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**TOURISM: THE RECOVERY OF THE VALUE AND THE MEANING OF THE PLACE IN A
GLOBAL ERA**

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Introduction

Tourism in the way that it is evolving today can help us better understand the emerging paradox introduced by the increasing popular paradigm of globalization and the inherent heterogeneity of the human condition. Increasingly mankind is being challenged in the form of institutions, economic enterprises and places of habitat to navigate a social contract between the economic pressure to subscribe to a homogeneous world on one hand and the biological necessity to be different for survival in the Darwinian sense on the other. In this paper we posit that the city as a tourist destination takes advantages of this contradictions. This means that the value of the urban place is being rediscovered along more humane dimensions.

This article starts by discussing the concept of globalization and its impact on contemporary urban management which include principles of urban productivity and economic development. Following this general outline the concepts of the city as a product to be recreated, managed and offered to both investors and visitors as a way to revitalize the urban economy is explored. The related concepts of place market and city marketing used in this process are introduced as well.

Finally this article tries to explain why eco-sustainable tourism can help a municipality improve its economic performance and face the competition of other urban centers of the same size by taking advantages of unique attributes of a geographic location whether man-made or occurring naturally.

Globalization. Is it a new process?

The word "globalization is a derivation of the word "global" which means "the whole". Having said this, being characterized as "global" depends on the one's adopted point of reference. That is, what is being considered as the "whole"? In this sense the perspective of globalization as an *economic* phenomenon (internationalization) is not a new process.

In terms of the modern business world it is possible to say that the globalization process started when the America was discovered in the 15th century. The discovery of America at the time promoted in a significant way the concept of geo/physical/mankind planet unity (although, the civilizations in that time were not be aware that there would not be more significant land to discover. The emerging philosophy of *commercial* unity was the result of geographic expansion searching for new resources to recover and new markets to sell to. Actually, economists today refer to this as the era of the mercantilism philosophy.

