

Creative cultural tourism as a function of competitiveness of cities

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Abstract

The globalized and decentralized world we live in is simultaneously the arena for the competition of cities belonging to the global network. Striving to secure a better position on the international scene, responsible managements turn to entrepreneurial activities aimed at finding new forms of competitive capitalism. Within a thus defined context, tourism is an important sphere. In these latest decades more and more attention is devoted to cultural tourism and creative cultural tourism, which are becoming an important sphere of global tourism. Reasons for this trend are evident in an economy based on knowledge and that which is experienced, in the fact that tourism is a branch of the economy with a huge potential, as well as in sustainability of investments in culture and human resources. Having in mind the hedonistic character of a place as a product and tourism as an activity directed toward the acquisition of new experiences and events, this paper will analyze those elements of the offer which contribute to increased competitiveness of cities. The subjects of this paper are the social space of the city, local products, mental space of the city, and material space of the city. A special accent is placed on creative tourism and its role in the process of regional economic development of cities in Southeast Europe.

Key words: Creative cultural tourism, City competitiveness, Regional economic development

1. Introduction

The current period is characterized by the development of the world market with consequences reaching deep into culture, identity and lifestyles. Globalization of economic operations is accompanied by waves of cultural transformation, a process called cultural globalization. As a counterbalance for globalization, there is localization

Theoreticians regard that "to keep the system balanced" requires the establishing of unity between these two phenomena.

Dynamic processes influencing the change of the known way of life and functioning of institutions are a daily challenge of participating in the competition on the global market. In this "race" successful strategies rely on technologically upgraded, interactive, integrative and sustainable means. States and cities strive to secure sustainability of their economy by developing branches of the economy within which they can remain competitive for prolonged periods of time and which are compatible with principles and goals of sustainable development in all important segments and with the development of information–communication technologies. These technologies influence a change of the manner of communication and of doing business. There is also the dilemma if the unification of globalization and technologies will change the foundations of the human society to an extent that threatens it, but quite certainly they are today the strongest drivers of the economy.

Developing countries recognize the good potential in tourism, as a branch of the economy which still has a future. The significance of tourism is also reflected in the fact that most recreational travel is from economically developed countries toward those that are less developed. In addition, the framework of the usual tourist offer catering to vacations is being expanded to offer other products and values, thus additionally increasing expected income.

Development of tourism can achieve higher goals such as financing measures for technical protection of cultural resources, integrative protection of natural resources, revitalization and reconstruction of city quarters and settlements, support for development of other "products" – material and nonmaterial, creation of new jobs, education related to culture and natural values, etc.

This paper will present the current global context reflected in the achieving of competitive advantages for cities. It will focus on elucidating the role of creative cultural tourism in the process of regional economic development. It will also analyze those elements of the city offer which contribute to its competitiveness, and belong to the domain of creative cultural tourism.

2. City competitiveness

The economy in a globalized world is an arena for competing cities and regions. Today, cities are drivers of social and cultural development, and as such they have the power to stimulate themselves, regions and states to grow and develop. To achieve a better position in a system determined by a network of global cities, they must be capable to strongly attract the best organizations, professionals, experts and investors. Harvey (1) describes this as *transition from managerial toward entrepreneurial activates* of cities, with the goal to find new forms of competitive capitalism. Under such circumstances, marketing and its instruments are an important element of development strategies serving to advertise and market potentials of a city in the global economy.

The subject of marketing of a site, as a field of urban marketing, are processes related to revitalization of cities, regions and states. A city or some other form of territorial organization are treated as a "product" aimed at constantly attracting new jobs, tourists, etc., all with the goal of developing a certain community. Although this is a simplified approach, one must not neglect the complexity of the city as a phenomenon. On the other hand, if the city is regarded as an integral product, one should also keep in mind its hedonistic characteristics (2). This means that, by placing the city in the group of hedonistic products, it possesses a specific emotional potential, i.e. the ability to offer satisfaction and excitement. Having in mind the characteristics of marketing as a discipline and of the city as a product, this unifies the understanding of the concept of urban marketing and site marketing which:

- determines local goals and modes of their realization,
- unifies basic developmental factors (attracting investors), and

- conforms to a specific "packaging of space" as a product, but constantly directed toward the "production" of a local public resource with the goal of creating additional social development.

