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**CULTURAL HERITAGE AND IDENTITY IN THE
CONTEMPORARY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

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Abstract

Culture and heritage have been increasingly recognised as means of sustainable social and economic development and an important element of tourist motivation. However, the recent development of cultural tourism indicates the problem of massification, offering conventional products based on serial reproductions of culture. Due to factors such as globalisation and the importance of cultural diversity and identity creation in postmodern society, it is essential to place the recognizable and unique cultural heritage and identity of destination in the centre of contemporary touristic strategies. This article investigates creative tourism as a new strategy for cultural destinations. The theoretical part of the article explores multiple links between cultural heritage, identity and tourism and the emergence of creative tourism based on uniqueness, authenticity and sense of place. The analytical basis for the evaluation is a content analysis of cultural tourism projects listed on the Croatian Tourist Board website in order to select representative examples for further case study. The article concludes by proposing indicative guidelines for further development in this sector.

Keywords: creative tourism, heritage, identity

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural tourism is not only a major global industry that brings income, but also a support for national identity and a means for preserving cultural heritage (Richards, 2007). It has been argued that cultural tourism represents a sustainable alternative to mass tourism and the best model for local development (Edgell, 2006). It is a form of tourism that protects local culture and heritage, neutralize negative effects of traditional mass tourism, contribute to growth of employment and local economy. However, recent development of cultural tourism has led to the unification of cultural touristic products and experiences or, what we may call, mass cultural tourism. This problem has not yet been fully explored with the exception of work of Richard and Wilson (2007) and Richards (2011) who have indentified the growth of creative tourism as the reaction to a serial reproduction of cultural tourism. They define creative tourism as an escape route from the serial reproduction of mass cultural tourism, offering more flexible and authentic experiences that can be co-created between hosts and tourists (Richards, 2011). A shift has been turned from tangible heritage towards more intangible culture and towards greater involvement with the everyday life of the destination.

This paper examines the relationship between cultural heritage, identity and tourism. It argues that the strategic planning of cultural tourism, based on elements of local distinctive characteristics, creativity and experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) can lead to creation of new tourism products that will improve traditional models by offering more engaging and interactive experiences. The article gives guidelines and examples of how cultural tourism can be reoriented towards more creative models in practice.

2. CULTURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Cultural tourism is a travel that is motivated entirely, or in part, by artistic, heritage or historical attractions. Most often cultural tourism is associated with arts, humanities, museums, festivals, food, music, theatre and special celebrations (Edgell, 2006). It is one of the oldest and most pervasive forms of tourism. Although it is difficult to know for certain how many people visit historic sites each year or what percentage of the entire world demand for international and domestic travel is motivated by a desire to experience heritage places, the World Tourism Organization place the number at around 40 per cent, suggesting that heritage and culture are a significant part of nearly half of all international trips (Timothy, 2008).

Cultural tourism has often been described as a sustainable alternative to mass tourism (Edgell, 2006), the best model for local tourism development or the tourism that brings financial and social benefits for local community (McKercher and Du Cros, 2002). It is a form of tourism that “cares for the culture it consumes while culturing the consumer” (Richards, 2007). Nevertheless, the current development of cultural tourism has taken the opposite direction, offering

conventional products based on serial reproductions of culture. It retains on relatively safe development models. The effect is a production of growing series of sterile, inflexible cultural tourism spaces, dominated by passive consumption and the use of familiar historic references (Richards and Wilson, 2007). Also, 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 (Russo, 2002). Mass cultural tourism, as any kind of mass tourism, offers standardized and unified experiences and products, degrades local values, disrupts authenticity and represents threat to cultural heritage and identity. Because of the growing demand, the distance between cultural tourism products and local communities is becoming bigger, creating conflicts and threatening cultural sustainability. Cultural destinations each “claiming distinctiveness, reproduce the same facilities in any number of places, echoing industrial globalization with its geographically widespread production, but concentrated consumption (Zukin, 2004, cited in Richards, Wilson, 2006).

