APPROACHES TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM

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Resume: This paper discusses cultural tourism as personal understandings and cultural interactions and points out some possibilities to be explored in the multipurpose tourism products. Some suggestions and approaches are provided which could create advantages and cultural assets in the practical implications of tourism.
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The essential characteristics of cultural tourism as a cultural interaction

Cultural tourism enables an integrated development of resources and approaches to an enrichment of the concept for sustainable development of tourist destinations. Cultural tourism is a possibility for each community to implement initiatives for its social-economic development and to search new ways for making popular its traditions, morals and manners together with the organized cultural activities.

Cultural tourism often evokes special destinations known for the predominantly cultural nature of their attractors—as opposed to natural (e.g. ecotourism), recreational (e.g. gambling in Las Vegas or Monaco) or other values (Noonan & Rizzo, 2017).

Cultural tourism started as a form of alternative tourism and nowadays can be considered, in some destinations, a dominant part of mass tourism. There exists a question if cultural tourism really serves the needs of sustainable tourism (Dana Pop, 2016).

Cultural tourism could be defined as travel undertaken predominantly with the intention to participate in various activities and gain new experiences related to culture, such as participating in festivals and cultural events, getting acquainted with the history and tradition of regions, sites and countries, visiting areas with traditionally built environment, visiting cultural monuments and museums, becoming acquainted with local customs and local gastronomy (WTO, 1985; ICOMOS, 1999; Moira, 2015, p.137).

Cultural tourism is distinguished by a unique combination of different product structures, interpretations of cultural heritage of a destination, resource potential and network dimensions of relationships and parties concerned. In the extended range of possibilities for spatial and temporal experiences, cultural tourism is identified by:
- virtual cultural routes;
- unexplored archeological sites and places with a concentration of relics of historical importance and specific natural features;

- travels aiming at field studies of the culture of certain destinations;
- cultural heritage (ethnicity, values, religion, cultural mosaic layers of civilizational developments);
- self-perfection of curious tourists to observe, analyze and give an emotional meaning to their movements in order to enrich their lives;
- various forms of educational activities, lectures, discussions, presentations, etc.

Cultural tourism is characterized as (Mihail Mihailov, 2013):
- a socio-economic phenomenon of complex nature and a tourist interpretation of anthropogenic resources;
- needs, which are a dynamic combination aimed at a restoration and improvement of man, mediated by the act of tourist travels. They are customized by a subjectivism of the perceptions, have their temporal and spatial characteristics with emphasis on the social, spiritual and intellectual dimensions;
- a specific motivation and a specific tourist product – a cognitive travelling to previously drawn up itinerary including heterogeneous or homogeneous natural and/or anthropogenic landmarks, travelling that is realized through the creation and provision of tourist specific basic and additional services by specialized or general tourism enterprises and organizations;
- participation in a high cultural level, with higher requirements for the quality of the tourist product, especially information, and devotion of more resources to satisfy intellectual interests;
- a dynamic product life cycle - fast input, progress and drop of the tourism market.

The rapid growth of cultural tourism has caused problems and there are signs that cultural tourism is becoming a victim of its own success (Korez-Vide, 2013). A growing number of tourists at major sites and in small communities have raised questions about the sustainability of this form of tourism. Historic city centres have started to suffer from a "vicious circle" of cultural tourism development in which famous sites attract large number of tourists thus degrading the quality of experience and driving "serious" cultural tourists away. Another problem is that in the search for their uniqueness through cultural tourism, many places have followed similar strategies, which have resulted in making those places feel and look the same. As an alternative, creative tourism could meet the needs of cultural tourism to re-invent the possibilities of tourist destinations to gain distinction in a saturated market. Cultural diversity and cultural differences are cultural tourism resource, which combines preferences, creative energy, modes of communication and sharing of values.

It can be concluded that cultural tourism:
- is a specific manifestation of the culture of a society;
- creates dynamics and diversifies opportunities for offering a variety of cultural symbols and events;
- takes place outside the traditional temporal and spatial dimensions and enriches people in their spiritual quests (Popova, 2012);

- is a possible manifestation of cultural differences and diversity as a resource of cultural interactions' synergy;

- "is characterized by a very recognizable features such as quality of the tourist product, price of services, specificity of attracting audiences, special interests, unique experiences, a possibility for all-year travel and more." (Aleksieva and Bokova, 2013)

- promotes cognitive, specific and specialized elements in its comprehensive product and differentiates a segment of tourists to a particular profile and motivation;

- creates distinction, in contrast to creative tourism that generates self-improvement and mass tourism that meets the basic needs (Richards and Wilson, 2007);

- is a kind of mass tourism in some destinations because of the quantity of cultural objects and assets as a whole, and also because of the gastronomy as a cultural tourism product in each tourism place, etc.