In view of the complexity of a city as a product and its hedonistic characteristics, its dimensional frame can be viewed by breaking it down to the social, cultural, mental and material space of the city. Each of the mentioned components of the city as a product represents individual levels of the overall experience and perception of a city. The social space of the city is the frame within which experience is acquired by interactions with other people, i.e. through social relationships. Cultural city space encompasses cultural patterns and local products. Mental city space encompasses symbolic meanings and psychological characteristics linked by visitors to a specific space. The material space is determined by the physical frame, i.e. its construction elements, both natural, and created.

By their stay in a certain city, people form an interaction with the environment. As a result of such a process, appears the aspiration to create city attributes/characteristics that are simultaneously the constructive elements of its attraction. In this manner, each of the separate levels of the overall experience and perception of the city contains elements that can result in raising the level of attraction of the place, thus strengthening its competitiveness. The area where the social, cultural, mental and material space of the city overlap result in a product representing creative cultural tourism, one of the leading domains of tourism as a branch of economy.

3. Creative cultural tourism

Cultural tourism is an important field of global tourism and encompasses all travel that includes experiences and events related to culture. According to Richards (3) cultural tourism signifies movement of people caused by cultural attractions outside their usual place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences in order to satisfy own cultural needs.

Creative tourism is a developed form of cultural tourism implying participation, not only observa-

tion, demanding certain skills, contributing to the acquisition of new knowledge and enabling closer contacts with the local population. UNESCO defines creative tourism as travel directed toward authentic experience with active participation, discovering, learning about art, heritage, or about special characteristics of a place. This secures a direct link with those who live in a specific space and form its specific culture of life. The last decades have witnessed the adoption of a series of charters and declarations on cultural tourism. ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) adopted the International Cultural Tourism Charter entitled "Managing Tourism at Places of Heritage Significance" in 1999, establishing principles of dynamic interaction between tourism and cultural heritage. Tourism is recognized as a phenomenon with a growing effect on politics, economy, culture, education, ecology and esthetics. (4) In addition, the Brussels Declaration by artists and cultural professionals and entrepreneurs, was also adopted with the goal to affirm the role of IFACCA (The International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies) as a dynamic global network exchanging knowledge, experience and enriching the world cultural heritage and pointing out the importance of creative cultural tourism (European Commission, 2009). In 2002, UNESCO founded the Creative City Network, with the goal to promote and exchange positive experiences in the field of social, economic and cultural development of cities in developed and undeveloped countries. One of the goals of this network is support of developed countries to developing countries and underdeveloped countries. (5)

The basic task of cultural/creative tourism is reflected as a contribution to the economic development of the society while preserving its cultural values. The popularity of this segment of tourism, as a branch of the economy has considerably grown in the last decade. Basic causes and motives are noted in the growth of interest in culture; increase of cultural capital; growth of the aged population in developed countries; "postmodern consumption" of tourism (short vacation, cultural diversity), and increased mobility. Simultaneously, factors which stimulate development of this type of offer are also present. Cultural tourism stands out as a market with constant growth, influencing

a different offer of jobs and vocations. The offer of cultural attractions is also increased; problems of financing culture and the growingly important role of intangible culture, image and atmosphere are becoming increasingly pronounced (6).

4. Creative cultural tourism as a driver of regional economic development

The significance of Cultural tourism in the economy of cities and regions in an era of "creative cities" is growing (7). As mentioned earlier, many theoreticians emphasize the importance of cultural and creative tourism as a driver of economic development. Whitt (8) and Zukin (9) believe that the development of a certain type of tourism can be used to influence the forming a city's image. A positive image leads to higher attractiveness and interest of large investors to invest. As a result of this development there are higher investments in shaping and equipping of public spaces, as well as construction of representative buildings.