Croatia has in the past generally put emphasis on mass tourism without identity, with marketing focus on natural beauties, sea and climate. Cultural tourism in general has been chronically neglected (especially in the continental part) (Fox, 2002). It has only recently been recognized as a prosperous tourism market niche. Croatian Cultural Tourism Strategy (2002, cited in Jelinčić 2002) concluded that, although many tourist programmes include culture as a part of a tourist package, cultural tourism in Croatia is still not sufficiently developed. Most of these cultural programmes have been imported, not using Croatian cultural distinctiveness as a tourist resource (Jelinčić, 2002).

Current problems of Croatian cultural tourism can be summed as:

- Small number of satisfactorily developed cultural tourism products in spite of a great number of potential resources. There is a big lack of visitors facilities (e.g. heritage interpretation centres)
- Lack of adequate and appropriate presentation, communication and interpretation (which leads to the lack of understanding and funding, but also to a loss of location authenticity)
- Neglection of domestic market
- Lack of cooperation between cultural and tourism professionals leading to a situation where protection of cultural heritage is not integral part of cultural tourism development
- Lack of strategic development planning.

One possible solution to these problems is a creation of cultural tourism products based on creativity and experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) that will reconnect the place, its heritage and community’s sense of identity with the touristic offer.

3. HERITAGE, IDENTITY AND TOURISM

Identity became a complex concept in a contemporary globalized society. It is defined as consisting of “customary practice and of beliefs, values, sanctions, rules, motives and satisfactions associated with it” (Jensen et al, 2011, p. 286). Nowadays the globalization has created a social context in which complexity produces diversity, which presents both possibilities and threats for identity building (Jensen et al, 2011). It is a dynamic, constantly changing process which affects and is affected by many institutions: media, arts, education and tourism.

UNESCO (2006) defines culture as a whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional assets that characterize a society or a social group, and which includes creative expressions (language, literature, performing arts, crafts), community practices (celebrations and patterns of social interaction that contribute to the group and individual welfare and identity) and material or built forms such as sites, buildings, historic cities, landscapes, art, and objects. In that sense, culture can be defined also as a “living identity” (Jelinčić, 2009). Culture and cultural heritage, as an expression of identity and history they belong to, could serve as a tool for the establishment of identities and differences, which at the same time localize and globalize the cultural and tourist experience, characterized by contact and mixing of cultures (Jelinčić, 2009).

There are many recent examples of the policy makers’ attempts to revalorise place through cultural identity in the face of increasing globalization and economic integration (Richards and Wilson, 2006). Many of these attempts involve tourism in the form of revalorisation of cultural heritage for touristic use. In the current globalization processes, an authentic expression of local identity adds value to a touristic representation. The image of a destination is based both on physical assets and a series of experiences built around those assets, generally extending to the “living culture” and the atmosphere of place (Richards and Wilson, 2006). By using the elements of local heritage and identity in the strategies of cultural tourism, we can differentiate our tourism products from competitors. But, in the same time, we encourage development that is favourable to the local community in terms of protection of its values, lifestyle and local economy. We strengthen cultural identity of local communities and promote the destination as a desirable place to live, work, visit and invest in. It is vital to have community participation if we want to achieve and maintain sustainability of tourism product. Active involvement of the local community means possibility for them to benefit from the project. It creates a sense of pride and raises motivation to be a better host.

Cultural destinations must learn how to maintain, develop and utilise their distinctiveness, keeping its authenticity and local sense of identity. It is the only way that tourist activities can be culturally (and thus economically) sustainable.

4. CREATIVE CULTURAL TOURISM

If we define globalization in terms of increasing integration of economic, social and cultural systems, then tourism can be seen both as a cause and an effect of a globalization process (Richards, 2007). Due to globalization processes in the postmodern society, tourists increasingly search for authentic cultural experiences and unique local products.

