

## SELF MADE TOURISM OF FAMILIES. Meeting and socializing in residential social tourism<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

The research presented in this article aims to explore some aspects of social tourism, part of a larger research which aims to deepen the supply and demand of residential tourism in some areas of southern Italy, development processes and impacts of the phenomenon.

Research has shown that, unlike the organized tourism, proposed and managed according to the logic of "production" industrial, residential tourism, largely because do-it-yourself, allows families to enjoy more "easily" the right the holiday and the right of sociality.

**Key Words:** social tourism; residential social tourism; self made tourism of families.

### INTRODUCTION

The term "Residential Tourism" indicates the tourism of private homes conventionally adopted with reference to the Italian case, we define: "... An informal and underground phenomenon that is developed through private tourist accommodation available in the area to accommodate the demand for tourism demand from a self-directed, spontaneous, uncertain and unpredictable, which organizes space and time independently of the tourist experience." (Romita, 2010).

The "residential tourism" has grown all over Italy since the late '60s, under the pressure of mass tourism. In the years to follow in some areas of Italy we invested in more formal models of tourism development, in others, and particularly those in the south of Italy, the "residential tourism" has continued to grow in an uncontrolled way up to become dominant in relation to official tourism.

The research presented in this article aims to explore some aspects of social tourism, part of a larger research which aims to deepen the supply and demand of residential tourism in some areas of southern Italy, development processes and impacts of the phenomenon, the reasons that lead to an exponential growth in population during the holiday season in those areas that are little more than villages during the rest of the year (Crest-Isnart, 2011).

Research has shown that, unlike the organized tourism, proposed and managed according to the logic of "production" industrial, residential tourism, largely because do-it-yourself, allows families to enjoy more "easily" the right the holiday and the right of sociality (Romita and Favia, 2011).

### THE RESIDENTIAL TOURISM

The phenomenon of Residential Tourism (or of private homes) has found and still find unprepared local communities that, in most cases, they have "simply" gone over the years the demand for this type of

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraphs "Introduction" and "The Social Tourism" are written by Francesco Favia; paragraphs "The Residential Tourism" and "Conclusions" are written by Tullio Romita; paragraph "Meeting and socializing in a residential social tourism" is the work of both authors.

tourism and privileged informal tourist economy.

In this way, in the years millions of homes are built for tourists producing a capacity significantly greater than that of the official tourism in "[...] areas and/or tourist resorts that have become such independently of the interests of circuits of official tourist market, spurred by strong demand for tourism, and where the informal, submerged and parasitic economy dominated. In such contexts demand and supply meet and organize without brokers and on the basis of personal arrangements" (Romita and Perri, 2006).

The Observatory of Unioncamere 2010 estimated:

- that attendance related to residential tourism are approximately 450 million (of which 296 million of national tourism and 154 of the international tourism);
- that this phenomenon represents around 55% of its total appearances in Italy;
- that in Italy the consumption of residential tourism related tourists are more than 27 billion euros (17 billion related to the national tourism and 10 to the international) (Isnart, 2011).

### THE SOCIAL TOURISM

The term social tourism has made its first appearance in the mid-fifties of the twentieth century in an International Congress held in Berne, to indicate tourist activities sponsored by organizations that operated non-profit organization in favor of the "lower classes".

At first, therefore, the term "social tourism" meant a tourism mainly targeted to specific social categories of people experiencing social and economic disadvantage.

This way of understanding the social tourism continues to be fairly widespread in public opinion, however, today, increasingly, among those involved in tourism and the significance of social phenomena that we tend to attribute the expression is much more social tourism wider than in the past, namely to meet the phenomenon that promotes socialization and through tourism activities that can meet a widespread need for relatedness.

In this sense, social tourism means to respond to a need for socializing, it is a way of life, it is a value choice by agencies that organize committed, even through the holiday, in the development of social bonds, to create opportunities for cultural enrichment and to promote and exploit the resources of the territory. In fact, although in recent years the debate about the social tourism has been greatly expanded, thanks to the passion and commitment with which different scholars have devoted to the topic, and to work for debate, discussion and proposal, carried out by organizations and associations that promote social tourism, there still seems to say that it provides a definition of reference for all of "social tourism".

