and products, etc.) and "consumers" (tourists), and between them and the resource base, consequently avoiding and mitigating the impacts on environment in tourism destinations.

Hawkins and Middleton (1998, p.56), stated that the “local government has a changing role in the tourism development”. They asserted that, traditional planning methods are no longer adequate for coping with rapidly moving social and economic forces and dealing with the needs of post-industrial societies. Consequently Hawkins and Middleton (1998, p.66) they have shown that “*change has forced the pace in privatising and in forcing proactive partnerships with the private sector to achieve wider strategic goals that cannot be achieved by the public sector alone*”.

2.1 Sustainable development versus Ecological modernisation

The concept of "sustainable tourism" is based on the more general concept of "sustainable development". As Buttel (2000, p.59) stated the concept of sustainability and sustainable development had real “*shortcomings in providing guidance and vision*” for the future evolution of the environmental policy. The concept was popularised, questioned, interpreted by innumerable users and everyone seems to impose its own interpretation on it. Probably it was only an “empty

slogan whose time had come without anyone really knowing what it meant” (Redclift 1994, 3). As a theory, “sustainable development” promises something to everyone. Lele (1991, p.613), ironically stated that the sustainable development is “a metafix that will unite everybody from the profit minded industrialist and risk minimising subsistence farmer to the equity seeking social worker, the pollution concerned or wildlife loving First Worlder, the grow maximising policy maker, the goal oriented bureaucrat, and therefore the vote counting politician”. Semantically, the concept of sustainable development fused two words derived from verbs with contradictory meanings. The word “sustain” means perpetuation and balance, while “develop” is a dynamic word that involve expansion and transformation. If the two words cannot “accommodate” their meanings, then the term’s relevance is corrupted. On the Round Table on Sustainable Development, Vitalis (OECD, 2001) asserted that “ironically, the term sustainable development implicitly assumes that the development is unsustainable by definition, and must be altered or tempered to perpetuate growth”.

Many environmental issues that are clearly identified in tourism destinations remain only in a small extent addressed because the governing authorities have found difficult to turn the concept of sustainability in practical policies and they lack the political will to impose restraints upon economic actors, but also to cooperate to bring about economic and ecological benefits. Moreover, regulation is not a linear process where policy-makers enforce a particular policy with a distinctive and well-defined effect. Policy success depends on many factors and particularly on the co-operation of different groups of society in tourism destinations. Based on the sustainable development concept, environmental policies in Romanian tourism destinations lack the integration among sectors, still use traditional administrative regulatory mechanisms and face the same problem: implementation deficit and shortage of suitable mechanisms of evaluation of policy making process. Consequently, regulation is more effective when used as a framework to encourage changes, rather than as a system of rigid rules. Flexible policy tools and credible long-term objectives can promote the development and adoption of clean technologies, while the environmental regulations should be based on a co-operative process.

As a result of elusiveness of the sustainable development and of its weak implementation a growing interest is emerging in the implementation of *Ecological Modernisation Theory (EMT)*, a variant of sustainable development concept having the advantage that indicates how to reach a sound environment without pointing out what is sustainable or not, proposing a reconciliation between the opposing goals of economic growth and environmental protection, by so named "greener industrialisation”.

2.2. Ecological modernisation a paradigm for environmental policy making in tourism destinations

EMT as a paradigm for ecologically restructuring of the society brings innovation by its main core themes: the changing the role of science and technology, the increasing importance of market dynamic and economic agents, the transformation in the role of the national state, changing discursive practices and emerging new ideologies, the modification in the role of ideology of social movements. In the ecological modernisation, traditional curative and repair options are replaced by preventive approaches by incorporating the environmental considerations into the production process. Moreover, more decentralised, bottom-up, flexible and consensual styles of governance that replace the traditional command and control policy making, emerged. Increasingly, the social movements are involved in the public and private decision- making regarding environmental reforms.

