



Alpweek 2008

L'Argentière –La Bessée - 12 june

***Ambivalence in the innovation:
tourism in the Alps in 20th century***

Andrea Macchiavelli – Università di Bergamo



Two parts

- **short excursus on the ski areas evolution**
- **focus on some factors which define innovation: their impact on the development of ski areas**

SKI AREAS EVOLUTION

Pre-modern phase (1890-1950)

- **winterization of summer destinations**
- **élite market**
- **lack of cable transports**
- **entertainment**
- **activities: ice sports and sledge**

Pioneering phase of the development (1950-'65)

- **development of investments**
- **first cable transports**
- **lack of a planning development of the area**
- **élite market, with wider prospects of market**
- **domestic market**

SKI AREAS EVOLUTION

Phase of development (1965-'80)

- **great growth of the market**
- **ski areas expansion**
- **trend to mass tourism**
- **development of equipment and slopes**
- **local government intervention**
- **accommodation, restoration, shopping, real estate**
- **small-medium areas prevailing**
- **sporting proposal (downhill skiing)**

SKI AREAS EVOLUTION

Reinforcement phase (1980-'90)

- **progressive reduction of the growth**
- **strong investments in upgrading cables and in snow production**
- **Technology:**
 - **increase of capacity**
 - **reduction of cable number**
 - **problem of dimension of slopes**
- **ski areas enlargement**
- **stable demand**
- **polarization on the best areas**

SKI AREAS EVOLUTION

Transformation phase (since 1990)

Signals of crisis, driven by:

Exogenous factors

- **soil scarceness**
- **climate**
- **demographic evolution**

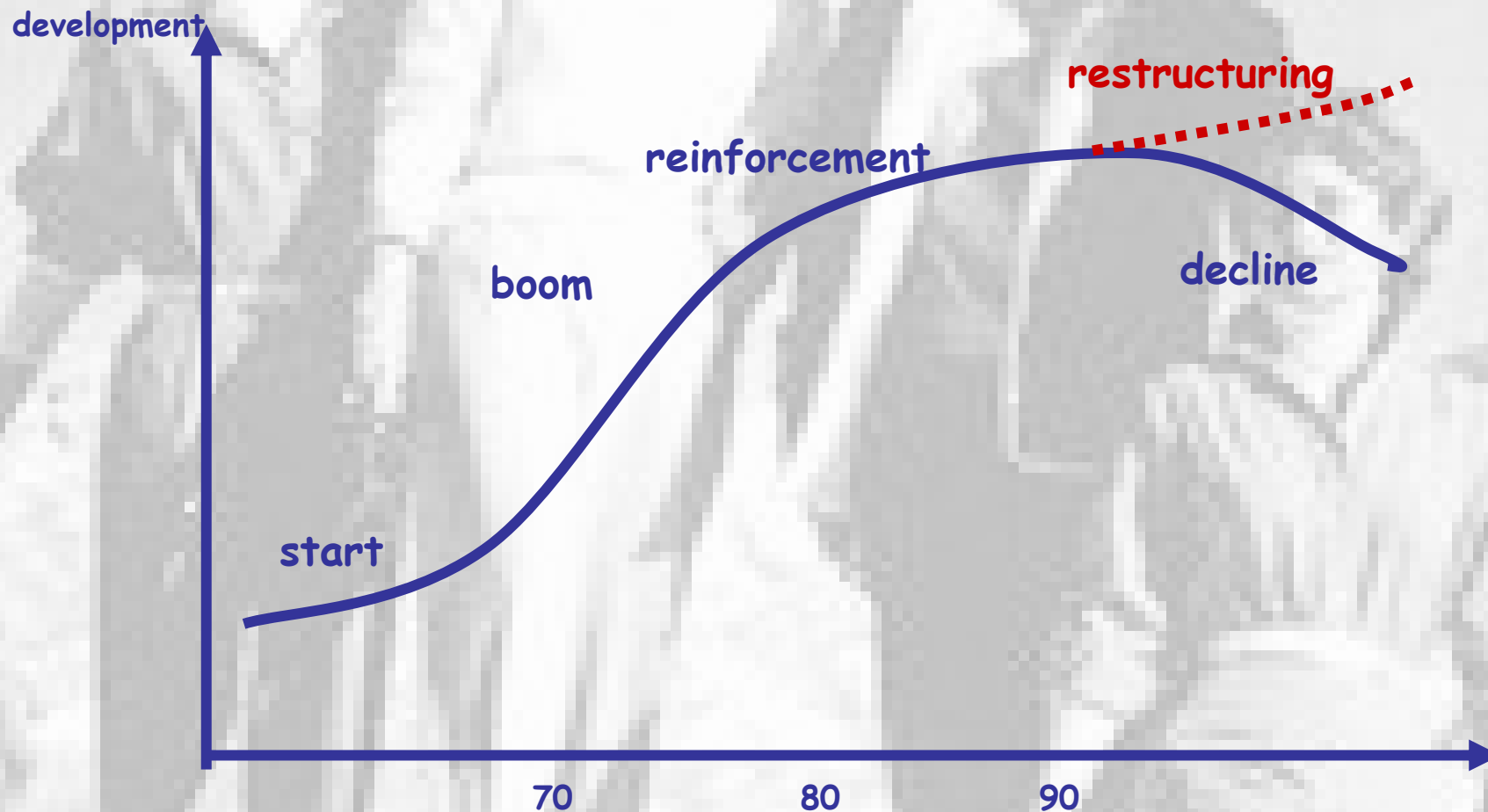
Endogenous factors

- **competition**
- **saturation of west market**
- **evolution of socio-cultural trends**
- **change of snow activities**

SKI AREAS EVOLUTION

Transformation phase (since 1990)

Skiing: mature product?



INNOVATION AND SKI AREAS: CONDITION AND AMBIVALENCES

1. Innovation must give an increase of productivity

= more output with the same input

**In the
mountain**



**Condition of survival of economic
activities**



Innovation

INNOVATION AND SKI AREAS: CONDITION AND AMBIVALENCES

Till today, productivity in tourism

Based on

**Use of natural
resources for wider
and wider people**

**(Thanks to)
technology**

INNOVATION AND SKI AREAS: CONDITION AND AMBIVALENCES

**Today, the problem is the same
(more output with the same input), but:**

- we cannot exploit further the same input
- some external conditions have changed (market, climate,...)
- there is a new demand (wellness, nature, culture, identity,...)

**Problem: to produce income with other input.
Is it possible?**

INNOVATION AND SKI AREAS: CONDITION AND AMBIVALENCES

2. Innovation is different from invention and creativity

- **Result of a process to improve what already exists**
- **has to measure with the context**

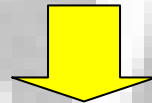
Innovator:

must compare with all factors playing

INNOVATION AND SKI AREAS: CONDITION AND AMBIVALENCES

Risk:

Extract the innovation from the whole context



Not to consider the negative effects which innovation could produce in the future

Ambivalence of the ski areas in the past

INNOVATION AND SKI AREAS: CONDITION AND AMBIVALENCES

3. Listening and giving solution to needs is the source of innovation

Listening



**not attached to the same models
(widespread behaviour in the
mountains region)**

**Catching
emerging
needs**



- **Needs change**
- **resources could be used differently**

Matching!