However, the Montreal Declaration of 1996 "For a humanistic vision and social tourism", formally adopted by the BITS (International Bureau of Social Tourism), the international association which has more than fifty years of activity it is engaged in tourism social, it is a very interesting document for the conceptual definition of social tourism, which is to be understood as: a) a shaper of society, b) economic growth factor, c) participation in the land and local development; d) partners in global development programs.

The Declaration represents a significant step forward if it's compared to the understanding of social tourism and see until then prevailing. No longer just a tourist addressed to specific social categories of people experiencing social and economic disadvantage, but also and above all tourism as a "... set of activities designed to promote socially useful and human, ie the growth and maturation culture, civil and social man and of all men, and to respect and enhance the environment and economic and social development of local communities. "(Tonini 2010: 26).

### MEETING AND SOCIALIZING IN A RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL TOURISM

The present investigation was carried out (from ISNART (National Institute for Research on Tourism in Rome) and CREST (Centre for Research and Studies on Tourism at the University of Calabria)) in the period from July to September 2011, and conditions and behaviours of more than 400 families on holiday in seaside resorts mainly in the South of Italy were placed under observing (further information on CREST research can be obtained from the University of Calabria).

Families Were asked questions about: Social relationships and friendship with other tourists and the

local population; the Reasons That Prompted have to choose a private dwelling for Their holidays, the mode of organization of holidays and social-economic condition of Belonging.

- The friendly relations between residential tourists

From Figs. 1 and 2, we can deduce that the Residential Tourism is a phenomenon that promotes social interaction and sociability among tourists who are vacationing in the same resort.

This in our view, is due to the fact that in the case of resorts, such as those of our survey, where tourism is highly developed residential and even prevailed over the conventional organized tourism, the relationship between tourists not only are inevitable but also necessary, and this facilitates sociability.

In fact, in the case of residential tourism it is virtually absent the presence of individuals who coordinate, organize and mediate the relationship between tourists, individuals or groups. For this reason, tourists must inevitably self-organize their vacation experience, and in so doing not only multiply the chances of meeting and contact with other tourists, but also opportunities for collaboration and cooperation among tourists in the overcoming small and great difficulties in the daily management of space and individual and common needs. In the case of conventional organized tourism, the situation is very different.

Obviously, as in various research has been detected, even in the case of conventional tourism relations of friendship between knowledge and tourists can certainly develop. However, the relationship between tourists in the context of conventional organized are much more formal than those that develop within the residential tourism because of the presence of a range of "institutional" subjects which ensure to meet the needs of tourists and mediate the the individual tourist experience and that one of group (some studies have shown that very often the case of tourists who at the end of a conventional type holiday are not able to recall the basic features of the people met and visited during the holiday).

In fact, it seems (Figs. 3 and 4) that the relations of friendship and solidarity among tourists, in the case of residential tourism, are stable and constant over time. In fact, the majority of tourists surveyed said that the relations of friendship with the other tourists going on for years and continue after the end of the holidays even if you reside in different places, also the frequent communications during 'years, especially among children and young people who use for that purpose and more easily to new technologies.

In our view, the possibilities offered by the residential tourism to facilitate the creation of solid friendly relations between tourists and among families of tourists represents a development opportunity for the territory, as well as what constitutes a push factor towards the town Tourism is also a factor of allegiance to the same location.

In fact, the certainty of finding in the next holiday families of tourists with which have established social relations and friendship, makes easy and safe the tourist stay in a place where, even if it is popular and known for years, has however guests. This is especially true when in the families there are children, and if these are in adolescence more easily than adults establish friendly relations with other peers and they will push themselves to return to the same resort.

- The relationship between residential tourists and local people

The Residential Tourism is a phenomenon that, in addition to promoting the social relations among the tourists themselves, also favors those among tourists and locals (Figs. 5 and 6).

