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Heritage as an Alternative Driver for Sustainable Development and Economic Recovery in South East Europe

Basis of heritagization and cultural tourism development

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Abstract

The importance of culture and heritage is becoming more and more obvious, both in regionalists and regional development. Cultural factors are important because they directly affect economic performance and development, and therefore the competitiveness of the region. This study gives an overview of relevant literature, aiming to introduce the complex relations between culture, heritage, geography, tourism, economy and experience economy. Furthermore, it offers a clear definition of each specific term, and defines the newest forms and trends in cultural tourism and experience economy.

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1. Definition and importance of culture

The term “culture” has no commonly accepted, universal definition. However, the majority of different interpretations seem to highlight the same concept: that culture is most often referred to as the relationship between the man-made world (including humans) and the world we are living in.

Beyond this, culture also means the totality of distinguishing features of nations and nationalities, including all their tangible and intangible values and assets. According to the scientific definition by cultural anthropology, culture is the totality of a society’s knowledge, ensuring the cohesion and survival of that human community.

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Culture provides a guideline about the general standards and values of everyday life. “Based on this broad definition, culture includes all social practices, arts and intellectual activities, and is equal to the life-long distinguishing systems produced by individuals and/or social communities.” (Husz, 2007). The definition of culture has gone through significant changes during the millennia: originally it referred to the term “cultura agri” (see Cato, around 160 B.C.), meaning “cultivation of the land”.

In 45 B.C., Cicero defined culture as “culture animi”, meaning “cultivation of the soul” in his work “Tusculan Disputation”. Today, in the 21st century, there are wider and narrower definitions of culture. The narrower meaning refers to arts, its producers and agents.

The wider concept includes places of community culture, education, customs, traditions, morals and even languages. (Kenyeres, 1986). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO defines culture as a set of assets added to nature by human kind. Among other things, culture includes the following factors: values, individual behaviour patterns, family relationships, safety, moral standards, expression on creativity, arts, handicrafts, traditions, rituals, community lifestyles, community bodies/organisations.

It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs. (UNESCO, 1982). According to the newest concepts, the term “culture” consists of an inner and an outer circle, referring to a narrower and a wider definition.

The narrower circle includes arts (e.g. fine arts, music, dance, literature) and cultural heritage assets (buildings, monuments). In a wider interpretation, culture includes elements of lifestyle (customs, traditions, religion, gastronomy) and creative industries (fashion, films, entertainment industry, design). (WTO – ETC, 2005). In case of defining culture as an attraction, 3 main types are to be distinguished: (Mathielson&Wall, 1982. Dávid, Jancsik&Rátz 2007):

- inert culture (e.g.: buildings, architectural styles, artistic creations, personal goods);
- everyday culture (e.g.: leisure activities, lifestyles, gastronomy); and
- enacted culture (e.g.: festivals, carnivals, traditional events).

The importance of culture and heritage is becoming more and more obvious, both in regionality and regional development. Cultural factors are important because they directly affect economic performance and development, and therefore the competitiveness of the region. (Dziembowska, Kowalska&Funck, 2000). The term “cultural heritage” has no precise definition.

According to the definition of UNESCO, cultural heritage means monuments, building complexes and sites that carry universal historic, art and/or scientific value (UNESCO 1972). Actually, culture is the relationship between humans and the world created by their objectifications: the nature modified by mankind, the technical-productive processes, consumption, the structures of communities and societies and their lifestyle.

Moreover, culture also includes the knowledge, standards, symbols that serve as a base of the former, i.e. arts, morals, religions, beliefs and everyday human attitude and behaviour (Vitányi, 1997). This wide definition can be divided into two main groups: intellectual and material heritage. The former generally means the whole range of intellectual properties, values and relationships of a person or a group of people, including identity; the latter mostly refers to the relics and values of built environments (Hajdú, 2000).

Cultural heritage is a cornerstone of local, regional, national and European identity; and because it is one of the most important among cultural, environmental and economic resources, regional development should handle it with an integrated, complex approach. From the point of view of regional development, both the protection and sustainable development of cultural heritage assets are important.

Development projects should focus on the exploitation of resources, the completion of heritage values, and also on generating new heritage values. The conservation of cultural heritage, the completion of its values, and the regional enforcement of social identity are important factors of sustainability, because they are the keys of safeguarding the past and present values for future generations, hence ensuring the survival of local features of the region.

Table 1. Success factors of local development and the role of culture in their formation

Success factors	Cultural tasks
Intention	definition of needs motivation improvement self-regulation conflict management
Capability = knowledge + technology	knowledge and skill development lifelong learning application of knowledge information management
External verification	External communication Knowing the rules Understanding the “language” of each other Forming alliances

Source: G. Fekete 2010

Regional development refers to area-specific cultural heritage as an ever-growing complex collection of cultural, social and economic phenomena, existing as part of the region (Czene, 2002). The role of cultural heritage is increasing in regional- and rural development: regional development strategies, development documentations refer to cultural heritage as a base of development/resource/value. Culture has an important role in all three basic conditions of development. These functions allocate the intervention areas of cultural agents in local development (Table 1).