EMT has identified two options for strategies to overcome the deficiencies of the traditional bureaucratic state in environmental policy making, namely:

-a first option concerns a "transformation of environmental policy from curative and reactive to preventive, from exclusive to participatory policy-making, from centralised to decentralised...from domineering, over regulated environmental policy making to a policy that creates favourable conditions and contexts for environmentally sound practices and behaviour on the part of producers and consumers" (Mol 1995, p46-47). In this respect, Mol suggests that the state will have to focus more on steering via economic mechanisms and change its management strategy by introducing collective self-obligations for economic sector via discursive interest mediation.

-the second option refers to a "transfer of responsibilities, incentives and tasks from the state to the market that accelerates the ecological transformation process" (Mol 1995, p.46-47). Thus, the welfare state is relieved of a part of its "burden" and tasks in environmental management by transferring those responsibilities that can be better managed by the private sector itself. The reason behind this statement is the fact that the market is considered to be a more efficient and effective mechanism for tackling environmental problems than the state. The central idea is not a weakening of the power of the state in the environmental management, but a transformation in the relation between the state and society with different accents on the steering role of the state. Ecological modernisation views the environmental challenge as an opportunity rather than a crisis. Industrial

innovation stimulated by an enabling state is a path leading both to economic growth and environmental quality.

Huber (1982, p.12) believes that at the core of ecological modernisation theory is the reciprocal process of the "*ecologising of economy*" and the "*economising of ecology*". Through these two concepts he focused on *sustainable production and consumption* through the introduction of economic aspects, mechanism and principles directed towards environmental protection. For Huber this meant addressing the environmental problems mainly through the transformation of production via development and application of more sophisticated technologies that bring about emissions cut, reductions on the water and energy consumption, also a decrease in waste generation. He believes that the only way of surpassing the ecological crises is going further into the process or modernisation towards "super- industrialisation". These may happen within the tourism sector by placing an economic value on nature and including market instruments as eco-taxes, liability, the increasing demand for ecologically sound products, environmental audits. The aim is to determine the economic actors (tourism industry) and consumers (tourists and local communities) to take into consideration the environmental aspects in their "production" and "consumption" process of the tourism products, services and activities.

The intervention of the state in the affairs of the private sector is often criticised by social theorists. The relation between regulatory state and innovation from the side of tourism industry in resorts is explored considering that the impact of regulation is influenced not only by its imperatives on bringing environmental improvement, but also by negotiations between the state as regulator body and regulated tourism companies. Whenever, impact of regulation is assessed on its capacity of influencing technological and strategic dimensions of innovation of regulated tourism companies. Therefore, the role of regulations in EMT consist in establishing imperatives for improvement whilst in the same time improving the capacity of tourism industry to respond to those imperatives, thus keeping the steering role of the state (local and national governments) in bringing about changes in production and consumption processes.

Considering the "globalisation of tourism", the EMT and the focus on "self- regulation" represent a premise for increased environmental performance of tourism industry and a competitive advantage on the tourism market. As time as environment becomes integrated part of the economic interest, the tourism industry being a big consumer of natural resources (water, energy, generation of tremendous quantities of wastewater and waste), tourism companies will start to demand audits for energy and water savings and waste management and invest in innovation, etc. The Ecological modernisation theory appeals to the private sector (tourism industry) using a word this is interested in, namely "profit", by means of market-based incentives, making the theory more probably to be

accepted by the tourism industry. In this respect, EMAS, eco-labelling, blue flag, etc. shall emerge as important instruments to characterise the environmental performance at tourism industry level, precondition for competition within tourism market.

In these particular circumstances the role of state institutions (Local councils, Environmental Protection Agencies, Romanian Water Company, etc.) is to create conditions for self-regulation by emphasising on dialogue and negotiations with the tourism industry, while the tourism industry is responsible for correcting its externalities and carefully use of resources by investing in green technologies for mitigating the environmental impact. Moreover, the state institutions will also be in charge with monitoring the environmental performance of tourism industry especially by means of economic instruments, by ensuring the “polluter pays principle”.

