

URBAN CULTURAL TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Elena-Manuela Istoc, PhD.¹

Abstract

Cultural tourism plays an important role in shaping the environment to meet the needs of consumers. The growth of cultural consumption (of art, fashion, music, history, etc.) and the industries that cater to it has fuelled the “symbolic economy” of cities. Today, the attractiveness of a city becomes based, both on physical, tangible assets, and a series of experiences built around those assets, generally extending to the “living culture” and the local atmosphere.

This paper focuses on the role of cultural tourism in the socio – economic development of urban areas, with emphasis on marketing principles and practices.

To achieve this paper, an analytical – descriptive methodology and gradually approach were follow and starts with examining the nature of urban cultural tourism and discusses approach to defining it, continues with the presentation of the principles of sustainable cultural tourism in the urban areas, followed by exposing the variety of ethical issues and social responsibility challenges which face organizations in the urban cultural tourism sector and ends with presenting the methodologies that were developed for the identification and the evaluation of the cultural assets that have proved important tools for developing tourism marketing strategies.

Keywords: urban cultural tourism, sustainable development, ethics and social responsibility, identification and evaluation of the cultural assets

The demand for urban tourism has increased greatly in the last decades. While many people travel to other cities than those of residence for business purposes or to participate in congresses and conferences, others travel to spend time learning about other cultures, developing specific interest and/or in search of entertainment.

On the other hand, culture is an essential element of the tourism industry (Urry, 2001; Richards and Wilson, 2006). Cultural tourism is also frequently quoted as being one of the largest and fastest growing segments of global tourism (growing since the 1990s at rates twice faster than overall tourism industry, according with WTO, 2004), this form of tourism may still be in its formative years but it already

¹ Researcher at Centre for Industrial Economics and Services of the Romanian Academy. This paper is supported by the Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number SOP HRD/89/1.5/S/62988.

designed as one of the fastest growing segments of tourism in the world and the most rapidly growing form of tourism in Europe (Klein, 2001).

Moreover, in the last decades, territories that had lost their mainstay activities under the impact of changes in the field of energy, technology and economics have been turned their attention to cultural resources to explore new ways of development. Thus, some Western cities that have suffered as a result of the recession and mutations in the world economy, have made effort to invest in restoring heritage buildings and have been setting up cultural districts devoted to production, exposure and consumption of art. And today, many developing countries are hoping to use cultural tourism to meet their financial needs.

1. Defining issues and context of urban cultural tourism

The diversity of approaches on the relationship between tourism and culture underlines the problems of definition which faced this field. Because culture touches every aspect of human life, we can argued that everything is cultural. According to this point of view, all forms of tourism might be considered as 'cultural tourism', because "all movements of persons...satisfy the human need for diversity, tending to raise the cultural level of the individual and giving rise to new knowledge, experience and encounters" (UNWTO). This broad approach is not very useful because it does not allow us to identify those manifestations of culture which are particularly important for tourism, and vice-versa.

Richards (1996) suggested that early approaches to the relationship between tourism and culture were based on the sites and monuments as cultural attractions. Gradually, a broader view of culture – tourism relationship emerged, which included the performing arts (Hughes, 2000), crafts (Richards, 1996), cultural events, architecture and design, and more recently, creative activities (Richards and Wilson, 2006) and intangible heritage (UNESCO) (Figure 1).

FORM OF TOURISM	PRIMARY TIME FOCUS	PRIMARY CULTURAL FOCUS	PRIMARY FORM OF CONSUMPTION
Heritage Tourism	Past	High culture, folk culture	Products
Cultural Tourism	Past, present	High culture, popular culture	Products and processes
Creative Tourism	Past, Present and Future	High, Popular and Mass Culture	Experiences and transformations

Figure 1: The characteristics of heritage tourism, cultural tourism and creative tourism (Source: Richards, 2001)

This has stimulated at the same time, the transition from a default definition of culture and of cultural tourism, based on the product to one based on the "way of life". More and more tourists visit new places to experience the lifestyles, everyday customs of the people from destinations they visit.

In many cities of the world can be identified important relationships between creative industries and/or cultural and tourism industry. And tourists are increasingly more educated have exceeded previous preoccupation limited to landscapes and natural resources and become more involved in symbolic and sensory consumption of the images and ideas associated with particular destinations. People want to visit cities which are associated with particular famous people, special events, ideas, or they want to experience the sights, sound and tastes of the cities they visit.

This expanded notion of cultural consumption of tourists (as expansive trend, without distinguishing between tourists and other visitors) makes the definition of cultural tourism or culturally – motivated tourism increasingly difficult.

However, we will consider as a working definition of cultural tourism that formulated by the World Tourism Organization, that is:

Cultural tourism includes “movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art.”

When we talk about cultural tourism we must underline the link between urban cultural capital and socio-economic development in urban area. This requires special attention to the different types of assets, values, and stakeholders involved.

For the tourist industry, “heritage cities” have become destinations that offer visitors a mix of cultural and leisure attractions in a unique framework (Pine and Gilmore, 1999), the supply gradually changing from “product” to “service” and then to “experience”. Today tourism plays an ever greater role in the economic life of cities, historical city competing not only among them but also with other cities trying to keep the number of visitors or to develop a particular market segment.