The “experience economy” (Pine and Gilmore, 1999), or creative economy (Howkins, 2001), that can be applied to tourism as well, has appeared after the notion that goods and services are no longer enough and that producers must differentiate their products by transforming them into experiences which engage the consumer. In tourism, it can be seen as the creative cultural tourism products that are not only based on material heritage objects, but involve an authentic experience and engagement in the real cultural life of the social community in the destination. These products are based on expressions of the individual’s creative potentials and the self-creation of the tourist experience and include more educational, emotional, social and participative interaction with the place, its living culture and the local people. Pine and Gilmore have suggested that the next phase of value creation will be in the area of “transformations”, or experiences which actually change the person having the experience (Richards, 2011).

UNESCO defines creative tourism as a “travel directed toward an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place which provides a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture” (UNESCO, 2006). While traditional cultural tourism is based on viewing, seeing and contemplating (e.g. visiting museums, art galleries, concerts, ballet performances and the like), creative tourism is based on experiencing, participating and learning. This puts creative tourism as the next generation of cultural tourism that satisfies the higher level need of self-actualisation with a primary focus of active skill development. It offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken. The creative tourists are deeply involved in the culture of the destination, where they take part in different activities – crafts, arts, culinary and other creative activities. That creates a close link between the tourists, the local population and its cultural heritage (Richards and Wilson, 2006).

Furthermore, creative tourism is not so place-bound as cultural tourism in general is, because creative tourism utilises tourist resources that are processes in essence – like dances, singing, crafts, painting, festivals and is, therefore, more sustainable in nature than traditional cultural tourism based on the consumption of built environments (Richards and Wilson, 2006) and contributes to the development of the destination. It meets the desire of tourists for more fulfilling and meaningful experiences. In this sense, creative tourism is similar to “experiential tourism” (Smith, 2006). The creative cultural tourism has to be based on the interpretation that will help people understand the place they are

visiting and contribute to the visitors' "sense of place and awareness of a destination heritage" (Uzzell, 2006).

5. METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

The empirical analysis of this article is based upon the secondary data taken from the Cultural Tourism Database that can be found on the website of Croatian Tourist Board (<http://croatia.hr/en-GB/Discover-Croatia/Culture-tourism>). The 77 descriptions of Croatian cultural tourism projects and events were the primary source for content analysis. The analysis was conducted in order to choose informative and representative cases that represent the phenomenon under study. The analysis used the following substantive research categories related to the characteristics of previously described creative tourism concept: authentic experience, interactivity, participation, learning, living culture.

Table 1 summarises Croatian projects that have adopted the creative tourism approach.

Table 1. Examples of creative tourism products

Project	Creativity base	Description
Secrets of Grič, Zagreb	History and legends of Zagreb	Interactive night tour of the Zagreb's Upper Town .
Istra Inspirit	Istrian history and tangible and intangible heritage.	Nine experiences which recreate the mystical Istrian history on authentic locations around the Istrian peninsula.
Ad Turres Days, Crikvenica	Archaeological heritage	Cultural-educational event as a way of celebrating the area's rich architectural heritage. The event evokes Roman times in a vivid, picturesque way, so that visitors can re-experience the atmosphere of ancient Crikvenica.
Špancirfest (Strollers' Festival), Varaždin	Traditional crafts, gastronomy, arts, music, theatre	Street festival that every year introduces new attractions and programmes, the chief aim being that each visitor becomes its active participant and co-creator
Decode Zagreb, Zagreb	Zagreb cultural heritage	The participants read the instructions and follow them from one secret code and sign to another as they discover the city. Thus, they become the principal heroes in this game in which their mission is to solve this Da Vinci Code-type tourist mystery.

The Labin Art Republic, Labin	Theatre, arts, heritage	Street festival whit concerts, theatre, heritage walks, art quarter
Lace Festival, Leopoglava	Traditional lace making	Exhibition, lecture, workshops
House of fairy tales and Festival of faire tails, Ogulin	Fairy tales of Ivana Brlić Mažuranić	Permanent exhibition, interactively led content, live storytelling and production of audio and video materials, performances.