Angel and Rock (2003, p.45-59) indicated that benefits that can be obtained from close cooperation between the agencies of economic development and the firms (while maintaining autonomy from the firms) include improvements in technological and managerial capability, as well as a wider range of resources and policy tools applicable to enhance economic growth and environmental performances.

Looking at the consumer side, it is clear that in tourism sector environmental problems are more closely linked to “consumption” than to dangerous or inefficient production processes, as time as “consumption” of “tourism products” involves consumption of higher quantities of water, energy and generation of tremendous quantities of waste in full season. The relentless increase in energy and water consumption, the release of carbon dioxide and associated impacts on climate and biodiversity is the best example. Tourists as consumers are not just consuming to survive. It is also clear that the tourists as consumers should not be understood as autonomous actors unaffected by the consumption decisions of the producers and regulators. Even if tourists are willing to change consumption practices in order to reduce their impact on the environment they are likely to face considerable problems because of the context within which they spend their holidays, related to technology development and inefficiency of tourism industry and of local governments in developing and promoting “innovative” models to influence the tourists consumption.

It seems likely that this will involve governments actively promoting an environmental and social message of some kind as distinct from simply providing information. It may involve political speeches, legislation or funding for action programs for the education and tourism information on the practice of a sound tourism. Focussing on more efficient use of energy, water and materials is appropriate. In the sphere of consumption, it is required that consumption acts to be experienced as environmentally friendly by consumers.

2.3. Policy networks in EMT

The traditional “command and control” paradigm cannot deal anymore with the environmental policy making and gives space to “governance” as a new concept that respects the autonomy of societal actors involved in policy- making process. Thus the role of the state changes from authoritative allocation to negotiation, hierarchy will give way to equality among negotiating partners and mutual trust among policy partners. Modern democratic governance reflects a shift towards a sharing of tasks and responsibilities, public policy being made via some kind of hybrid arrangements involving public, private and non-governmental institutions. Even though the modern governance is non-hierarchical, the public sector remains ultimately responsible for governance. But before the policies are adopted by elected politicians, policy choices are shaped and refined in bargaining between a diverse range of actors, all having an interest in what policy model is chosen and in advantages they can draw from the implementation of the policy.

As Mol (1995, p.61) acknowledged, “EMT falls short of analytical concepts essential for analysing ecological restructuring process of institutional arrangements”. Whenever, a tool for analysing policy making and ecological restructuring is the *network analysis*. The central idea of EMT is that institutional arrangements cannot happen accidentally, that is why ecological changes should be evident by looking at the transformation of the three spheres: policy, economic and societal institutions.

According to Borzel, (1997, p.9) “policy networks provide for a network for the efficient horizontal coordination of the interests and actions of public and private actors mutually dependent on their resources”. By combining the autonomy of the market actors with the abilities of hierarchies to pursue selected goals and to control their anticipated consequences, the policy networks can overcome the problem of horizontal coordination.

Rhodes and Marsh (1992, p.181-192), acknowledged two types of policy networks: *policy communities* and loosely affiliated *issue networks*. While the policy communities are quite stable, have a limited number of participants, bargaining over resources between members, frequent interactions, the issue networks comprise a large number of participants with quite variable degree of mutual commitment or dependence on others and no one group is in the control of the policies. The type of policy network is generated by three key variables: the relative stability of the network’s membership (concerns the dominance of one actor over the time or the existence of a fluid membership and dependent on the specific policy issue), the relative insularity (a closed or open membership for outsiders with different objectives), the strength of resource dependencies (do

network members depend on each other for resources: money, expertise, legitimacy or are self-sufficient and independent to each other?).