It is also important to recognize that the experience of urban cultural tourism in term of quality and competitiveness of destinations for such a form of tourism, depend on more than the qualities of the cultural resources. We need to consider cultural resources in the context of the complementary resources and infrastructure support.

The wide variety of facilities offered by a city, but also the fact that they are not the exclusive products for consumption by tourists but for a wide range of users, make urban cultural tourism to be a complex phenomenon.

Shaw and Williams (2002) suggest that the urban area itself, with all its attributes, is a leisure product. And this product can be decomposed into multiple items (Law, 2002) by identifying the key components of urban tourism (Figure 2).

Primary elements are those which constitute reasons for tourists to visit a city. Secondary elements and additional ones are, however, very important to the success of urban tourism, but they are not the main attraction for visitors. So that all elements (primary, secondary and additional) must be carefully examined when we are going to made a plan for the development of (cultural) tourism in an urban area.

On the other hand, for those who decide in a city, offering visitors the desired quality and, in the same times, supporting the environment and the identity of the city at a high level, often involves maintaining a delicate balance where the priorities are frequently changed.

We also have to take into account the fact that a city is a complex system, with functions, such as: residential, historical, artistic, scientific, educational, economic, and so on. And for each of these functions are attached to different values. These values, however, are not always easy to assess, especially when we consider the tangible and/or intangible cultural assets.

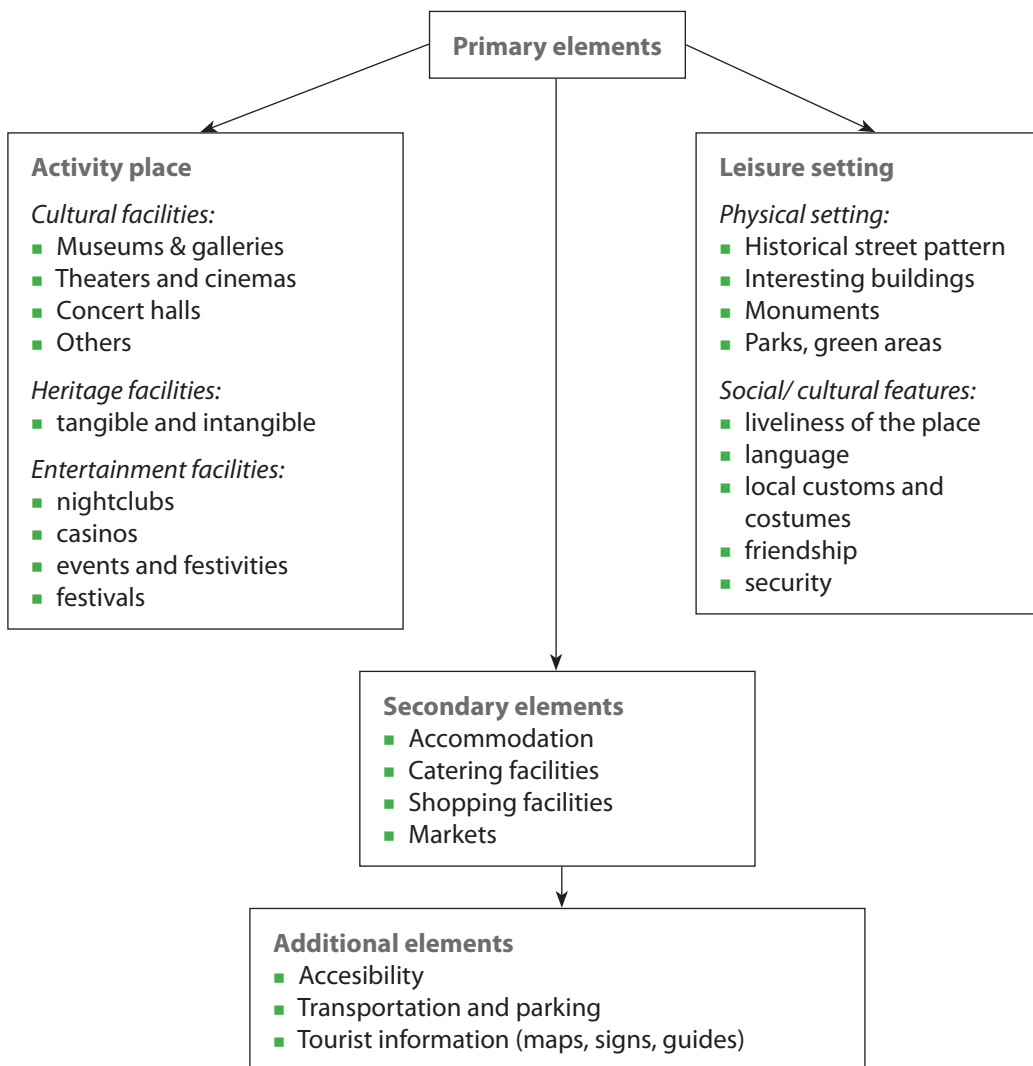


Figure 2: The relationship between primary, secondary and additional elements of urban touristic resources

The importance of urban cultural tourism for the economic revival of communities or regions is given by “wave effect” on other socio-economic field of the community. Among these may be identified:

- Cultural heritage (in tangible or intangible form), enhances the tourism value;
- Local business development, increase revenues;
- Decreased unemployment;
- Raising the standard of living;
- Increased tax receipts;
- Increased resources invested in infrastructure, facilities and services;
- Increased competitive strength;
- Attracting new residents by the labour market opportunities and by the quality of living standards ;
- Increase the property value;
- Strengthen the identity and the cohesion of the community;
- Increasing the residents’ satisfaction;
- Enhancing the quality of life.