In fact, over 60% of tourists interviewed said they had friendly relations with local people everyday, in other words, with people living in the resort. These percentages are not reached in relations between tourists and local people in the conventional tourism, and many authors have emphasized the poverty of social exchanges and the banality of the tourist experience in reports generated by organized mass tourism (Boorstin, 1962; Turner and Ash, 1975).

With the same locals, tourists also establish in this case, as previously seen in the case of the relationship between tourists, friendships that continue over time and during periods of the year other than those vacation (and frequent communications exchange visits in their respective places of residence).

- Special needs and residential tourism

The decision to vacation in a private home is, for most of the families interviewed, a choice, a way of consciously preferred to stay in conventional holiday accommodation.

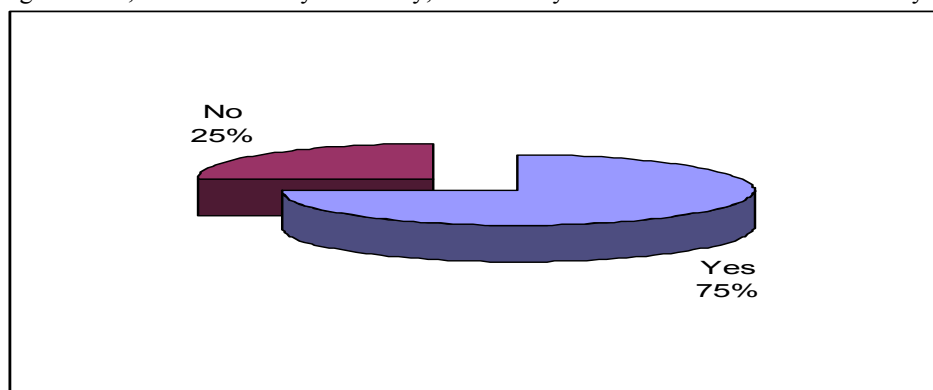
However, a significant proportion of respondents believe the holiday visitors in a private home a choice "forced", that is the only possible way to guarantee the right to stay in all family members as to meet social needs, such as: the ability to meet the needs of children and the elderly and families with temporary disabilities and / or permanent, the ability to afford a holiday for families with more than three persons as a result of the lower cost of the holiday than the structures conventional accommodation (Fig. 7).

The Residential Tourism has other benefits for families. For example, being able to carry, or find on the site, employment and professional figures who help to resolve the management of specific problems present within families (Fig. 8).

Among the interviewed families on vacation, we detected the presence in the same household, persons who work in caring and assisting the elderly and children, providing health care and helping with the housework.

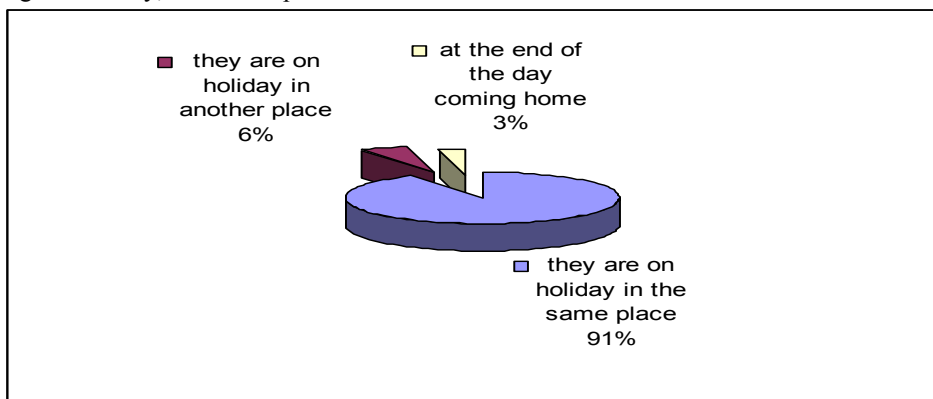
For these families it is staying in a house that allows them to go on vacation, since it makes it possible to have adequate space to accommodate families with special needs and to establish a relationship with staff able to assist these families (even the conventional accommodation better equipped they are unable to provide adequate services to people with particular problems). In an increasingly aging society, probably the tourism industry will adapt to new business, but in the meantime, families solve their problems by organizing the holiday in autonomous way).