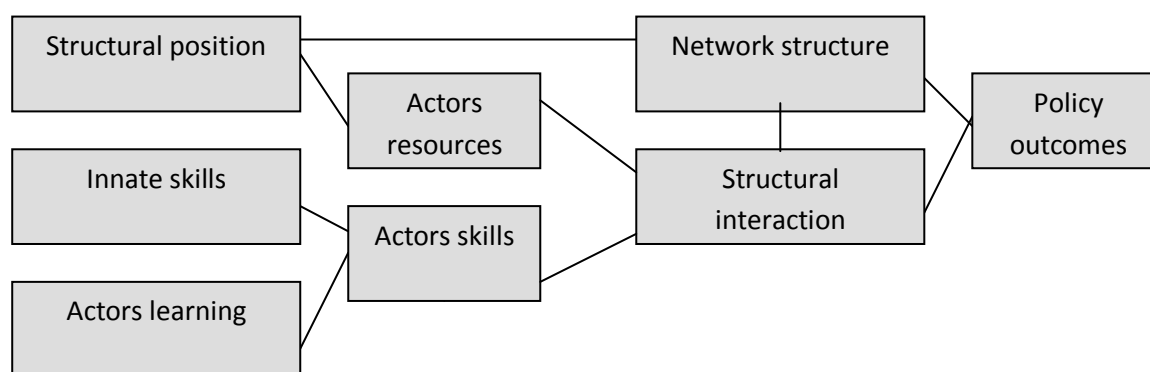
The policy networks always have a core and a periphery. While the core is responsible by policy making and determine the membership of the policy community and outcome of the policy-making process, the periphery only observes and sometimes is consulting in the policy making process. Networks not only serve for decision making, but for information, communication and exercise of influence in the preparation of the decision making. There are policy tools used in this context for the analysis of the policy outcomes: planning, instruments as regulatory instruments (e.g. zoning, land use control, standards, licensing) and economic instruments taxes and subsidies, user charges, economic incentives, etc.) and voluntary instruments/ agreements (administrative covenants, social covenants, policy covenants).

The aim of analysing policy network is to examine if there is any partnership in place in tourism destination to bring about a sound tourism development, thus, to determine the resource allocation between different actors in tourism destinations, and to determine if these actors can mobilise resources in policy making. The analysis allows also the investigation of policy instruments, public and private actors and their relationship with the sustainable tourism policy making. The resource dependency takes a number of forms: legal, organisational, financial, political and informational resources.

The most important in this "game" is the emergence of resource dependency. Resources take a number of forms that are analysed as follows:

- Legal resources: control over the setting, implementation and interpretation of the regulation (national or local by-laws);
- Organisational resources: defined as the capacity of a policy actor to elaborate and implement a policy;
- Financial resources: control of the funds;
- Political resources: linkages to another actors or organisations that may exert pressure on another organisation within the partnership;
- Informational resources: the knowledge one actor dispose of it can mobilise.

Figure 1: Policy networks and policy outcomes: a dialectic approach



Source: adapted from Marsh (1998:p194) by Borzel (1997, p10)

Policy networks also help in finding if the policies in place in the selected tourism destinations are equitable for all the actors involved, and how the actors have managed to induce environmental improvement. Networks apply to co-operative efforts among the three categories of actors: public, private and NGOs that are interconnected in different ways, and therefore help explaining policy outcomes, through voluntary bargaining. Negotiations are based on communication and trust. Whenever, there are two main problems/ social dilemmas¹ that can render consensus difficult or even impossible in bargaining system:

1. the *bargaining dilemma*² (prisoner's dilemma in the game theory, i.e. in situation in which defection from co-operation is more rewarding for a rational actor than the compliance due to the risk of being cheated (Scharpf, 1992 cited in Borzel 1997, p.8). An optimal result would be achieved through cooperation, but this is susceptible of the betrayal of the other ones.

2. the *structural dilemma*, i.e. the inter-organisational structure of horizontal co-operation itself (ibid.) among organisations based on the negotiations between their representatives, that are not totally autonomous, but under the control of the organisation they represent, rendering difficult the cooperation within the network motivated by the personal interest, insecurity generated by the intra- organisational control and necessity of implementing the inter-organisational policies. The more complex the structure of local action group the more difficult the cooperation, asking for a higher degree of coordination, creativity, flexibility at the internal and external changes, negotiation and reconciliation of interests for overcoming the opportunistic and divergent tendencies.