Therefore, cultural assets – tangible or intangible – demonstrate their importance for the tourism industry and for the attractiveness and competitiveness of cities. And the most successful destinations are those that can create a positive impact by culture – tourism synergy. But this synergy does not occur automatically. It must be created, managed and developed with responsibility.

From this perspective, OECD (2005) identifies several criteria which are important for the developing a positive relationship between tourism and culture. These criteria include:

- the permanence of cultural activities;
- the participation of the local population, in addition to the tourists;
- the ability to produce all goods and services required for this occasion.

The organisational capacity of a place is also an important factor. From this perspective the management of relationship between tourism and culture is very important. If the success of a city is based on its multi-functionality and balance, the tourism must be considered as one of the functions of the city and to be treated in this context. If the cultural tourism is necessary to monitor its impact on the city, in particular the impact on intangible capital (social capital and symbolic capital). It is also requires a rigorous evaluation of tourist visits to cultural heritage. Local evaluation is important both economically and sustainable development. In fact, sustainability issues are often ignored in marketing research from the urban area, especially in terms of intangible cultural heritage. Often sustainable development approaches tend to be limited to natural issues even if the cultural heritage assets are involved too. And, in a globalized world, it’s necessary and even natural that

each city to consider local resources (especially cultural heritage) in order to face global competition in a manner which complies with the principles of sustainable development.

2. Principles of cultural tourism sustainable development in urban areas

The concept of sustainable development emerged in the 1970s in the debate which was determined at that time by the report of the Club of Rome that drew attention to the environmental consequences of rapid economic growth. But the concept did not take more substantial shape until the publication in 1987 of *Our Common Future*, the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Through this document, the Commission stressed the possible long-term consequences of failing to take action and advocated the adoption of policies aimed at achieving sustainable development, defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987).

Sustainable tourism is an approach to the development of the tourism industry designed in order to create a context that can guide choice, bring together stakeholders so that they can work towards a common interest and help decision makers in finding the balance between positive and negative effects for the present and future.

Thus, sustainable tourism can be defined as that form of tourism developed and maintained in an area (community, city, region, etc.) in such a way and at such a level that it remain viable indefinitely and not to deteriorate or alter the environment. This definition includes several imperatives that should serve as a guide for action:

- prudent use of resources;
- reducing poverty and gender inequalities;
- enhancing the quality of life;
- conservation of biodiversity;
- preservation of indigenous knowledge and ways of life based on respect for different traditions ;
- strengthening responsibility bottom-up capacity for participation and better decision making at local level.

Based on these assumptions and taking into account the characteristics of cultural and urban tourism we can establish a set of principles for sustainable development of urban cultural tourism. They can be both general and specific.

The general principles include:

- climate issues are an serious problem worldwide and should be given priority to certain forms of cultural tourism to reduce carbon emissions, conserve rare and precious resources and avoid waste production (especially non-biodegradable);

- tourism is an important economic activity and urban cultural tourism should contribute to an integrated global program for sustainable development;
- urban cultural tourism have to meet the needs of access and aim to provide experiences and benefits of high quality visitors;
- impact of tourism should be reflected in the prices for consumers and producers, prices which reflect the real cost to society and the environment;
- use of a quality labour provided by the local community and formed by specific education and training;
- urban cultural tourism marketing must be a responsible one and ensure visitors a high-quality touristic experience;
- management and development of urban cultural tourism should be responsive to change.

The specific principles of sustainable development of urban cultural tourism lie, first of all, in the similarities between the cultural and natural capital:

- both forms of capital is a legacy of care requires a fee for the present generation;
- the similarities existing between the functions of natural ecosystems in supporting and maintaining the natural balance and the functions of cultural systems in supporting and maintaining the cultural life and vitality of human civilisation. Moreover, on one side, the notion of diversity so important in the natural world, has a significant role to play within cultural systems, and, on the other side, a characteristic of the most cultural good is the uniqueness.
- From this point of view, Throsby (2001) identified a number of principles of sustainable development which should guide the users of cultural capital. These principles are:
 - Intergenerational equity principle: refers to equity distribution of welfare, utility of resources between generations. It is used in the context of the economic, psychological and sociological concept or idea and means of fairness or justice in relationships between children, teenager, adults and the elderly in particular as regards the treatment and interaction. In accordance with this principle development must take a long-term view and not be such as to compromise the capacities of future generations to access cultural resources and meet their cultural needs. This requires special concern for protecting and enhancing the tangible and intangible cultural capital because heritage represents “a future for the past” (Peacock, 1994).
 - Intragenerational equity principle. This principle asserts the right of the present generation to fairness in access to cultural resources and to the benefits flowing from them, viewed across social class, income, group sex, ethnicity, and so. The idea of equity or fairness continues to play an important role in economic and social policy, although it has