Cultural geography is the scientific branch that examines the connections between culture and spaces. It focuses on the regional problems of cultural infrastructure and the regional differences of populations, with regards to geography and the general socio-economic environment (Tóth&Trócsányi, 1997). The concept of heritage has gained priority in regional researches, establishing an individual scientific field: heritage geography (Graham, Ashworth&Curnbridge, 2000). According to heritage geography, heritage assets should become part of the market (Hornyák, 2001).

Cultural economics represent another important research trend that analyses the economic role and utilisation opportunities of culture (Towse, 1997). However, the relationship between culture and economics is a more complex system (Danielzyk&Wood ,2001). Cultural economics includes the creation of cultural goods (book, film, music, fine and applied arts, local handicraft products), the production of raw materials and tools, and also marketing and education related to the former. In a wider sense, it may include education-related services and culture-based tourism, too. Examples for that are cities specialised on film making, or the local economy of the Kaposcs basin in Hungary, that is based on the summer cultural festivals. Culture can serve as an excellent and favourable tool of competitiveness strategies in many regions, because it “only“ requires the exploration and creative utilisation of local capabilities. Its most important resource requirements are human capital and creativeness (G. Fekete, 2000).

2. Culture and experience economy

The term of experience economy first appeared in social sciences in 1992. It was created by Gerhard Schulze, a sociology professor of the Bramberg University, and published in his work “Erlebnisgesellschaft. Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart” (Experience society of today). (Éber, 2008) The professor’s examination focused on cultural consumption; he built both his overall age diagnosis (the experience society) and his cultural structure theory on that. His work was based on the consumption patterns of the developed West, overthrowing almost every former theories of classical economics. Schulze states that theoretical thinking based on the consumption of scarce goods and services has become obsolete. In postmodern times, when survival is no longer a problem, the main question is how one can live a most fulfilling and satisfying life, rich in experiences. (Schulze, 1992) As a consequence, survival and self-preservation factors in decision making are replaced by cultural consumption. This necessarily leads to the transformation of society. It is of course not about pursuing pleasure (hedonism), but about the increased importance of living standards and gaining new experiences.

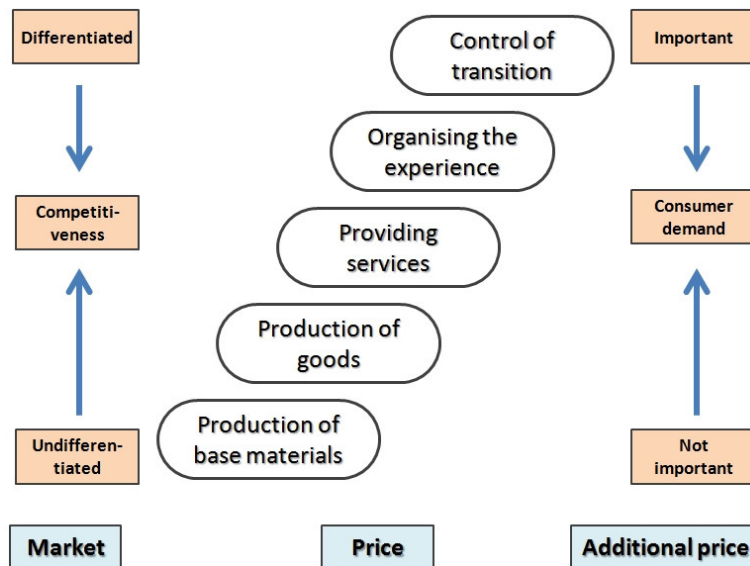


Fig. 1. Development of supply
 Source: Interreg IIC VinTour projekt, 2006

“Experience society is a concept that, in historic and intercultural comparison, attaches a relatively great importance to the role of experience in forming society” (Schulze, 1992). Schulze’s theory was succeeded by several authors. In 1999, Pine and Gilmore published their work entitled “The Experience Economy”, stating that after the age of raw materials, goods, and services, we are now living in the age of experiences. (Molnár&Sáriné, 2010) According to them, today’s consumers will not only seek new consumer goods, but most importantly, new feelings and impressions. Consumption has become personal. It is now not only about the fulfilment of primal needs, but has to be able to live up to the requirements of ethics, environment, health and social status. Supply has adapted to this change, and as a consequence, it is not the mere product or service that is offered to the consumer, but there is also an experience attached to it. Experience will provide the product’s uniqueness and personal character that connects supply and the consumer directly. Fig. 1. illustrates the development of supply. Base materials become experiences via a theoretical evolution (Fig. 2.). The increasing value of complex supplies shall obviously cause higher prices. Supplies with added values require special skills and competences, but at the same time, competitiveness is also strengthened.