Fig. 1 - You, or someone of your family, has friendly relations with other tourists daily?



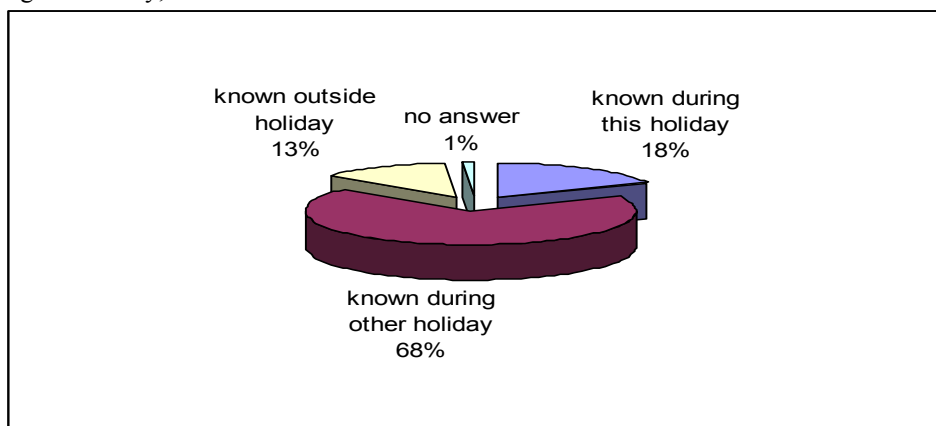
Source: Meeting and socializing in residential social tourism survey 2011, CReST and Apulie.

Fig. 2 - Mostly, relationships with other tourists:



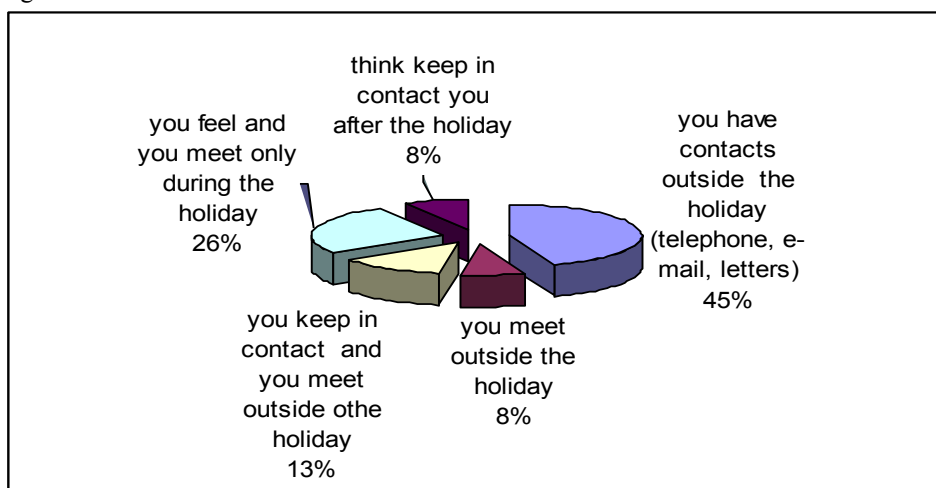
Source: Meeting and socializing in residential social tourism survey 2011, CReST and Apulie.