become overshadowed in recent years as a result of preoccupations in policy-making with questions of economic efficiency. We can suggest that in the cultural arena matters such as the distribution of cultural resources, access to cultural participation, the supply of cultural services for minority or disadvantaged groups, etc. are all aspects of equity or fairness in the conduct of cultural life that may be overlooked in the pursuit of efficiency-related outcomes. The intragenerational equity principle requires such focused attention on these issues, if sustainable use of cultural resources is to be achieved.

- Maintenance of diversity principle: cultural diversity is very important in maintaining cultural systems. The diversity of ideas, beliefs, traditions and values yields a flow of cultural services which is quite distinct from the services provided by the individual components. For example, in so far as works of art are inspired by the existing stock of cultural resources, a greater diversity of resources will lead to the creation of a larger variety and more valuable works of art in the future.
- Precautionary principle. This principle states that decisions which may lead to irreversible change should be approached with extreme caution and from a strongly risk-averse position, because of the imponderability of the consequences of such decisions. Thus, the destruction of a cultural asset may lead to irreversible losses in the event that the item is unique and irreplaceable. In this situation the precautionary principle would be applied especially if the cultural item were considered of sufficient value to warrant it. The principle does not assert that irrevocable decisions are never to be taken in regard to cultural capital, but rather that it is necessary to pursue a higher level of care in cases where irreversibility is involved, taking into account other principles of sustainability in the decision.
- Interconnectedness principle: economic, social, cultural and environmental systems should not be seen in isolation, rather, a holistic approach is required, i.e. one that recognises interconnectedness, particularly between economic and cultural development. This principle provides the opportunity to identify the role of cultural capital of any asset as part of what could be called the cultural infrastructure of the city and attract the attention of both the economic and cultural benefits and costs that you might create as a result of this role.

In the sustainable urban cultural tourism approach, policy makers should consider the following aspects:

- Defining the product. The product may include heritage, other attractions and facilities, human resources, etc. The elements must both work individually and come together as a coherent whole to maximise the benefit to the place and provide a unique tourist experience

- Keeping the distinctiveness of the city. Cities – in general – and historic towns – in particular – have a local distinctiveness and a well defined identity. Properly managed tourism can help local people to understand and value what is distinctive about respectively city.
- Resources and climate change. Cultural tourism cannot afford to ignore its potential impacts on resources and on the environment, in general. It must identify and take advantage of all the opportunities arising for developing products and environmental practices.
- Optimise benefits. Cities face the challenge of trying to optimise the benefits of tourism, for example, by attracting foreign investment.
- Competition. European cities face global competition and to deal with it they need to understand how the markets are changing, providing quality experiences for domestic and international visitors to remaining competitive.
- Support and funding. Despite the economic importance of tourism it cannot ensure the full financing of the cultural resources management. The consequence is that many elements of culture may be insufficient resources to ensure product quality and cultural tourism, to preserve the distinctive character, etc.

Given the complexity of urban tourism and cultural specificity of each city it can be assumed that it will rarely be possible to comply with all of the principles of sustainable development. However, policy makers will have to find and take measures to ensure balance between the positive and the negative impact of tourism activity. Taking into account the problems which underlie these principles, a structured approach to sustainable urban cultural tourism can be defined by considering:

- needs, aspirations and wellbeing of visitors;
- the need for companies in the industry to be profitable;
- respecting the values and quality of life of the local people;
- preservation of the cultural and physical environments.

It is unlikely that they have equal weight in importance. Perhaps the priorities will vary from one case to another, the interaction between city and cultural tourism is always dynamic.

In conclusion it can be said that the notion of urban cultural tourism on a sustainable basis requires trying to maintain a relationship as more productive and more harmonious between host communities, visitors and environment (Savage et al., 2004).

3. Ethics and social responsibility

Ethical and social responsibilities are closely related to sustainable development and are characterized by vast subjects with many elements (Figure 3):

The below figure illustrates that some ethical dilemmas and social responsibility issues that are related to the internal environment of firms of urban cultural tourism sector, while others are related to their external environment.