¹ Social dilemmas describe situations in which the rational behaviour of an individual – defined in economic terms- leads to results under the expected level from a social point of view. These situations appear because the individuals grant more attention to their own interest on short term than to the group interests.

² Describes a social dilemma as a game between two persons that show how they can the rational decisions lead to collective imperfect results.

3. APPLICATION OF THE ECOLOGICAL MODERNISATION THEORY IN SLANIC MOLDOVA RESORT, ROMANIA- A SHORT ANALYSIS

Slanic Moldova is the only watering spa in the Region of Development North East in Romania. The watering spa lays in the south- west part of Bacau County, at 84 km distance from Bacau, the capital of the county. Called the “Pearl of Moldavia”, Slanic Moldova is an “all season” resort of national interest, whose mineral water springs were discovered in 1801 and nowadays are compared to the mineral waters of Karlovy Vary, Vicky, Aix-les-Bains. The resort offers treatment for digestive disorders, metabolic and nutrition diseases, rheumatic, cardiovascular, respiratory and other health problems. The resort is appreciated due to its 24 mineral water springs, but also to its architecture that kept the historical value keeping the track of XIX century.

The city population does not exceed 5.500 inhabitants (together with 2 satellite districts), according to the local council and the resort accommodates early around 150.000 tourists. The accommodation capacity within the spa is 2.297 places, out of which 1.629 in exploitation and 327 with close circuit belonging to different organisations. The tourist accommodation facilities in Slanic Moldova are classified from 1 to 3 stars (Strategy of social economic development in Slanic Moldova for the period 2007-2013).

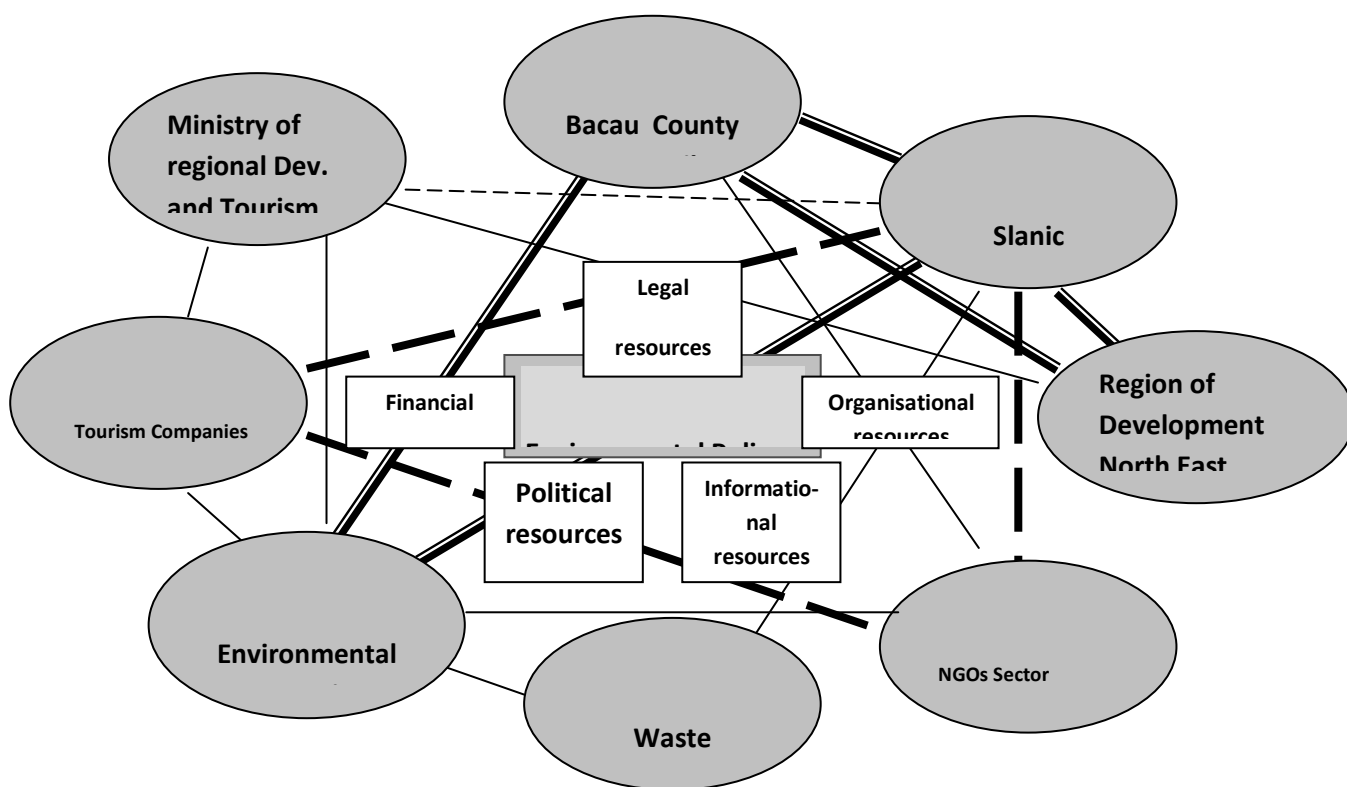
Even though the environment in Slanic Moldova does not encounter very severe environmental problems, first of all due to the decrease in the tourism arrivals because mainly of the lack of tourism “product segmentation”, non- emergence of “niche tourism” according to the values and amenities of each destination and weak marketing strategies, there are few issues worth mentioning. The environment is mainly deteriorating because of insufficient management of the solid waste and incomplete treatment of the wastewater, but also because of using unfriendly environmental technologies at the consumer level (tourism industry and local community) that increase the water and energy consumption. Also, the road infrastructure connecting the resort with Transylvania is not suitable and is considered as being the main obstacle for attracting tourists from this region, and further development of the resort.