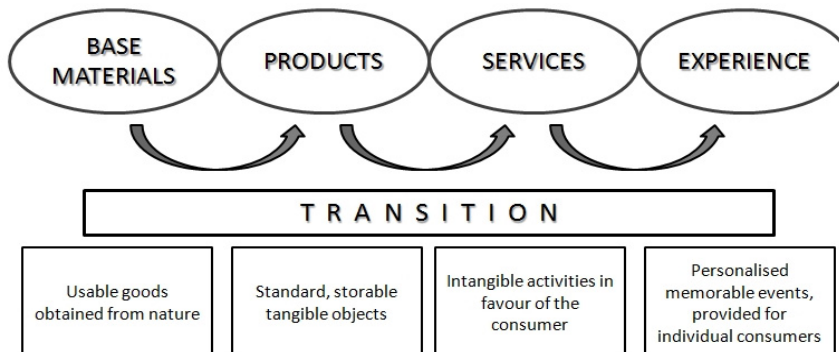


Fig. 2. Transition of consumer demands
 Source: own edition based on Molnár-Sáriné (2010)

3. Tourism and experience economy

Experience appears as a product component even in the most simple products and services. Marketing attaches experience to products on purpose, to establish an advertisement message. Certain beverages have become the symbol of spending cheerful time with friends, while driving a car usually offers the experience of unlimited freedom. (Michalkó&Rátz 2005). The experience economy of the 21st century focuses on the consumer/guest: production is carried out with their active inclusion, and the main purpose of services is to create a memorable experience for the consumer. This was not demanded by consumers of previous generations, aside from a few exceptions. Experience was a requirement even 20-30 years before in the following sectors:

- tourism
- entertainment industry
- culture. (Kovács, 2008)

The behaviour pattern of tourists is significantly different from the traditional structure of consumption. Supplies, i.e. tourist attractions are generally extraordinary, unusual objects. The measure of peculiarity is directly proportional to the greatness of the experience, almost absolutely up to the consumer. Education and experience purposes are crucial components of tourism, culture and entertainment industry, worthy of increasing attention in the future. (Horváth, 1999). The type of experience sought in tourism can be of various kinds, and different for each person. Types created by the authors Michalkó&Rátz (2005) illustrate the most representative experience categories in tourism demand (Figure 3.). In the 21st century, experience economy not necessarily an exclusive feature of homogenic societies. Consumers can observe the expansion of formerly narrower frames and branches, e.g. tourism, arts, entertainment industry. “Small scale retail is turning into theatre in front of our own eyes” – says Kotler, one of the most widely known figures of modern marketing. Pine and Gilmore (1999) also state that the fundamental categories of experience economy are: experience, theatre, memorability, personalisation, exploration, performance, visiting friends and emotions. (Horváth, 1999). Experience economy begins with the unparalleled extension of everyday opportunities, especially in the fields of modern Western consumption and leisure activities. The process has four dimensions:

- The explosive growth of supply in the widest sense (as of today, tourist offers cover even the narrowest market niches, e.g. ship cruises for gay couples, vegetarian cooking festivals, exhibitions for blind people, etc.)
- In parallel with the extension of supplies, the earning capability of Western people also increased. This was based on the stable growth of real incomes and decrease of working hours at the same time. The ratio of spending on self-preservation declined, and as a consequence, the increased purchasing power together with released leisure time resulted in the emergence of special offers (butterfly collecting tours in rainforests, participating in auctions for unique treasures in distant countries, limousine sightseeing, etc.).
- Under the present circumstances of market economy, limited access to goods and services has become only a reminiscence of the past.
- Change is an essential need of society. “The soul, relationships, family, life perspectives, the body – all these can be fixed, improved and altered” (Schulze, 1992)
- Information dump and the oversupply of possible living spaces, career projects, relationships and political principles often force people to make decisions under constraints. Such extension of opportunities can cause stress – tourism try to ease this pressure by life-coach journeys, yoga camps, reclusive centres and thematic travels contrived with oriental elements. (Éber ,2008)
- In experience society, people mostly express their identity and their views about society by consumption. (Douglas&Isherwood, 1998) Cultural consumption consist of a series of episodes (reading books, visiting exhibitions and museums, movies, visiting restaurants, listening to music, etc.) that can be interpreted as symbols with aesthetic-conceptual significance. As a result of individualisation, there are too many co-existing personal styles. Schulze (1992) discerns three daily aesthetic schemes:
- High cultural scheme: the successor of the former upper class elite. They are intensively interested in public affairs, like to read polite literature. Their cultural and tourism related interest focuses on classical music concerts, fine art exhibitions and theatre plays.