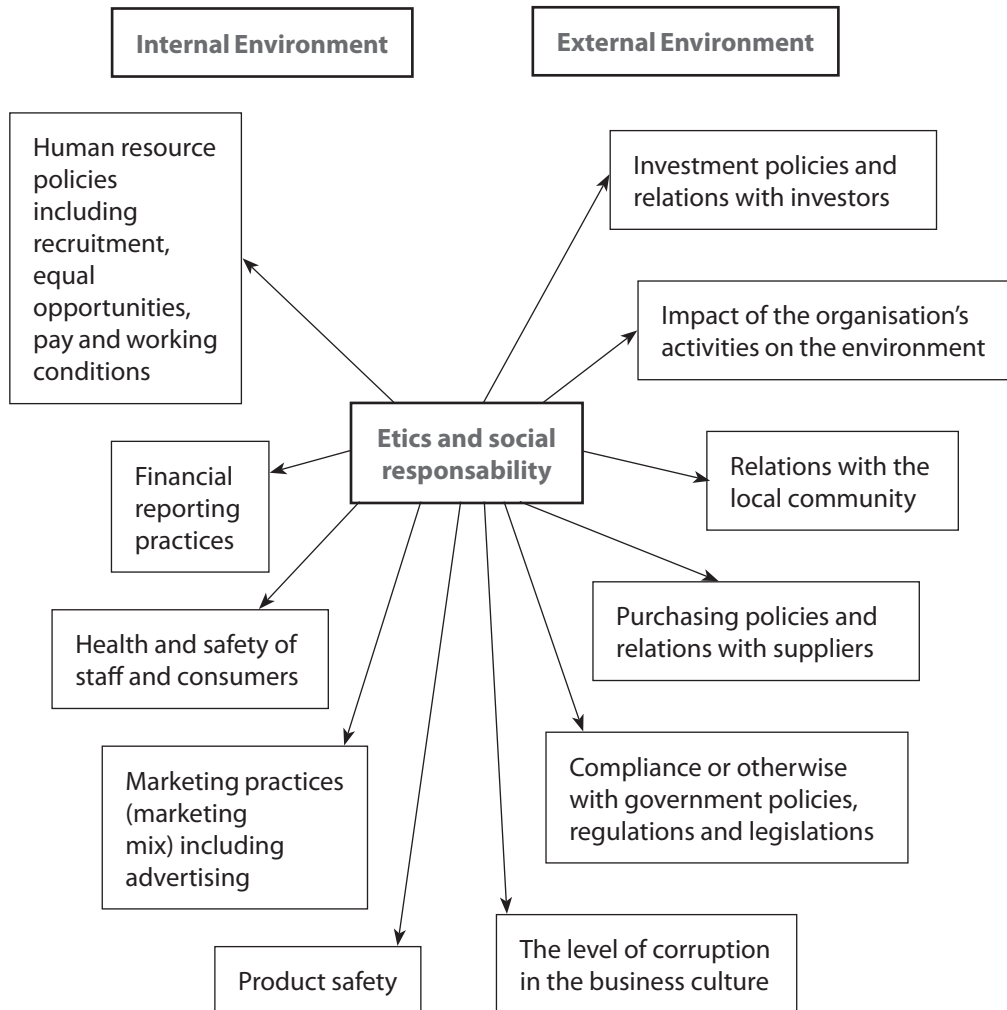


Figure 3: Aspects of ethics and social responsibility

The following part presents a series of ethical dilemmas and social responsibility issues of some urban cultural tourism sectors. However, it should be specified that they are only examples, because these issues can be more and more diverse in reality.

- The cities keen to attract tourists spend vast sums of money on marketing and infrastructure, for example. This money usually comes from taxation which is levied on the community as a whole. However, in many such cities, only a minority of the population will rely on tourism

for their livelihood, directly or indirectly. These hidden subsidies distort the pricing system on which all private-sector marketing concepts are predicated.

- The degree to which public money is spent on develop/promote tourism rather other sectors of the economy and society is a contentious issue in many developing countries. So money spent on tourism instead for sectors like health, education, housing etc. can create local resentment towards tourists. This resentment can reduce the quality of the holiday experience and lead to a decline in visitors' number.
- The existence of a discrepancy between short and long term perspectives in the development of destinations. Trying to major short-term benefits of tourism can lead to tourism development which is too rapid and uncoordinated. In the longer term this may lead to social and economic problems which will make the destination less attractive who may go elsewhere. So the destination can be left with huge capacity which is under-utilised.
- The link between cultural tourism and cultural heritage is not always the expected one. In many cases, tourism activity can accelerate certain processes that destruct cultural heritage. Overuse and defective use of archaeological and historical sites can lead to damage. Also, vandalism of tourists can lead to mutilation, destruction and loss of the irreplaceable historic and cultural values. Similarly, an intense marketing can generate degradation of local cultural heritage and destruction of cultural identity through the loss of the authenticity elements and adulteration of cultural practices etc. Except for the entry / access fee, direct benefits for heritage conservation are limited and difficult to quantify. The proportions in which a cultural heritage element should or not be included in the tourist circuit, the intensity of how this item is use for tourist activities, etc. constitute grounds for disagreement between conservationists and economists. This can affect the attractiveness of the city.
- Another dilemma is the subvention given to protect cultural resources and their introduction in tourist traffic. The problem is the obvious visibility of the costs in the local and national budgets, while benefits are not so obvious and often more nuanced, intangible and difficult to capture in conventional terms. The only clear benefits remain the visiting toll revenues.
- The important cultural tourist attractions can be used as much by tourists as locals may not have easy access to them. This can lead to hostility from the locals towards the development of tourism in their town.
- In the museums sector there is a dilemma of how to handle controversial and politically sensitive historical events, religious, etc. (i.e. Jews and Nazis,

the presentation of minority groups such as Basques, Corsicans, gypsies, transvestites, etc.). Speaking of a taboo can lead to adverse publicity, reduced visitor numbers and the creation of a climate of conflict. On the other hand, ignoring such issues can lead to the idea that is being told not offering a true picture of history, reality, society, etc. It may also discourage some potential customers from visiting the museum.