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has published a survey that draws some directions in defining and measuring cultural tourism. The official statement of UNWTO puts an accent on culture as a fundamental part of the tourism experience in Europe, and its growing importance. "Today, cultural tourism is one of the largest and fastest-developing global tourism markets: an estimated four out of ten tourists choose their destination based on its cultural offering. They are increasingly attracted by intangible factors such as the atmosphere of a place, its association with famous people, ideas or events – in other words by a place's culture, history and traditions.

Europe is a key cultural tourism destination thanks to its incomparable cultural heritage that includes museums, theatres, archaeological sites, historical cities and industrial sites, as well as music and gastronomy. Europe's cultural heritage enriches our lives and provides inspiration for our cultural and creative industries. By making Europe a top tourist destination, it helps generate economic growth, employment and social cohesion. The combination of culture and tourism can be a powerful driver of economic activity".

Cultural tourism becomes a different form of living while tourists are outside their residential places, an experience to do cultural research and promotion of our most notable and distinguished manner to present the cultural specificity of our residentiary, and also brings symbols of complex cultural emotions in interactions (culture penetrations) and tangible values of tourism products.

Tourism and Culture Synergies' survey of the World Tourism Organization – resource of the cultural interaction

Some of the First UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture: Building a new Partnership'conclusions is based on an online survey, which was developed to explore how cultural tourism is understood and perceived

in Member States. It covered 44% of UNWTO Member States (69 out of 156 countries), who were asked about their definition of "cultural tourism", their priorities and policies in this area, and their views on future development and trends. The following main findings of the survey summarize that:

- Almost all Member States define tangible heritage and intangible heritage as a part of cultural tourism, and over 80% also point out contemporary culture (e.g., film, performing arts, design, fashion and new media, among others). Tangible heritage is rated as the most important element of cultural tourism, followed by intangible heritage and then contemporary culture.

- Estimates of the percentages of cultural tourists among international arrivals vary widely. Member States using a broad, activity-based definition of cultural tourism estimated that 47% of their international arrivals are connected with cultural tourists, whereas those with a narrow, motivation-based definition estimate an average of 16% cultural tourism's visits.

- Measurements used to estimate the size of the cultural tourism market are rather based on cultural participation data (32%) than cultural motivations (30%). Both measures are used by few countries. Around 37% of countries have no current measurement of cultural tourism.

- Cultural tourism is a priority in the tourism policy of 90% of respondents, and 69% indicate that it is 'very important' to tourism policy. Countries with a cultural tourism policy were more likely to measure cultural tourism, to report larger numbers of cultural tourists and to report higher cultural tourism growth rates.

- Around 84% of Member States indicate that cultural tourism is included in their marketing and promotional plan (UNWTO, 2018).

The survey of the 61 cultural tourism experts who participated in the online survey indicated that both tangible and intangible heritage should be included in the definition of cultural heritage. Over 80% of experts would also specify contemporary culture. Most experts considered that intangible culture was becoming more important part in cultural tourism, and that "this trend would also continue in the future with the growing demand for engaging and creative experiences". Cultural tourism demand is viewed as having grown in the past five years, and is also expected to grow in the next five years. Most experts argued for better measurement of cultural tourism, with a mixture of activity-based and motivation-based indicators.

The main future policy objectives were seen as developing and increasing:
- integrated approaches to tourism and culture synergies;
- community empowerment and inclusion;
- product variations and structures;
- networking and collaboration;
- capacity building.

Specific actions should include more monitoring of the results of policy implementation and setting shared goals for cultural tourism stakeholders. Experts

placed 'balancing promotion and protection' above 'understanding tourist behaviour' in their ranking of future policy agendas.

The main future challenges for tourism and culture collaboration were indicated as differing objectives between stakeholders and problems of coordinating actions by different levels of government.

Based on the results of the research, Greg Richards (2018), UNWTO consultant, identified a number of issues in depth:

"- The dynamic relationship between tourism and culture means that the nature of the cultural tourist and the culture that they consume is changing rapidly. In particular models of cultural tourism based on tangible heritage are being augmented by growth in intangible heritage and creativity.

- This dynamism problematizes the definition of "cultural tourism", which now has to be considered as a much broader field of synergies between tourism and culture than was the case 20–30 years ago. More stakeholders are involved, and the role of local communities as part of the cultural tourism experience has expanded dramatically. The tourists themselves have also become co-creators of their own experiences.