Fig. 3 - Mostly, other tourists:



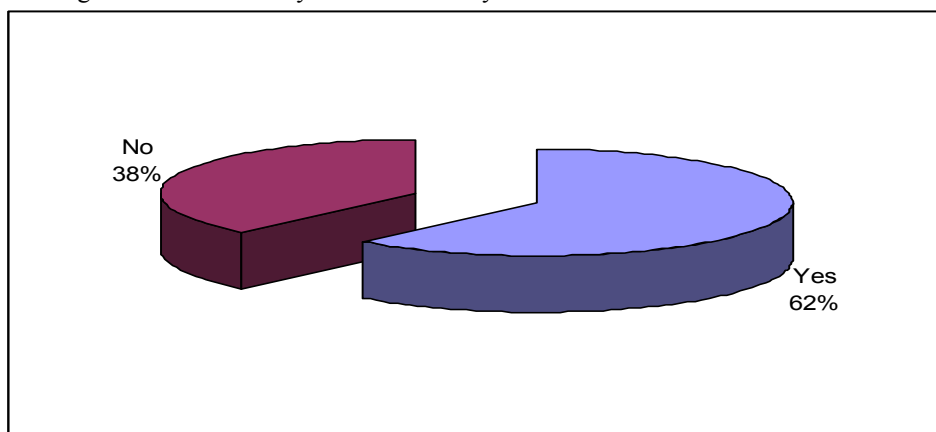
Source: Meeting and socializing in residential social tourism survey 2011, CReST and Apulie.

Fig. 4 - With the other tourists:



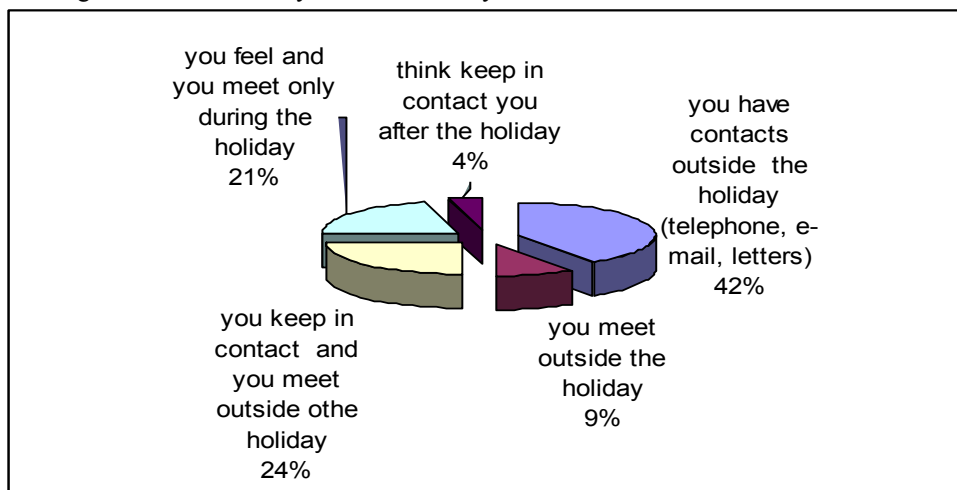
Source: Meeting and socializing in residential social tourism survey 2011, CReST and Apulie.

Fig. 5 - You, or someone of your family, have friendly relations day by day with persons residing in the town where you are on holiday?



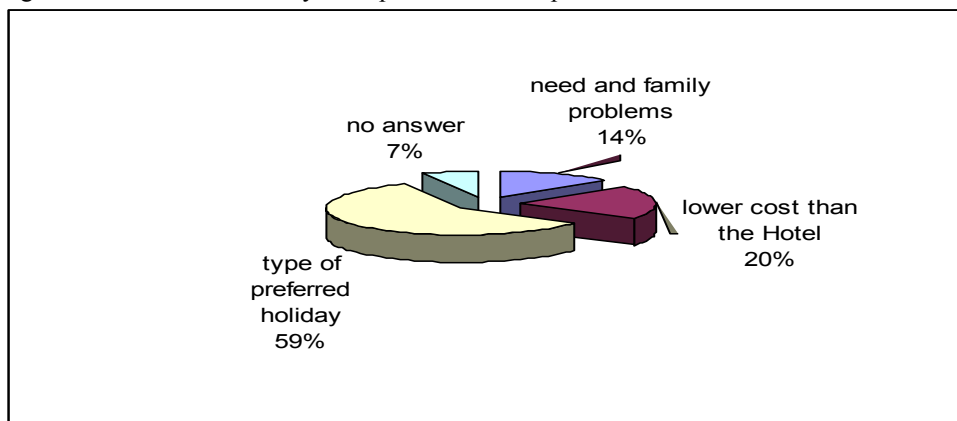
Source: Meeting and socializing in residential social tourism survey 2011, CReST and Apulie.