- The question of zoos and whether it is right to keep animals in captivity for the entertainment of visitors is a long-standing debate. Many zoos, recognising growing public distaste for traditional zoos, have responded by changing their promotional message. They now sell the idea that their main purpose is education and conservation, rather than entertainment. Moreover, it is interesting to note that one of the first tourism-related applications of virtual reality that has been talked about is the idea of the animal-less “Virtual Zoo”.
- Another problem leads to certain cultural institutions that attract / encourage the participation of an audience that is not normally motivated by high culture. Often this is done by modifying the offer, making it easier to assimilate, which displeases “the elitist” who sees it as a dilution or trivialize of the pure art form.
- Another dilemma arises from a good public status of cultural heritage, a major concern of economists representing the externalities (when an item of cultural heritage attracts large crowds, the local retailers, restaurants, hotels, etc. will benefit from it and we can name externalities the tourist expenses as well as the generated jobs, etc.). Externalities are benefits such as: strengthening national identity, the education or for future generations. The question is how can the owner of cultural heritage element to achieve these benefits? Which is how to internalize externalities of the site?
- Many people can benefit from a conservation investment of heritage buildings without having contributed any money. On the other hand, the investment can generate a negative externality by attracting large groups of visitors. This can cause some damage to surrounding buildings and can create discomfort to locals without offering any compensation
- On the other hand, tour - operators live in a competitive business environment which contains many ethical dilemmas and social responsibility challenges, including:
 - How honest they should be in their promotional activities? Frequently, tour - operators have a poor reputation for honesty in their brochures, for example. The hotels location is often said to be “just five minute from the attraction X” (one of the main attractions of the city) when this would only be

possible by helicopter. Tour - operators are reticent to take a lead in honesty in brochures in case they suffer competitive disadvantage if their competitors do not follow suit. However, in Europe there is EC Package Travel Directive, forcing the tour - operators to certain honesty in legislation.

- Many tour - operators do not provide adequate advice for their clients on potential hazards and inconvenience in case such information might discourage them from purchasing the product. This might cover everything from diseases that are prevalent in particular cities of destination to the risk of deep vein thrombosis for long flights for example or the annoying insects from Scotland or Scandinavia, the risk of tick bites in Vienna, transmitters of encephalitis, or street crime in some cities and so on. In the longer term these omissions of warnings may lead to customer dissatisfaction and loss of business.
- Some tour - operators provide incentives to the travel agency staff (e.g. free holidays), which can lead to unfair counselling to clients. While the agency may lose customers, these can use modern technology which allows them to access travel products without needing travel agents.
- Some travel agencies use restrictive sales promotions to attract customers. For example, to qualify for promotion customers must purchase and insurance policy from the same agency. Ensuring to the specified agency could be more expensive than other agents. This could be seen as a form of unfair, unscrupulous sales promotion that could bring bad reputation for the tourism agency as an impartial intermediary.

The actors involved in urban cultural tourism can take a number of responses of a wide variety to ethical issues, from total denial - “there is no problem” - to a complete ideological conversion leading to a major change in marketing policy they adopt. Most known answers are somewhere between these two extremes. Some, for example, may find social responsibility issues threatening and they will seek a change in policy and marketing practices in order to - reduce their vulnerability to criticism.

Regardless the adopted position for achieving responsible urban cultural tourism is necessary to follow several steps:

- Valuation of the potential. Valuation of what the community has to offer in terms of attractions and visitor services, capacity, ability to protect resources and marketing ability
- Planning and organizing. Ensure efficient use of human and financial resources. Setting priorities and objectives.

- Preparation to receive visitors, protection and resource management. Ensuring that today choices will have positive long-term effects for the community
- Market. Research and intelligence target market. Develop a marketing plan to address the target market. Knowledge of local partners and competitors, as well as the regional, national and international ones.

4. Methodological approaches for the identification and valuation of cultural resources for a sustainable valorisation

The identification and valuation of a city’s cultural assets are important tools in developing urban marketing strategies. We can use - for this - several methods/models which include:

■ **Sustainable Tourism Model**

According to this model, the cultural assets are classified for high, medium and low tourist use at a national, regional and local scale. The model uses visitor participation as a tourism indicator, identifies those assets with the greatest potential for further development and highlights attraction groupings and gaps in cultural provision. It is depicted, graphically, in a grid (Figure 4).

