

CULTURE AS FACTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Although fundamental, for a long time, the role of culture in society has been diminished, priority being given rather to the economic sphere, considered as the sole holder of sources generating wealth. As awareness of the multiple implications of the cultural aspects occurred, the culture was reconsidered. In parallel, there was a re-evaluation of the culture/economy relationship, the synergy created from their interaction bringing mutual benefits to them and to the society as a whole. This also explains the success of today's cultural tourism, one of the expanding tourist markets. Under what aspect does culture contribute to the economic development? To what extent do the economy/tourism contribute to the support of the culture? What is the potential of tourism and especially of cultural tourism? There are queries on which the present study focuses.

Keywords: *culture, economy, cultural tourism*

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1. Introduction

Culture. Economy. Definitions. Boundaries.

Culture as a subject of study has aroused the interest of many researchers, with the difficulty of finding a unanimously accepted definition (see Alfred Kroeber, Clyde Kluckhohn, 1952). One of the classic definitions of culture belongs to the British anthropologist Edward Tylor. According to him, culture represents: "that complex whole which includes knowledge,

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beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by as a member of society" (Edward Tylor, 1871). A broader definition of culture is introduced by UNESCO. According to this organization, culture embodies: "the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group", including the arts and letters, modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs (Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, 1980). The fundamental idea that emerges from the above is that, through its defining elements, culture refers to the essential substrata of society, its central purpose being related to the definition of identity.

As for economics, the philosopher Adam Smith defines it as: "a branch of the science of a statesman or legislator [with the twofold objective of providing] a plentiful income or subsistence for the people ... [and] to supply the state or commonwealth. with a revenue for the public services "(Adam Smith, 1776). The modern economy therefore has as primary goal the creation/assurance of well-being. Responding to the unlimited needs of the members of the society, in the context of limited/scarce resources, the economy is emerging as "the science of efficient options".

Even if from the mentioned definitions the crucial role that the two domains have in the evolution of the society is clear, in a first phase, the culture and the economy were perceived as spheres with parallel functioning. Not only were the various interferences and inter conditionings not noticed, but it was also appreciated that the two fields are relatively antagonistic, with the tendency to maximize the role of the economy in society, in parallel with a minimization of the role of culture. This optics has been gradually abandoned, today the relationship between culture and economy being considered a symbiotic one, the two spheres serving as support for each other.

2. Sections

Culture. Tourism. Economic Implications.

For its part, the relationship between culture and tourism has long been dominated by the same limiting perception, with culture reserving a unique role: that of contributing to the definition of identity, and tourism being appreciated only as a leisure activity. However, the dynamics of the relationship have been profoundly changed, as the mutually beneficial

influences have become more and more evident. Thus, it has been proven that the cultural elements are the basis for the increase of the territorial attractiveness, allowing the regions to distinguish some in relation to the other and stimulating the tourism.

According to the OECD, the development and consolidation of the link between culture/tourism has occurred in the background of multiple market evolutions. Among the factors that determined this process we mention:

In the area of demand (OECD, 2009):

- increasing the interest for the culture (manifesting an acute need for identity contouring and differentiation, see globalization);
- the increase in the size of the cultural capital;
- aging of the population belonging to the developed regions;
- introduction of new consumption models;
- the tendency to experiment, rather than to visit;
- increasing the importance of the immaterial culture;
- increasing mobility.

In the area of supply (OECD, 2009):

- development of cultural tourism (role in creating new jobs, revenue generator);
- the perception of cultural tourism as an expanding market, as a quality tourism;
- diversification of the cultural offer;
- broadening access to information on culture/tourism based on new technologies;
- the need of more and more countries to create a distinct identity (see also the case of Romania, after 1989);
- the need for external design of the region/country image;
- problems related to the financing of the culture, in the background of increasing the cultural offer.

In this new context, the cultural element has acquired an increasingly accentuated aspect of the tourist product, becoming part of the strategies of enhancing the image of the tourist destinations. On the other hand, tourism has

been integrated into cultural development strategies, with a contribution in enhancing cultural heritage and in supporting cultural production.

The created relationship thus becomes a symbiotic one, the development of the two domains being inexorably linked to each other. The same conclusion is derived from a UNWTO reference report, the dominant idea being that of the broad connexion of the spheres in question: "arts and crafts, dances, rituals, and legends which are at risk of being forgotten by the younger generation may be revitalized when tourists show a keen interest in them. Monuments and cultural relics may be preserved by using funds generated by tourism. In fact, those monuments and relics that have been abandoned suffer decay from lack of visitation" (UNWTO, 2001).

