**"The soft infrastructure of the industrial revolution: why tourism matters".**

**Nicola Bellini**

A region’s soft infrastructure is here defined as the set of values, beliefs and attitudes that, narrated through the area´s cultural heritage and reflected into images and symbols, influence innovative decisions at individual and collective levels. This occurs because innovation needs to be legitimized. This need for legitimization is even stronger when we are dealing with “revolutionary” changes that are affecting the social structure of the society and of the local political economy.

As tourism (mobility, travel, knowledge of the other etc.) takes over a central place in contemporary societies and in consumption patterns, its potential and actual links with manufacturing advancements should be considered carefully. Two dimensions need to be explored:

- tourism as experience of innovations (internet, but also robotics, VR, new transportation means, accessible tourism tecghnologies etc.);

- tourism as learning about innovation and about places as innovation hubs.