Culture is included in urban regeneration as a means of stimulating physical regeneration, animating parts of a city and producing benefit for the economy and the society. It forms the basis for regeneration strategies such as:

- "culture led regeneration", where culture is a driver of development;
- "cultural regeneration", where culture is a part of the integral strategy; and
- "culture and regeneration", where these are nonintegrated processes, and culture plays a supporting role. (10)

Various strategies are based on different methodologies, but a similarity in the field of realized results is recognized (11):

- iconic structures – culture becomes a "system for producing symbols" (12), in this role stimulating the construction of buildings – symbols of a city (museum in Bilbao, music house in Porto, opera in Singapore, etc.);
- construction heritage as a "mine" - in any period of decreased economic development of cities, as a consequence of decreased building potential construction heritage is conserved, later becoming capital that can stimulate development of the economy;

- mega events – many cities base their economic progress and image upgrading on organization of large international manifestations (Olympic Games, World Fair, European Capital of Culture, etc.),
- thematic approach – certain cities are making an effort to isolate a certain among their characteristics as unique (New York – "Cultural Capital of the World", Stockholm, Bruges, St. Petersburg, Amsterdam – "Venice of the North", Miami, Los Angeles, Las Vegas – "pleasure consuming" cities, etc.).

As previously mentioned, cultural/creative tourism has become an important factor of economic development. This is also confirmed by the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia 2020, which lists the following as the basic goals of successful and sustainable economic development:

- raising competitiveness of cities in the Republic of Serbia;
- decrease of regional inequalities and poverty;
- stopping negative demographic trends;
- identification of natural and cultural attractions of Serbia (regional identity). (13)

Mentioned goals can be realized by implementing strategies of urban-economic development through culture and tourism. Development of characteristics of a place can also be prompted and nurtured by developing creative jobs that would support products and ideas. Many cities are in the process of establishing networks of creative clusters/places which depend on creative production. Their creativity has the potential to become a spectacle for tourists, a backdrop or the very focus for tourist activities (14).

In these processes special attention is devoted to realization of "authenticity". Authenticity is the basis of the cultural tourism product and is indispensable to make the offer of a place competitive on the global market. It is reflected in:

- experience of a different way of life,
- experience of expression of a national identity or identity of a certain community,
- customs and tradition, insight into various cultures, cultural-historic heritage, history and identity),

- an offer different from globally set standards, not harmonized with local conditions and customs,
- quality of the offer/experience.

Authenticity is the basic resource of cultural tourism, and simultaneously also something that every community has in its history and culture, and is able to offer. Cities and regions competing on the global market are working to expand their offer and are fighting to achieve quality and exclusivity. Having in mind this situation, the cultural tourism offer of Serbia could be directed toward (15):

- organizing visits and tours of individual sites with a cultural, historic, spiritual, geographical, sociological, ethnographic significance, etc.;
- organizing and visits to manifestations with a seasonal character, tradition, local customs, or that stand out from the offer in the region by their specificity;
- tours of natural resources (nature parks, sites with endemic flora and fauna, etc.)
- organization of narrative evenings dedicated to local tradition;
- rural tourism with an offer of traditional and local products;
- opening of ethnographic museums displaying objects, skills, and activities, characteristic for an area or historic period.

It is important to mention that manifestations, customs, etc. sometimes need to be altered and adapted in a manner that will bring them closer to the audience, which is sometimes a precondition for visitors to feel the special experience. This leads to situations called the "gray zone", where the offered product is not wholly authentic. In this case, product quality becomes the main criterion. (16)

4.1 Cultural corridors – a project

The Council of Europe project – Cultural Corridors (Routes) of Europe (17) has been singled out as an example of horizontal coordination and implementation of a development strategy based on developing networks of cultural/creative places. The project goal is mapping and linking of key events and individuals in the field of creative economy.

Cultural Corridors of Europe are based on a set of common values with the goal of raising awareness about the European cultural identity. The idea is based on identifying and locating historical influences, exchange and development, that have shaped European culture. Corridors are instruments for preservation and upgrading of cultural and natural heritage and raising the quality of life.