Fig. 6 - You, or someone of your family, have friendly relations day by day with persons residing in the town where you are on holiday?



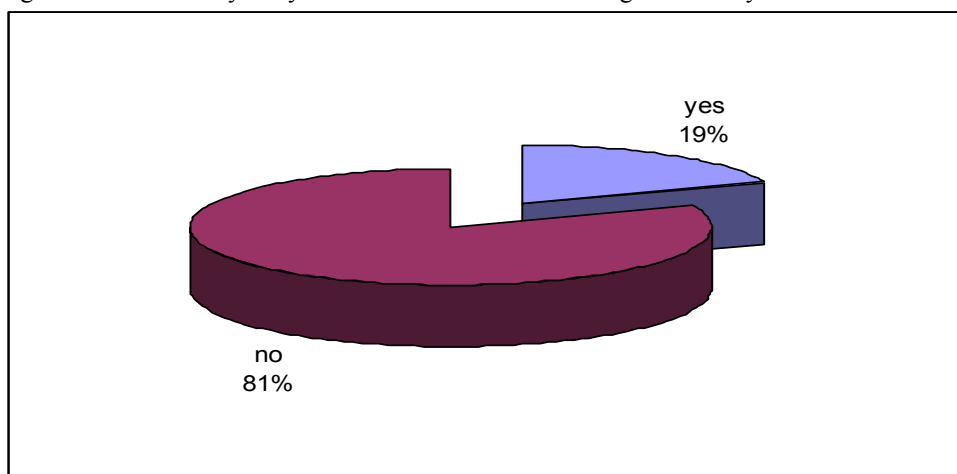
Source: Meeting and socializing in residential social tourism survey 2011, CReST and Apulie.

Fig. 7 - The choice of holidays in a private home depends on:



Source: Meeting and socializing in residential social tourism survey 2011, CReST and Apulie.

Figura 8 - Your family daily avails of collaborators during the holiday?



Source: Meeting and socializing in residential social tourism survey 2011, CReST and Apulie.



## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of research presented, we can say that the residential tourism facilitates and encourages the creation of social relations and friendship between tourists and between tourists and local people.

Moreover, in our opinion, the residential tourism:

- responds more effectively respect to organized tourism to a social need;
- is able, in consequence of its lower cost of living compared to conventional tourism, to ensure the right to vacation for families with fewer financial resources, and numerous;
- is able to provide the right to stay to people with difficulties and disabilities that can not be cared for and/or assisted by staying in conventional accommodations.

In fact, the research presented showed that, unlike the organized tourism, proposed and managed according to the logic of "production" industrial, residential tourism, do-it-yourself, allows families to enjoy more "easily" the right to vacation and the "right" for socializing:

- self-organized vacation can arrange to meet needs independently, sometimes very special, to which the tourism industry can not or does not find useful and / or convenient to give an answer (think of the special needs of children, the elderly, of people with temporary or permanent disability, food issues, etc.);
- the holiday do-it-yourself allows you to autonomously satisfy needs, sometimes very particular, that the tourism industry fails or does not find useful and/or convenient answering to (special needs of children, the elderly, the handicapped, disability permanent or temporary, etc.);
- using a self-organized holiday with use a private home favors the tendency to social life, because it implies the need to have relationships with people, with local communities, with the natural and cultural resources, with specific and general services and landscapes;
- organize the holidays using a home for holiday favors the trend to social harmony, because it implies the need to have relationships with people, with local communities, with the natural and cultural resources, with the specific and general services and landscapes.

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