(Source: Author)

The analysis has shown that, although there is no explicit creative tourism offer on the official web portal of Croatian tourism, there are some existing projects that contain the key elements of creative tourism and Croatia is making its first steps in this area. Eight out of 77 cultural tourism projects described on the website can be categorized as creative tourism projects. Regarding the global trends in tourism development, this number is not sufficient. Croatia should take the advantage of its potential and work on the new forms of cultural tourism products.

6. GUIDELINES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

In order to profit from the creative business model, the towns and regions must create strategies for developing creative tourism products and work on a national and international branding and marketing. The following table shows main advantages of creative cultural tourism as opposed to traditional forms of cultural tourism.

Table 2. Differences between creative and traditional cultural tourism

CREATIVE CULTURAL TOURISM	TRADITIONAL CULTURAL TOURISM
Based on local creative capital in constant development	Based on existing cultural heritage (material) resources with predetermined characteristics
Small groups and individuals with narrow niche interests	Large groups and individuals with general interests in culture
Non-destructive participation, visitors' responsibility, creation of new cultural heritage	Mass cultural tourism already represents a danger for many cultural heritage sites
Very high sustainability, based on a continuous process of creation	Limited, resources are not renewable
Mobile and without need for much	Static, depends on tangible resources

Creativity is a process and creative tourism utilises tourist resources that are processes in essence, e.g. dancing, singing, crafts, culinary, painting, festivals. These resources are more sustainable than tangible cultural products (Prentice and Andersen, 2003). Because of the complexity of the creation of creative tourism products and services, there are several approaches that can be taken. Creative tourism can be destination based or activity based. Destination based product is destination dependent. Such approach is typical for creative cities, creative landscapes or programs that use the material resources of a place. Activity based creative tourism product is geographically dispersed (Richards, 2011). These are creative tourism programs based on a concrete activity independent of the location such as the Roman Empire battles re-enactments that spread across several Mediterranean countries.

The main methods to turn shift from traditional forms of cultural tourism to new, creative experiences are:

- Creative spectacles: It is possible to undertake creative spectacle activities around existing passive tourist resources (festivals in historic cities, theatrical representations, concerts, performances)
- Creation of creative spaces such as art quarters
- Educational and hobby tourism: Organization of courses and creative workshops based on cultural assets
- Cultural routes
- Virtual interpretations via Internet, especially social media
- Agro tourism, eco tourism and gastro tourism

Sustainable development of tourism is closely connected to the stimulation of micro-business development (Jelinčić, 2002). If a local community is able to integrate their everyday business and professions into the tourist activity and thus present their local lifestyle, it is likely that the quality of tourist visit, as well as the quality of the local population life will be ensured. Cultural tourism in Croatia should thus include all the heritage and identity resources available: museums, architecture, archaeology, visual and performing arts, crafts, language, literature, myths, design, film, music, local food and landscapes.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the current development of cultural tourism, indicating the need to move beyond conventional products towards more creative approach based on destination uniqueness, authentic experience and participative learning. The potential for adopting creative tourism strategy has been highlighted and some good practice models have been presented. However, the content analysis

of Croatian cultural tourism offer showed that there are only a few creative tourism projects in Croatia and that the heritage potentials have not been fully explored. For cultural tourism to become sustainable and in compliance with the need of the community, it has to be based on its distinctive heritage and identity and adherent to the principles of creative experience economy. The creative tourism counts on cultural resources to attract travellers to a destination. It is also a form of creative community's development. By stimulating the creative industries from outside, the local economy improves beyond the profits from tourism. Developing creative cultural tourism model can bring many benefits to local community, such as the revival of local crafts and tradition, cultural heritage preservation, renewed pride of the local population in their cultural heritage, generation of jobs and income in creative industries. It can stimulate the economic growth in the destination by adding value to the tourists' experiences. An authentic cultural heritage and its creative use should be the base for future tourism development in Croatia. Further research should be undertaken in order to test these hypothesis and to determine to what extent this kind of interpretation of local culture and identity, through creative tourism, influence the creation of visitors' appreciation of place and its heritage, culture and landscape.

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