The new economic context generated by the economic crises offers opportunities to incorporating environmental concerns within the environmental policy agenda through a more participatory policy-style. For Slanic Moldova local council the participatory environmental policy is still a challenge. Even though the local council links up with other organisations in making up its environmental concerns visible, a better inter-sector communication is highly necessary. A degree of inertia in involving all community representatives has been noticed in what concerns the environmental policy making. The role of policy networks and their interaction as well as the

resource dependency was analysed, also as a way of increased environmental performance. In analysing public policy outcomes in connection to sustainable tourism development in the chosen case study the concept of policy network was used, looking at the interactions among public-private and NGOs, the patterns of cooperation, resource allocation. Policy networks allowed the investigation of the policy instruments, the stakeholders and their relationship with the policy making.

Even though the local council did not involve all the actors in the policy making process, it has a good co-operation with the County Council, some decentralised state institutions (Environmental Protection Agency, Romanian Water Company- Siret Branch, County Department for Public Health, etc.), water and waste companies, that in an extent also contribute to the good organisation of the activities in the resort, with which shares legal, financial, organisational, political and informational resources.

Figure 2. Relations among actors involved in tourism and environmental management in Slanic Moldova (present situation and perspective)



Legend: _____ existing relations (bi-directional)
 - - - - - relations to be consolidated
 = = = = = Consolidated relations between actors (policy communities)

Thus, among these institutions, there are many formal and informal contacts that may be seen as “policy community”, with the private sector as its periphery or sometimes viewed as a “governmental network” when the private sector is not always involved or informed about the decisions taken concerning tourism and environment.

In the last years, the Local Council developed adequate expertise and experience in elaborating and implementing environmental strategies, even though it continuously co-operates with the County Council and the Environmental Protection Agency. The County Council is the most influencing actor and the owner of information, being the authority that provides assistance to the local council in environmental management and a powerful political body that can influence the distribution of the budgets or co-financer of projects of county interest, as is Ski-Park. Moreover, the County Council disposes of skilful staff with expertise in elaborating policies and project proposals. Together with the Environmental Agency are invited to the local council’s meetings whose agenda concern environmental issues with impact on tourism development. This partnership may be considered a stable network.