INNOVATION AND SKI AREAS: CONDITION AND AMBIVALENCES

**Also in the past the same logical
process, but....**

...now emerging needs:

Nature/wellness

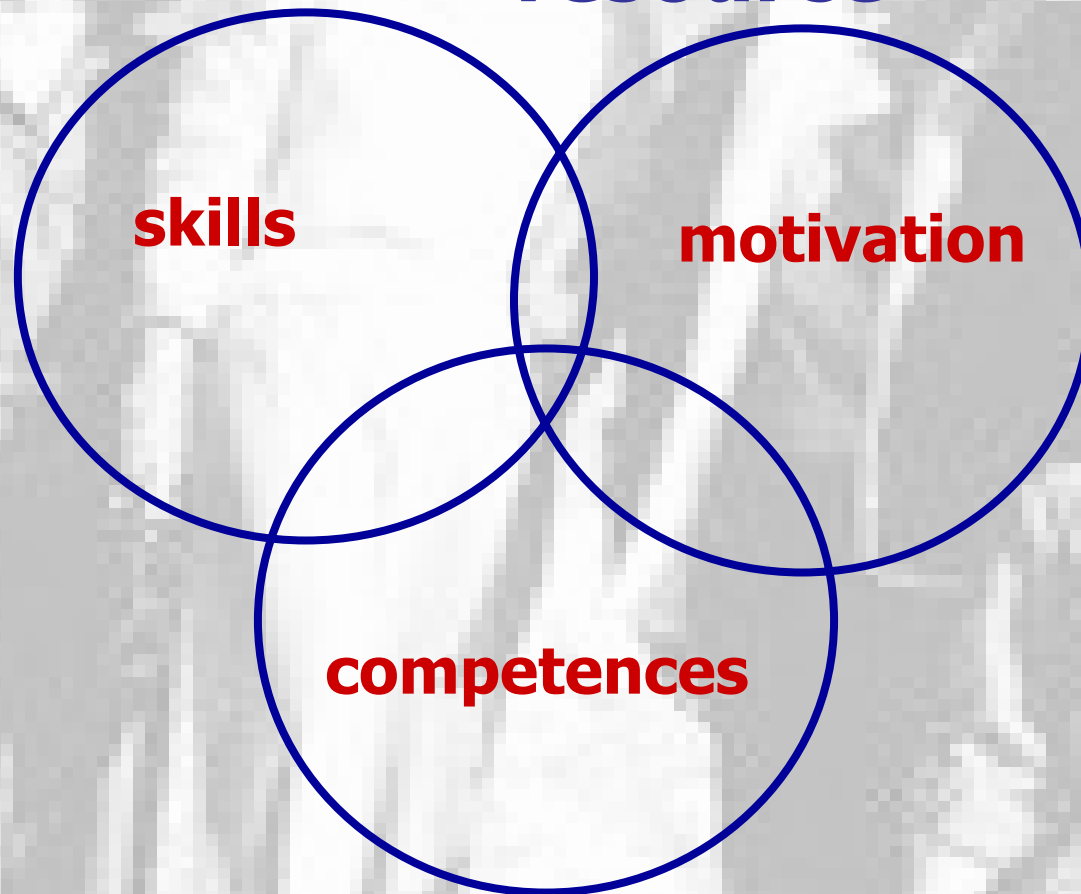
Meet culture

Emotion

**Ambivalence: the same models in a
changing context**

INNOVATION AND SKI AREAS: CONDITION AND AMBIVALENCES

4. Innovation depends on the human resource



INNOVATION AND SKI AREAS: CONDITION AND AMBIVALENCES

**Is not (only) a problem of R & D,
but of characteristics of the people**

- curiosity
- listening/dialogue capability
- responsibility
- confidence

- risk
- flexibility
- no ideological approach

Has the mountain these people?

Two risks (ambivalence)

Self-sufficiency

**Import of
external model**

INNOVATION AND SKI AREAS: CONDITION AND AMBIVALENCES

**5. Innovation needs a competitive context, but also...
....a collaborative context**

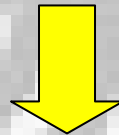
No contrast

“Cooperation to compete”

INNOVATION AND SKI AREAS: CONDITION AND AMBIVALENCES

Ambivalence:

**Mountain feels more
solidarity/community dimension
than cooperation**



Difficult unitary strategy

Role of the leadership!

INNOVATION AND SKI AREAS: CONCLUSION

**The more evident ambivalences today in
the mountain resorts:**

**little knowledge
of demand and
competitors**

**resistance
to change**

role of Public Administration



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