CURRENT TOURIST USE	NATIONAL	REGIONAL	LOCAL	COMMENTS
High (100.000 plus)				
Medium (20.000 – 100.000)				
Low (below 20.000)				

Figure 4: Sustainable Tourism Model

■ **Sieve Format**

This model ranks a city’s cultural assets into the following categories:

- built heritage: archaeological sites, listed buildings, conservation areas, industrial heritage, etc.;
- cultural products: museums and galleries, handicrafts, folklore, festivals, food and entertainment, historic transport systems, etc.;
- natural assets: outstanding nature areas, local nature reserves, sites of special scientific interest (Figure 5):

Each asset is then given a weighting for four criteria: heritage significance, tourist appeal, accessibility and management.

The weighting consists of scores of 1 to 3 for each cultural asset and depending on the tourism significance at local, regional and national levels where:

National = 3

Regional = 2

Local = 1

The scores obtained show the opportunities for the development of cultural assets with a local or regional focus into assets with a greater significance and more visitor appeal through the place marketing strategies.

ASSET	HERITAGE	TOURISM	ACCESS	MANAGEMENT	TOTAL
Conservation Areas					
...					
Listed buildings					
...					
Museums & galleries					
...					
...					

Figure 5: Sieve Format

■ ASEB Grid

The ASEB model was developed by Beeho and Prentice in 1995, having as a starting point a SWOT analysis applied to museums from United Kingdom.

This method focuses on identifying benefits and experiences gained by people as a result of cultural products “consumption”.

The ASEB Grid is used as an important tool of consumer-oriented marketing.

It helps inform product development (i.e. Design) and promotional messages as well as other elements of the marketing mix (7Ps: product, price, place, promotion, people, processes and physical evidence).

The method takes as a starting point for improved and SWOT analysis is based on a qualitative assessment of the benefits the consumer, using your own words and answers, being useful in understanding consumer behaviour and control of cultural products in the evaluation of the benefits obtained as a result of their consumption, cultural assets assessment depending on the degree of satisfaction they offer and attempt to provide consumers of products different cultural experiences that they want. In this way, the method proves to be, in addition one of the evaluation and a tool necessary knowledge and expectations of consumers, product development, planning and promotion as give special attention to the benefits of visitors following the consumption of cultural products.

From the design point of view, the method is a grid form that focuses on four areas of interest of the culture consumers:

- Activities: relates to the motives for visiting and visitor experiences with the activities under-taken at the destination;
- Settings: is understood in terms of which activities take place and what are the expectations of the visitors, including social, environmental and management settings.

- Experiences: of the hierarchy represents the customer's experiences when visiting a destination;
- Benefits: shows the social and psychological benefits which people experience when visiting a cultural asset.

And the rows are represented by the SWOT analysis components (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) for each column. (Figure 6).

	Activities	Settings	Experiences	Benefits
Strengths				
Weaknesses				
Opportunities				
Threats				

Figure 6: The ASEB Grid

When we use the ASEB model, focus is on introspection of consumers experience rather than the benefits of quantitative measurement.

To assess the cultural asset, their visitors (consumers) are interviewed about their motivations, satisfactions and experiences gained from consumption.

The advantages of the method include:

- the collected data is presented in a efficient way to get a general idea about the strengths and weaknesses of the attraction which has been analyzed;
- provides an efficient way to evaluate the qualitative approach of an cultural asset focusing on the experiences and benefits gained by consumers;
- It is a useful tool for a better improvement of the cultural asset, and any disparity between the experiences and expected benefits of the consumers of cultural goods and services can be identified and further reconciled with managers providing these services by using this method.

And the limitations of the method include:

- It's valuable resources - consuming (time, people, etc.) when collecting the data;
- It's a challenges to articulate 'benefits' in terms of weaknesses and threats seems illogical;
- Also, experiences and benefits can be difficult to distinguish.

Application of these methods can bring an audit of that city's cultural capital; a city's cultural profile and an evaluation of the importance of the analyzed cultural

capital is considered a sustainable tourism development and urban renewal through responsible marketing strategies.

A better valorization of cultural resources in a city can be achieved if their development and protection processes are made so they support each other; if people involved in taking decisions see tourism as a tool that leads to a goal rather than a goal in itself. Tourism is just one of the ways that can be used to achieve sustainable development in economic, social and cultural point of view.

5. Conclusions

A definition or usage of cultural tourism development strategy to be useful in urban areas requires a very detailed analysis and precise identification of demand characteristics and services necessary to satisfy it while also protect the resources and the local population.

At the same time, the link between cultural tourism and socio - economic development should be carefully considered. The continuing growing studies have a slight tendency to exaggerate the potential positive economic effects of cultural tourism in urban areas or to omit the presentation of possible negative effects on destinations. But the reasons for success or failure of development strategies and urban regeneration based on cultural tourism are complex and require detailed analysis, identification and verification of all determinants parameters.

A special attention should be paid to the relationship between tourism and cultural heritage (tangible and intangible), because beyond certain limits, the tourism activity can become a negative element in terms of conservation and use of this heritage. For this reason, especially cities in developing countries should originate projects to protect the heritage and establish a territorial distribution strategy for investment in tourism promotion.

An important element is the need to integrate cultural projects with intervention programs for socio - economic development and local promotion. Without being part of an integrated development plan, urban cultural tourism can not produce benefits for society and can not be sustainable for long periods of time.