Environmental Agency has an important role in the ecological restructuring of the tourism industry, being involved in all issues that concerns prevention, licensing and controlling of tourist sector. Whenever, the Environmental Agency sees the co-operation between the local council and the tourism sector crucial for the sustainable development of the resort by involving the last one in the decision making process, as the tourism industry has resources for the improvement of the environmental management of the companies by operating efficiently in terms of water and energy consumption and sound waste management. A better involvement and campaign of the Environmental Agency, together with the local council, in promoting and encouraging tourism companies to implement voluntary instruments would induce ecological transformation of the tourism industry.

The Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism is more involved in marketing policies in Slanic Moldova. On the other hand, the NGO sector has been only occasionally involved in local projects, mainly with educational objectives concerning waste management or nature protection.

The local council is the initiator of different strategies and projects whose final aim is the economic growth through tourism development while preserving and improving the environmental conditions. If many infrastructure projects have been implemented or in course of implementation, little has been done to initiate consultations with the tourism industry in all matters that concern the sound development of tourism at the company level. Unfortunately, for the time being in Slanic Moldova as could be seen above, are in place only dispersed, small policy communities or governmental policies focused on solving specific problems. In these policy communities the

involvement of the public sector is predominant, the private sector being at the periphery of these networks. The relations between these two sectors are more formal and inflexible, and do not always result on bargaining over resources, in particular financial resources, most of them being represented by legal resources, considering the legal task of the local council of checking the compliance of the tourism industry with the environmental legislation in what concerns the waste management, water consumption and wastewater collection/treatment. The reason behind this situation is first of all a weak co-operation between the state institutions and private sector based on the former patterns of co-operation before 1989 when was in place the Iron Curtain ideology, but also because of a weak representation of the private sector in the public policy setting and sometimes a kind of tensioned relation based on political grounds among actors. At local level an association of the tourism developers it is not in place, thus the interests of the tourism industry are not always on the political agenda.

By using regulatory instruments, the local council took some measures to determine the tourism industry to integrate the environmental concerns into its activities (water metering, waste segregation at source, “pollution pay” principles, etc.). Anyhow, for tourism industry environmental care seems to become a part of the economic interest. As the water and energy prices are going up, the energy and water conservation become a precondition for increasing tourism industry’s profit. Thus, a part of the tourism industry incorporated the environmental concerns “involuntary”, from economic interest, and not because of environmental awareness. In addition, some tourism companies that modernised their tourism structures were aware that investing in modern technologies/facilities not only increase the turnover by reducing the water and energy consumption, but also gain competitive advantages on the tourism market.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE USE OF EMT IN TOURISM SECTOR

Most of the Romanian top-down policies are based on the concept of “sustainable development” that fails to show the implementing organisations what sustainability means in practice. While asserting that a sustainable development of the society must be achieved, the environmental and tourism policies fall short of showing how the environmental crisis may be surpassed. Secondly, a set of indicators to provide the policy-makers at the local level with concrete means of comparison and a set of tools to identify the more sound environmental options is not in place.

Even though, the central, regional and county policies rule the decision making process at local level, local council has the authority to establish its own policies. Whenever, without the participation of the private sector in public policy-making, there are fewer chances that the local policies will be successful and equal for all actors.

The EMT was seen as an opportunity for the local council capacity building and for involving the tourism industry and NGO sector in the policy making process in order to overcome the environmental crisis. Policy networks gave insight onto the existing partnerships between public, private and NGO sector and the resource allocation among actors. The analysis of the environmental policy in Slanic Moldova proves that the local government achieved its goals only in what concerns the local council responsibilities in environmental management, being focused on a more paternalistic policy style. There is still a strong state presence for the environmental protection, instead of creating conditions for the stakeholders' participations. This is a reason of dissatisfaction and criticism towards the local council. Whenever, if the existing consultations with the tourism industry will intensify and be based on trust and resource allocation, there are opportunities for creating a strong policy network. Whenever, also the NGOs cannot be considered a driving force for the ecological restructuring of the tourism in Slanic Moldova as time as they are not well represented or cannot put pressure on the local government or tourism industry to change their environmental management. The NGOs cannot "inject" themselves into politics and challenge dominant ideas and press for changes and new initiatives. Moreover, they need more impetus and financial support to get independence and "visible" as their more institutional counterparts, rather than being non-connected local citizen initiatives, single issue-groups and alternative lifestyle communities.