- The broadening of cultural tourism has also generated a wider range of mutual benefits between tourism and culture. These not only include the basic cultural, social and economic returns from tourism, but also aspects such as the development of creativity and atmosphere in destinations, attraction of creative people, expansion of the audience for culture and the support of professional networks and export markets.

- In the future it is likely that there will be more convergence between tourism and culture, particularly in the area of the creative industries and consumption of *local* or *everyday* culture. However this will also generate new challenges, particularly in terms of managing tourist access to local communities and dealing with the enlarged range of tourism stakeholders."

During the Twenty-second session of the UNWTO General Assembly in Chengdu, China (between the 11th and 16th of September, 2017), the following definition for "cultural tourism" was adopted:

"Cultural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination.

These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions."

Some conclusions and recommendations of the UNWTO General Assembly are referred to:

- Cultural tourism is set to remain one of the key tourism markets in the future. The expanded range of cultural phenomena consumed by tourists will also increase the range of stakeholders involved in this market, with local communities

becoming one of the keys to the sustainable development of cultural experiences. In order to make effective policies, however, more information is needed on the profile, motivations and needs of cultural tourists. This in turn requires better research, linked more closely to policy objectives.

- a creation of a vision for cultural tourism to link and energize stakeholders;
- a generation of better information;
- development of more specific cultural tourism policy;
- creating more targeted cultural tourism marketing activity;
- ensuring cultural protection;
- making effective use of new technologies;
- fostering stakeholder collaboration, etc.

The creative possibilities of cultural tourism

In the 21st century the tourism global market creates an organic and interdependent system in which the supply and demand side experiences significant changes both in time and space and also from the perspectives of the quantitative and qualitative aspects or components. Newer and newer regions and tourist products will be involved in the international and domestic tourism trends as well and in the ever growing competition only such a tourism destination of tourism actor can survive which or who can provide an ever growing standard of quality (Csapo, 2012).

Approaches towards the development of cultural tourism of a destination could be:

- *An implementation of thematic routes* as an attraction – in the concept of this kind of tourist product is possible different activities to be distinguished, from the creation of a unique experience at the contiguity with local communities to the study of thematic resources such as winemaking, carving or natural areas. The thematic route has some advantages such as: a relatively small initial investment for its realization, its ability to diversify temporally and spatially tourism demand, and to use idle resources, the creation of new demand and interest in a specific attraction, etc. (Csapo, 2012) Such thematic routes take place in Bulgaria too, for example, in the Natural Park "Belasitza" where eight thematic routes are organized (Thematic routes, 2018):

- "Belasitsa Butterflies and Flowers" – a radial route from the village of Yavornika to the waterfall. The length of the route is 1.20 hours and its length is 2.8 km. The route enables the acquaintance with some butterflies and daydreams and colorful plants, for becoming aware of trivia about them and why they can not do without each other.

- "The life of the chestnut" - a circular route (from the village of Kolarovo, through Goelcheto and back to the village of Kolarovo. The length of the route is 2.30 hours and its length is 5.3 km.) along which visitors have the

opportunity to move into the unknown and unique world of the chestnut forest, full of fascinating creatures and charming inhabitants.

- "Trail of the ant" – the visitors could be brought in some microcosm full of interesting facts - the world of ants. Along the trail there are three information boards - Red forest's ant, the Behavior of ants and the Ants' Significance. Starts at Congur hut where the route dashboard is located. The length of the route is 1.20 hours and its length in both directions is 3.6 km.
- "Friends" – it starts from hut Belasitza and leads to the picturesque Leshnishki waterfall. Following the blue marking tourists touch the unknown and unique world of our friends the trees. In the hut and around it there are interactive dashboards that present ten trees of Belasitza. Along the path there are signs to help tourists to recognize these trees.
- "The Water Secrets" - the end point of the route is the beautiful Kameshnishki waterfall. The trail has five information boards presenting interesting and in memorable way the power of water.
- "Traveling in History" - this route carries in time to the most interesting and dramatic moments in the history of the mountain Belasitza and tracks how people's life has changed from ancient times till today. Its total duration is 4.40 hours. The starting point is the center of the village of Kolarovo.
- "Colorful Fairytale" – starts from the center of the village of Samuilovo and leads to the White Fountain area. This route offers a walk in the Belassica pruning forests full of wonderful flowers. The length of the route is about 20 minutes (without breaks) and its length is about 2 km. The trail is marked with green tourist markings.
- "Woodpeckers - guardians of the forests" – the route starts from the center of the village of Gabrene and reaches the Pishena rock area. The entire trail is 2.5 km long and takes about 45 minutes. You could admire picturesque views of the valley of the river Strumeshnitsa. Belasitsa Nature Park is one of the favourite places for woodpeckers in Bulgaria.