Routes are certified and thematically different. By topics, 17 categories of corridors have been singled out, such as: Pilgrimage Routes (Figure/Graph 1), Historic and Legendary People of Europe, Celtic Routes, Parks and Gardens – Landscapes, Architecture of Military Fortifications, Heritage Routes of European Jews, Routes of the Olive Tree, Routes of Industrial Heritage, Phoenician Routes, Baroque Routes, Silk Road, Festival Routes, etc.

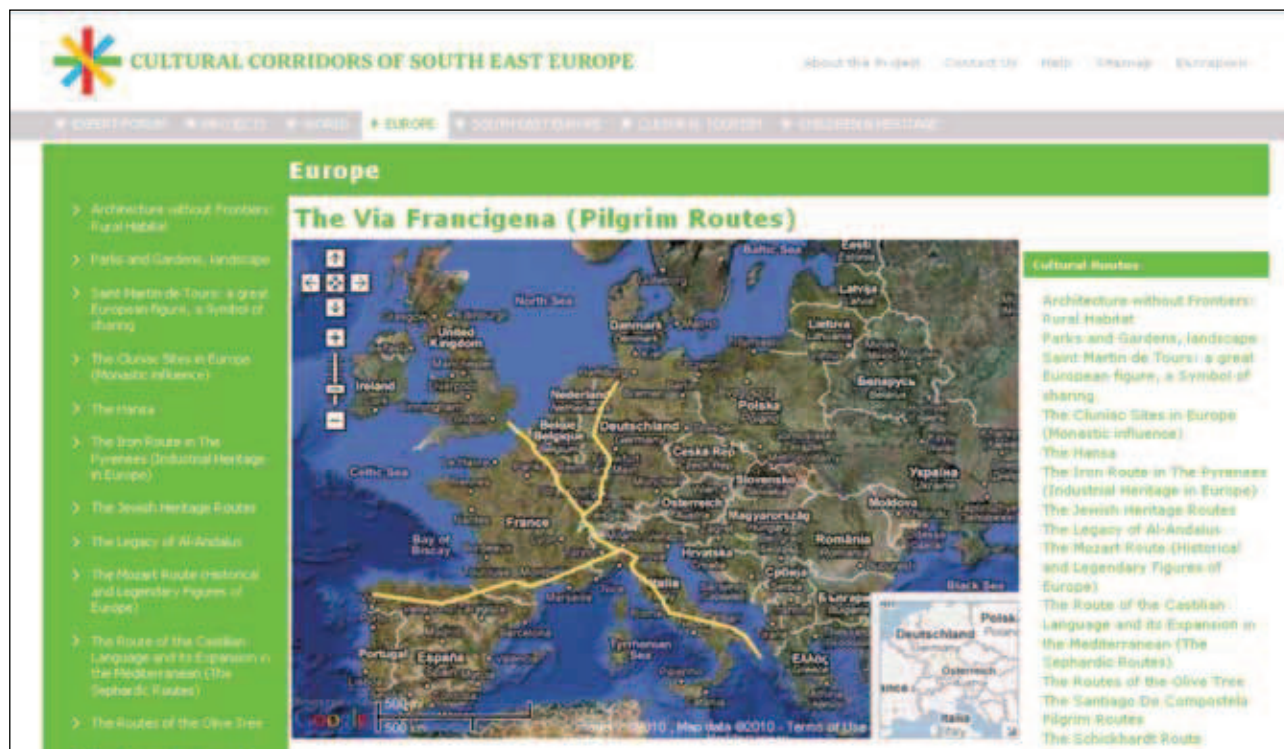
A separate segment of this project is the sub-project Cultural Corridors of Southeast Europe. In view of the specificities in the form of territorial specificities in this region, nine thematic corridors have been singled out: Danube Corridor, Diagonal Route, East Transbalskan Corridor, Sophia-Ohrid Road, Adriatic Corridor, Black Sea Corridor, Marble and Aegean Sea Corridor, East Transbalkan corridor.

Project implementation started with the adoption of the Varna Declaration (2005) at the meeting of the Southeast Europe Regional Forum. Countries of Southeast Europe undertook to:

- contribute to the promotion of cultural heritage and cultural corridors within the region;
- implement the Declaration using modern technologies and in cooperation with the EU Institute for Cultural Routes and other expert institutions.