As environment becomes integrated part of the economic interest, tourism industry starts to demand audits for energy, water saving and waste management. In this respect, environmental management systems (EMS) and eco-labelling emerge as important instruments to characterise the environmental performance of the tourism industry. The implementation of voluntary instruments as EMS can improve the environmental performance by helping the tourism industry to maintain compliance with the environmental laws and regulations. EMS and eco-labelling can result in both business and environmental benefits. An EMS may help a tourism company to improve its environmental performance, enhance compliance, prevent pollution and conserve resources, attract new tourists, enhance employee morale, public image, increase efficiency and reduce costs.

Moreover, these voluntary instruments would represent a precondition for the competition within the tourist market. Few solutions recommended for the greening of the tourism industry, include:

- Eco-labelling certification and using of ecolabeled products and services;
- Obtaining and maintaining ISO 9001 certification;
- Obtaining and maintaining OHSAS 18001 certification;
- Obtaining and maintaining HACCP certification;
- Obtaining and maintaining ISO 14001 certification;
- EMAS certification;
- Having a corporate environmental policy. Implementation of Corporate Environmental Auditing and Reporting;
 - Installing water saving appliances (self-closing tapes, saving flushing toilets), integration and recycling of the grey water as a water resource of second quality used for the flushing toilets/watering gardens after treatment;
 - Energy saving appliances that may include material insulation, ventilation with heat recovery, saving energy bulbs, use of non-conventional sources of energy (wind mills, sun panels) that is renewable and ecologically seif;
 - Integrated waste management at the company level;
 - Negotiating covenants with small aviation companies/private airplanes (e.g. emissions trading where it is known that the number of emissions permits will diminish over time).

4.1. Significance of the EMT and its relevance for the environmental policy making in tourism destinations

In the recent years, Ecological Modernisation Theory has emerged as one of the most promising way of balancing environment- society relationship in Western European countries. In the ecological modernisation, traditional curative and repair options are replaced by preventive approaches by incorporating environmental considerations in the "production process" that is considerable important for tourism, considering its tremendous seasonal impact on environment.

The innovation stimulated by a competitive market economy and facilitated by an enabling state is a path leading towards economic growth and environmental quality in tourism destinations. Therefore, the burden on the local budgets will decrease as time as the state is relieved of a part of tasks, by transferring those responsibilities, tasks towards the tourism industry. This transfer will accelerate the ecological transformation process in tourism destinations. Establishing the imperative for environmental improvement in the tourism sector is one way the local government can place pressure on tourism industry to incorporate environmental concerns in order to achieve the

environmental targets by voluntary mechanisms. Target setting is important as time as ecological modernisation is more a strategic than an operational issue. As a consequence, the importance of traditional "command and control" forms of regulation declines, focusing more on economic and voluntary instruments.

4.2. Conclusive remarks

Ecological modernisation is not, however, immune from criticism. Whilst there is a reasonable consensus about the core characteristics of ecological modernisation, there are sufficient differences between scholars to distinguish between 'weak' and 'strong' versions along a continuum. In its weaker 'techno corporatist' form, ecological modernisation focuses on the development of technical solutions to environmental problems through the partnership of economic, political and scientific elites in corporatist policy-making structures. The stronger 'reflexive' version of ecological modernisation adopts a much broader approach to the integration of environmental concerns across institutions and wider society, envisaging extensive democratisation and recognising the international dimensions of environmental issues.

Even though the applicability of EMT for the tourism sector has not been tested yet in practise, the restructuring of the economic development that focuses in three major issues: state-market relations, technology development and environmental awareness represent an opportunity and allows the introduction in a first stage of weak 'techno corporatist' ecological modernisation in the policy making of the tourism destinations.

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