At the same time, to deal with ethical dilemmas that arise and to take social responsibility, cultural tourism areas should regard certain principles such as:

- Local community education about the importance of cultural resources that promote understanding and appreciation of local culture;
- Management of potential conflicts between those working in tourism sector and conservationists;
- Planning of cultural tourism as to provide high quality visitor experiences;
- Ensuring the contribution of tourism to promotion and protection of heritage (natural and cultural).

Moreover, Throsby (2001) identifies three “golden rules” for the development of cultural tourism planning to ensure benefits to both sectors and lead to a sustainable development of the area:

- determining the right value for cultural assets;
- the need to be clear about the sustainability principles and sustainable development of local economy;
- The importance of a rigorous analytical methods to be use for studying tourism/ cultural interaction at both micro and macro levels.

References:

- Beeho, A.J.; Prentice, R.C. (1995): *Evaluating the Experience and Benefits Gained by Tourists Visiting A Socio – Industrial Heritage Museum: An Application of ASEB Grid Analysis to Blists Hill Open – Air Museum, The Ironbridge Gorge Museum, United Kingdom. Museum and Curatorship*, v. 14, n. 3, pp. 229 – 251
- Briggs, S. (1997): *Successful Tourism Marketing: A practical Handbook*, Kogan Page Limited, London, UK
- French, Y.; Runyard, S. (2011): *Marketing and public relations for museums, galleries, cultural and heritage attractions*, Rutledge, UK.
- Fusco Girard, L.; Forte, B, Cerreta, M, De Torro, P; Forte F. (2004): *The Human Sustainable City: Challenges and Perspectives from the Habitat Agenda*, Ashgate, Aldershot
- Fusco Girard, L.; Nijkamp, P (eds.) (2008): *Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Local Development*, Ashgate, Aldershot
- Ginsburgh, V.A.; Throsby, D. (eds.) (2006): *Handbook of The Economics of Art and Culture*, Elsevier, Oxford, UK
- Girard, L.F.; Nijkamp, P. (eds.) (2010): *Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Local Development*, Ashgate, UK
- Hardy, A.; Beeton, B; Pearson, L. (2002): *Sustainable tourism: an overview of the concept and its position in relation to conceptualisations of tourism*. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, v. 10, n.6, pp 475-496
- Hughes, H. (2000): *Arts, Entertainment and Tourism*, Butterworth – Heinemann, Oxford
- Klein, R. (2001): *Public policies and cultural tourism – EU activities*, paper presented at The First Conference on Cultural Tourism, Economy & Values in the XXI Century, Enterprise directorate general Tourism, 29-31 marth, Barcelona
- Law, C. (2002): *Urban Tourism: The Visitor Economy and the Growth of Large Cities*, Continuum, London, UK
- Loulanski, T. (2006): Revising the concept for cultural heritage: the argument for a functional approach, *International Journal of Cultural Property*, v.13, pp. 207-233
- OECD (2005): *Culture and Local Development*

- Ooi, C.S., (2002): *Cultural Tourism and Tourism Cultures: The Business of Mediating Experiences in Copenhagen and Singapore*, Copenhagen Business School Press, Copenhagen, Denmark
- Orbasli, A. (2000): *Tourists in Historic Towns: Urban Conservation and Heritage Management*, E&FN Spon, London and New York
- Peacock, A. (1994): *A Future for the Past: The Political Economy of Heritage*, David Hume Institute, Edinburgh
- Pine, B.J.; Gilmore, J.H. (1999): *The Experience Economy*, Harvard University Press, Boston
- Remich, A. (2001): *Evaluating European Cities Performances in cultural Tourism: A Comparison of two alternative Dea – Approaches*, Wirtschaftsuniversität, Vienna
- Richards, G. (ed.) (1996): *Cultural Tourism in Europe*, CAB International, Wallingford, UK
- Richards, G. (ed.) (2001): *Cultural Attractions and European Tourism*, CAB International, Wallingford, UK
- Richards, G.; Wilson, J. (2006): *Developing creativity in tourist experiences: a solution to the serial reproduction of culture?*, *Tourism Management*, v.27, pp. 1209-1223
- Ruhanen, L. (2008): *Progressing the sustainability debate: a knowledge management approach to sustainable tourism planning*. *Current Issues in Tourism*, v.11, n.5, pp. 429-455
- Savage, V.R.; Huang, S.; Chang, T.C. (2004): *The Singapore River thematic zone: sustainable tourism in an urban context*. *The Geographical Journal*, v. 170, n.3, pp 212-225
- Shaw, G.; Williams, A.M. (2002): *Critical Issues in Tourism. A Geographical Perspective*, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford, UK
- The World Bank, (2000): *Culture Counts: Financing, Resources and the Economics of Culture in Sustainable Development*.
- Throsby, D. (2001): *Economics and Culture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
- Urry, J. (2001): *The Tourist Gaze*, Sage, London
- WCED, (1987): *Our common future*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK
- Zukin, S. (1995): *The Culture of Cities*, Blackwell, Oxford
- www.unesco.org
- www.unwto.org