- *Delivering of digital (cultural) content* through mobile devices of the mobile device users during the cultural experience of tourists in both museums and city environments (Spadoni, Tariffi and Sassolini, 2011). Considering that cultural tourism is undergoing a radical transformation, especially in the wake of global social phenomena, like: (1) democratization of travel and cultural consumption, (2) low-cost flights, (3) single currency in Euro countries, (4) unstructured and personal tourism experience often with strong individual focus, (5) strong reference to personal assistance and guidance instruments, both in terms of location (GPS navigation) and in terms of cognitive orientation (individual tour guides). In addition, there is a growing interest in less visited and secondary tourist sites that are also cultural markets. In this scenario, where communication and networking equipment (smartphones, navigators, tablets, etc.) are becoming widely available commodities, it emerges clearly the problem of finding and adapting content to be conveyed to the users/urban explorers. Hence, the problem of the lacking of tourism content is a typical paradox of generation and

technology gap: having textual and multimedia materials that illustrate a specific urban itinerary today requires a non-trivial investment throughout the entire cycle of content provisioning (cultural-historical research, writing, adapting to the rhythms and timing of the visit, georeferencing, translation, sound, voice, compression, etc.). Furthermore, the authors of tourist guides still need to redo or revise the entire material in case of changes in the thematic finalization of the work, which is typically bound one-to-one to a specific route. On one hand, new digital possibilities facilitate and inform cheaper the tourist but on the other - make him/her lonely in searches and his/her cultural experiences, and more involved in the organization of a tourist stay in a destination.

 - *A foundation of cities of creativity, knowledge and emotional intelligence* – "creativity and knowledge are the driving force of the urban economy in both the developed world and in emerging economies. So cities are trying to create the suitable conditions for the flourishing of creativity and knowledge in today's new culture of business." (Kolova, 2011) The future of each city outlines main directions for development, which include: (1) the history of the city in the relation 'past-present-future', (2) the specific resources and capabilities of the populated area, (3) the personal entrepreneurial networks, which encourage the participation of talented/multitalented and creative people to implement internal mobility from city to city and stay where their potential is assessed, etc. All these conditions favor the cultural tourism. Great cities are exciting because they successfully concentrate commercial and cultural activities in one centre or as it is said by the cultural theorist John Holden, "they combine making of meaning and making of money in interesting ways." To preserve the natural and cultural heritage and for the development of the national system of protected natural and cultural values, to maintain biological balance, the natural spatial and cultural identity and to integrate their values into present life in the National Spatial Development Concept for the period 2013-2025 the following priorities are outlined: (1) Preservation of the identity of the natural and cultural heritage through an effective protection and intelligent use of the economic potential of protected natural and cultural values; (2) Increase of the National ecological network's elements in the regions with the lowest proportion of protected territories and areas and linking the National ecological network with the European ecological network through a cross-border cooperation for protection of natural values; (3) Inclusion of new natural and cultural sites inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage list; (4) Preventive protection of typical landscapes with a preserved traditional land use and with a high conservation value and restoration of damaged landscapes caused by human activity; (5) Ensuring equal access to the whole range of natural and cultural values - carriers of a historical memory and national identity. These efforts develop in a perspective cultural tourism in its implementation as combinations of business trips, professional meetings, time for leisure, etc. The content of intercultural interactions is also very important asset in management development and realization of business models in cultural tourism. Conflicts become immanent in the cultural meanings

and understanding. The milieu sets the course of tourism activities and cultural management and leads to the implementation of different conflict management styles in the context of self-leadership, motivating communication and smart destinations development. This often depends on the multitalented professionals in the field of their expertise, the abundance of cultural practices and business stories in the development of the region, the multiplication of knowledge in a real learning environment, "the public communication with the combination with other managerial tools to achieve results and build trust" (Bankova, 2015), etc.

Conclusion

Cultural tourism and the approaches to its development are parts of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the world. The possibilities of social networks and internet platforms, personal sites with the epistolary experience sharing knowledge and photos of tourist travels contribute to the preservation of traditions, values, impressions and cultural relationships. Today tourism businesses and leaders will increasingly promote added values by developing employee personal experience and emotional intelligence to expand their marketing performance through an image presence on the Internet.

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