

# **Tourism in Biosphere Reserves: Genesis of a Territorial Issue Case of Ida-ou-tanane, in the High Atlas Mountain (South-West of Morocco)**

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## **Introduction**

The expansion of tourism in protected spaces, in particular the biosphere reserves, draws more and more attention because of its social and territorial repercussions: tourism fits into the landscape strongly and penetrates through extremely different environments. No more space can escape from the geographical extension of tourism. And its territorial impact starts to be measured with those of other activities.

## **Methods**

The tourist practices and territory will be the subject of investigations for this work within a socio-spatial approach. Being near the greatest tourist station of Morocco (Agadir), for a long time Ida-ou-tanane territory became an attraction for international tourists as well as for national hikers. Great numbers of tourists prefer to take refuge in the gorges of this mountain than to remain in the seaside resort of Agadir. The result is the emergence of a new tourism system, of which territory is the basis and the local society is the reflection. However, this country constitutes the example of a specific and fragile ecosystem. Its localization in the Biosphere Reserve Arganeraie (MAB-Morocco), gives it even more fragility. The tourist activity starts to become a determining economic element in this area. And the efforts devoted lately to the development of rural tourism in Morocco, encourage this orientation more and more.

## **Results and conclusion**

Two Monitoring forms are to be questioned (figure 1) : Monitoring of space or Monitoring of the tourists?

To answer this question, three reports are proposed in this contribution:

### **1. Tourism transforms the areas**

As tourism develops in the villages, it is spread and organized in specific places. Its spatial radiation can reach all the places. Tourism transforms existing places, but it also creates new locations. A geographical phenomenon which “upsets the order established in the hierarchies and the functioning of concerned space”.

### **2. Interactions: a socio-space genesis**

The profile of rural tourism is very difficult to define. With a precise and limited offer, the demand is characterized by high diversity. The result is a great diversity in the attitude of the tourists about respect to territory and society. However the relation between tourism and the social context of the inhabitants is difficult to approach in the policies of management. However, the needs of the tourists in the excursion places become increasingly large.

### **3. The attitudes and the spatial forms of tourism**

The development of a tourist area in Ida-ou-tanane resulted in the constitution of privileged sites associated to a specific tourist practice (bivouacs, speleology, excursion). During the 15 last years, the

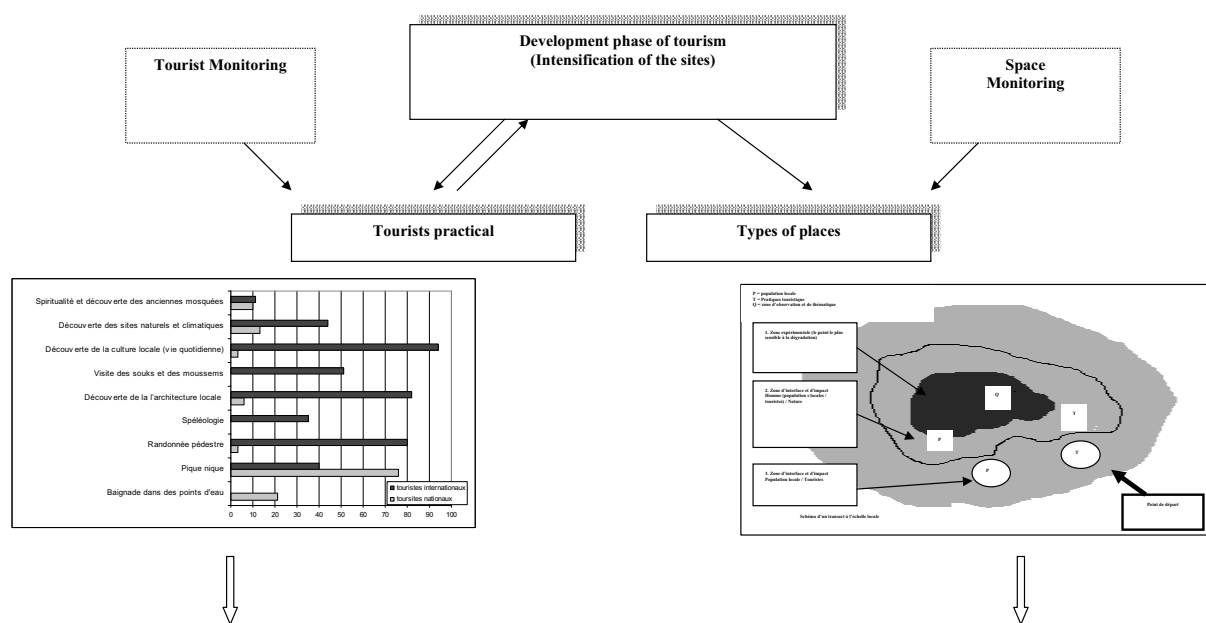


Figure 1: Two Monitoring forms.

development of tourist territory does not cease to increase the number of sites with tourist interest. The result is the evolution of tourist practices and the intensification of the rate of tourist functioning.

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