All information relevant to this project and individual sites and landmarks are published on the Cultural Corridors of Southeast Europe web portal. In addition to the above mentioned, the portal also contains a calendar of events that are organized, and have the goal to acquaint visitors with history, tradition and local cultural characteristics.

In view of the fact that Roman archeological sites in the territory of the Republic of Serbia stand out as an exceptional resource for developing cultural tourism at the international level, the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development of the Republic of Serbia initiated the project *Cultural*



Figure/Graph 1. The Via Francigena (Pilgrim Routes), Cultural Corridors of Europe, http://www.seecorridors.eu/?w_p=22&w_l=2&w_c=19



Figure/Graph 2. *Viminacijum*,
<http://www.e-turizam.com/images/stories/viminacijuma.jpg>

Route or Roman Emperors. The project could be realized in cooperation with representatives from Bulgaria and Romania.

The Cultural Route or Roman Emperors encompasses archeological sites and museums in Pozarevac, Veliko Gradiste, Golubac, Majdanpek, Kladovo, Negotin, Zajecar, Knjazevac, Svrlijig and Nis. The goal of the project is to link these cities into an entity as had existed when the Roman Empire spread to the banks of the Danube. (18) For the needs of the project a master plan was prepared with the idea to offer environments and events that will present life as it was when the Roman Empire spread to this region.

Each singled out site (Figure/Graph 2) should be equipped with parking and access, adequate road signs; the sculpting of busts of 17 roman emperors and the construction of an elevator to Trajan's plaque, preparation of a special Roman menu, designing of souvenirs, construction of Roman hostels, etc., are envisaged.

Projects based on a similar concept are also the *European Wine Route*, headed by the Tourist Organization of Serbia and *Danube Route*, headed by the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development of the Republic of Serbia, and encompassing the Upper and Lower basin of the Danube.

The common denominator for the mentioned projects is the need to be based on international cooperation and a comprehensive development strategy implemented within a specific territory.

5. Conclusion

As drivers and pillars of social and cultural development, cities stimulate themselves, regions and states to grow and develop. To achieve a better position within the system of the network of global cities, cities are orienting toward entrepreneurial activities with the goal to find new forms of competitive capitalism. The concept of urban marketing and place marketing within these processes enables determination of local goals and manners of their realization, unifies local factors of development and corresponds to a specific "packaging of space" directed toward production of a local public resource in order to create additional social development.

As a complex phenomenon and treated as a hedonistic product, the city unifies components of its social, cultural, mental and material space. The area where these components overlap represents creative cultural tourism, one of the leading domains of tourism as a branch of the economy.

Culture and innovation play an important role in assisting regions to attract investments, creative talents and tourists. Paradoxically, in an era of information-communication technologies which remove obstacles posed by distance and time, the "physical location" and the "socialization" factor remain decisive for economic progress and success. Cities and regions compete to attract foreign direct investments and creative talents. To be successful, they must provide: a varied cultural offer, quality of life and lifestyle. Creative cultural tourism has become an important factor for stimulating local and regional attractiveness.

The positioning of cultural tourism as a basic strategic idea within each individual development sector of the society at various levels of hierarchy and space, can secure a qualitatively higher level of development, both individually and overall. Culture, as a code of behavior, thinking and space, which is inherited and constantly enriched, today certainly offers a competitive advantage, influences the quality of life in that environment, and can help in finding answers to modern day challenges. Culture can be regarded as the fourth pillar of sustainability and, in addition to the economic, social and environmental aspect, should form the basis of any urbanistic plan (19).

Projects *Cultural Corridors (Routes) of Europe* (Council of Europe), *Cultural Corridors of Southeast Europe* (Council of Europe), *Cultural Route or Roman Emperors* (Ministry of Economy and Regional Development of the Republic of Serbia), *European Wine Route* and *Danube Route*, have been singled out as examples of projects for raising attractiveness of cities and regions. Mentioned projects have the goal to map sites and link key events and individuals from the domain of creative economy. Corridors are a specific instrument for preserving and upgrading cultural and natural heritage and raising the quality of life on a specific territory.

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