Cultural Tourism.

In time, we also witness the demarcation of tourism/cultural tourism. This delimitation was achieved with the identification of a new category of tourists, whose main motivation in choosing the destination is the interest related to knowing and deepening the elements of culture and heritage. A profile of the cultural tourist, choosing as criteria of classification the importance granted to the culture in deciding the destination and the intensity of the lived experience, places him within five categories (Mc. Kercker, Du Cros, 2002):

- Purposeful cultural tourist: culture is the primary reason for choosing the destination, the cultural experience being deeply felt;
- Sightseeing cultural tourist: culture is one of the main reasons for the visit, but cultural experience is less intense;
- Serendipitous cultural tourist: does not travel for touristic purposes, but lives deep cultural experiences, once he is given opportunities;
- Casual cultural tourist: is characterized by a reduced cultural motivation, the cultural experience being, in its turn, a superficial one;
- Incidental cultural tourist: does not travel for cultural purposes, proving a superficial involvement in the cultural experiences to which he occasionally participates.

Cultural tourism is defined as: "any displacement of a person who meets the human need for diversity, contributes to the cultural level of the person and generates new contacts, experiences and information" (UNWTO,

2001). Through this form of tourism, the opportunity is created to practically experience new ways of life, characteristic of the tourist destination, acquiring a much deeper level of understanding of the specificities of the visited areas.

Historical and archaeological aspects, arts and architecture, gastronomy and other local products, economic, social and political structures and last but not least the natural landscapes increase the degree of territorial attractiveness and, consequently, the tourist flow.

The recorded impact is considerable, being not only of economic nature, but also of social and cultural nature. The results generated are thus reflected on several levels (OECD, 2008):

- creation of new jobs;
- attracting new investments;
- revenue generation;
- increasing the number of tourists;
- preservation of local traditions and culture;
- increasing the sense of pride of the community with regard to its heritage;
- a better visibility of the destination.

Cultural tourism is based on capitalizing on cultural heritage, perceived as a long-term cost-effective resource and as a pillar of tourism development, through its ability to stimulate local advancement (Abichou and Shaïer, 2012). The tourism valorisation of the heritage mediates the definition of an identity (vital in the context of globalization), the outline of some differentiations in relation to the multitude of tourist offers, the increase of social cohesion and, the creation of an economic balance.

Culture/Cultural Tourism. Perspectives.

The potential of strengthening the relationship between culture and tourism is even greater as, at present, tourism represents one of the most dynamic economic sectors, its evolution having a positive impact on the global economic development.

According to the latest study by the World Travel and Tourism Council, in 2018, tourism registered a growth rate of 3.9 %, surpassing the rate of global economic growth, amounting to 3.2 %. Constituting 10.4 % of the total economic activity, tourism generated in 2018 a number of 319 million jobs, about 10 % of their total (UNWTO, 2019). Also, the World Tourism

Organization reveals an increase of international tourist arrivals by 5 % compared to the previous year: 1.4 billion arrivals and of tourist exports by 4 %: USD 1.7 trillion. The data confirm the upward trend outlined in the field starting in 2010, being practically the ninth consecutive year of growth recorded in this sector. Among the most popular tourist destinations in 2018, we find France, Spain and the United States, followed by China, Italy, Turkey, Mexico, Germany, Thailand and the United Kingdom.

In turn, cultural tourism is today a continuously expanding tourism market, with the growth rate of the segment being 4.5 % in 2018, and the percentage represented by cultural tourists amounting to 35.8 % of the total registered tourists (UNWTO, 2018).

3. Conclusions

Culture, through the values and traditions incorporated, imprints the economic evolution of the states. Also, the cultural sector is the creator of a multitude of cultural products and services. In fact, culture is a real lever of economic development, enhancing the cultural heritage by making a major contribution to increasing the degree of territorial attractiveness, a fact translated by extending the flow of tourists, creating new jobs and ensuring higher incomes.

As regards tourism, tourism activity engenders the development of destinations, revitalizing the cultural heritage elements owned by communities, being possible only on the basis of the funds generated by tourism. Basically, it provides the chance of surviving this heritage, the culture being a direct beneficiary.

The relationship between culture and tourism is synergetic, the exchanges realized and the connection itself being mutually advantageous. Considering the numerous implications in society, the role of the two domains is a fundamental one, both culture and economy/tourism, at this moment being defined as essential vectors of global economic, social and cultural progress.

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