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THE ITALIAN CULTURAL DISTRICT AS A MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Daniele FANZINI^{}, Irina ROTARU^{**}*

Abstract: *Considering the growing importance acquired by the intangible elements coupled with the unprecedented prevalence of the intellectual component of goods over their physical production, this research investigates the capacity of culture to foster identities, strengthen communities, support businesses and propel sustainable territorial development. Following the introductory presentation of cultural districts and clusters in general with special attention to the Italian understanding of the concept, the paper focuses on the dedicated program promoted by Fondazione Cariplo together with the projects developed in this context. Two case studies are investigated in particular, namely il Distretto Culturale dell'Oltrepò Mantovano - DOMINUS and il Distretto culturale "Le Regge dei Gonzaga". Despite their close location and identical legislative / administrative framework, they started and evolved in very different ways, mainly because of their specific endogenous conditions, but somehow reached the same main objectives. Starting from these relevant examples evaluated from a broader international perspective and recalling the outputs of various researches done by Politecnico di Milano in this field, some pivotal conclusions are derived concerning the mechanism of culture-led development, its main pitfalls and achievements.*

Key words: *cultural district; triple helix; culture-led economy; ecology of value; governance; Italy*

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THE CULTURAL TOURIST AND THE DECODING OF THE URBAN SPACE: THE COINCIDENCE VOCABLE – IMAGE

*Viorella MANOLACHE**, *Henrieta Anișoara ȘERBAN***

Abstract: *The study approaches the concept of space in relation to an interpretation of the cultural tourist, at the intersection of the matrix geo-theories, embracing the abandonment of the notion of place and re-discussing the cognitive, aesthetic and moral spaces. This broad enterprise begins with a philosophical repeated conquest of the city in sacred and unhallowed terms. Often it is a city for the others, governed metaphorically by an impure approach exploring a culture of consumption, globalization, massification, simulacra, etc. While the city struggles to maintain sociability, it faces the global “de-socializing” effect of postmodernity, which influences each potential social space. Anyway, the tourist is an extraterritorial being, too, and lives that as a privilege, enjoying the independence as a right (freedom of choice). Culturally, the tourist travels through landscapes / images and discourses / vocables. The maps - cognitive and linguistic - guiding and misguiding the tourist are subject to (frequent) adjustment. Paradoxically, it is the alterity that brings the ironist traveller “safely” to herself (as a feminine metaphor), although the traveller is “caught” by imagery, transcriptions and imprints. This emphasizes the travelling as sheer incommunicability. „Each image / place / vocable wants something from you” and the distance of the tourist from things, places and images triggers a cultural effort.*

Key words: *traveller; culture; image; cognitive; aesthetic and moral space; urban space*

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CULTURAL INTERESTS WHILE ON HOLIDAYS. AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION

*Alexandra ZBUCHEA**

Abstract. *The number of cultural tourists is continuously increasing. At the same time, other types of tourists are participating in cultural venues while on holidays. Not only the general interest of tourists in culture is growing, but also the cultural offer is also rising and attracts the attention of increasingly more diverse types of tourists. The literature in the field of cultural tourism is mainly investigating aspects related to the anthropology of cultural tourism. Special interest is also visible in some particular forms of cultural tourism, such as urban tourism. Little attention is given to specific motivation, as well as to the actual activities undergone by tourists. Since the literature tends to investigate cultural tourism in the context of international visits rather than in national context, the current research is also placed in such a framework. The present paper is an exploratory investigation of the motives and activities that tourists are undergoing during their vacations abroad in order to identify the place of culture in this context.*

Key words: *cultural tourism; out-going tourism; tourism attractions; Romania*

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ENHANCING THE CULTURAL TOURISM EXPERIENCE THROUGH GASTRONOMY IN THE MALDIVES

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Abstract: *The tourism industry in the Maldives has faced unprecedented growth in the development of luxury resorts since 1972. With significant investment in infrastructure, and other physical super structures including a high concentration of five-star resorts, the region has been rapidly transformed into a premium luxury tourism destination. Considering the risk of diluting the existing unique heritage and cultural traditions of the past, tourism in the Maldives can help to preserve essential cultural components including its unique gastronomy through food tourism. In an increasingly competitive tourism environment, sea, sand, and sun destinations such as the Maldives will need to diversify its offerings to meet the increasingly sophisticated demands of the global tourist. Adding to long-term sustainability of tourism in the Maldives, this study examines how gastronomy can be further developed and to identify what aspects will help to positively enhance the tourism experience.*

While the majority of tourists to the Maldives indicated that the destination is predominantly known for its sea, sand, and sun impressions along with its natural beauty, the results of this study reported that interest in local food offerings exists among tourists visiting the Maldives beyond what is typically presented during buffet nights in the high concentration of luxury resorts. To help maintain the historical and cultural significance of the region, in addition to reducing the high level of imported products while increasing engagement and active participation of the local population in the tourism industry, gastronomy tourism may provide substantial benefits in sustaining tourism in the Maldives. Observing gastronomy as an emerging concept for the Maldives, it is evident that many of the resorts are focusing on enhancing the visitor experience through more local and authentic offerings that represent this unique region that is remotely located in the Indian Ocean.

Key words: *Maldives; gastronomy; food tourism; cultural assets*

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THE ROLE OF RAILWAY, AS A HERITAGE OF INDUSTRIAL HISTORY, IN TOURISM, WITH CONCLUSION ON QUALITY OF LIFE

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Abstract: *The industrial history's values embodying the economical and social processes of the last 200 years represent an even more important segment in the tourism of cultural heritage. These objects can be found both in urban and rural environment as well. Producing firms provide a good example for the former, and the memories of the agricultural industry do the same for the latter. The values connected to transportation represent a unique part of industrial heritage, and their utilization forms an even more important part of the modern tourism- and provincial development. Preserved traffic values serve not only the improvement of reaching, but they provide a possibility for a modern product development in tourism too. The article shows the connection between tourism and the preservation of railway heritage in the context of quality of life. The study makes also exact statements connected to the attendance of traffic historical values in the regard of age, education and living environment.*

Key words: *railway heritage; life quality; tourism development; heritage utilization; Hungary.*

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BARON FOR A DAY: GUESTS' PERCEPTION OF HISTORICAL PAST IN CASTLE HOTELS

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Abstract: *Heritage destinations convey important messages to those in quest of historical past and identity. Interpretation of these destinations can contribute to the (re)building of national identity. Castle hotels are destinations that combine heritage and hospitality. Castle hotels' image as a tourism destination is primarily a place of luxurious conditions, accommodation with landscape park, built and owned by aristocrats. They convey the image of luxury and aristocratic lifestyle, high-class amenities and therefore they offer ideal settings for experiencing luxurious lifestyle environment of aristocrats of past era. The paper investigates castle hotel guests' attitudes and perceptions of historical past with the objective of understanding underlying motivations resulting in destination selection. The question is raised: can the connection to one's past - evoked by these heritage destinations - be detected and can it contribute to the reinforcement of national identity?*

Key words: *castle hotels; historical heritage; lieux de mémoire; hospitality; perception, Hungary.*

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