- Trivial scheme: descendant of popular and mass culture, mostly entertained by TV-shows and magazines. When travelling, culture is usually represented by visiting mainstream concerts or popular meet-the-author events. Main destinations are trendy, “hot” resorts with outstanding landscape values. Travels are usually organised by travel agencies. Organised cultural “surprises” (folklore nights, camel riding, stand-up performances) are required.
- Action scheme: the youngest scheme evolved after World War II. They like films, especially sci-fi, horror and action movies. They usually visit small bars and clubs, and try to find their own taste in music. Typical adrenalin-rush seekers, with highly narcissistic features. As of cultural tourism, they are mostly interested in rock concerts, subcultural performances, clubs and bars. Individual discoveries are preferred: typical ecotourists, willing to explore local cultures, handicrafts, customs and traditions for themselves. (Sculze, 1992)

Actors of experience society – the macro-groups – are distinguished by their lifestyles, by more frequent internal communication among each other and by the typical way how they process information. Before, decisions about travelling were normally made based on information from friends and family. Today’s explosive development in transportation, information- and communication technologies offers an opportunity for everyone to choose their own preferred relationships. These new relationships affect all aspects of travel-related decisions. Similarity becomes an important factor in all fields, meaning that during travelling, similar preferences will become the most important criteria. Exhibitions, cultural events, clubs, pubs, thematic travels are usually “meeting places” of people with similar experience objectives.. (Éber, 2008).

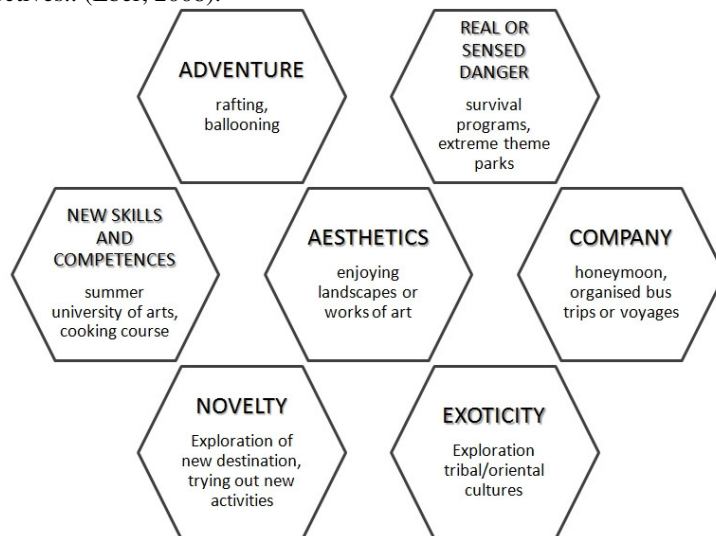


Fig. 3. Experience types in tourism

Source: own edition based on Michalkó-Rátz (2005)

The preferences in gaining experience are essentially affected by three factors. Personal style is a compass of cultural consumption, and therefore an excellent identifier. Age (generation) and education are two criteria that allow to classify the actors of experience economy into five categories. Figure 4. illustrates the model. Experience economy is a detailed age diagnosis, embedded in social theories, that focuses on the cultural fragmentation of today’s late modern society. The basic concept was opposed by many, the main argument being that the whole concept excludes “Eastern European” societies, the under 18 and senior age groups, foreigners, immigrants and migrant workers. Schulze rearranged his theory in 2005, but the basics remained the same in the amended version too. “Social reality is rather complex, and therefore the lack of emphasis on disparities does not mean the denial of their existence or significance” (Schulze, 2005). This statement places the relationship of cultural tourism and experience economy into a whole new context. The increasing differentiation in experience demands and cultural supplies requires deeper and more detailed research. The adaptation of experience economy to Eastern European societies and developing countries – places that have totally different social standards, way of thinking and consumption habits from the “Western culture” – may open up perspectives that might deepen and further separate the term of experience economy. During their continuous development, tourism and society are always in close

connection with each other, one shaping the other and vice versa. If the principles of ethics and sustainability grow stronger both in tourism and in everyday experience seeking, this positive vision can be the new objective for cultural tourism and experience economies alike.

4. Cultural tourism

Cultural tourism aims to unite economic profit and the conservation of values. Cultural tourism represents an independent tourism product, that aims to raise awareness of how important it is to preserve the values of the past, and how cultural heritage, and respect towards built and natural environment can strengthen the identity (Rácz, 1998). Similar to the different definitions of culture, the term cultural tourism has different conceptions, with broader and narrower meanings. In a broad context, cultural tourism is a tourism product that takes into account uniqueness, sustainability and the importance of marketing, with emphasis on the satisfaction of intellectual demands. Tasting a real Irish whiskey or a ride in an African matatu can be considered as intellectual experiences. In both cases, the traveller gains an experience that gets them closer to the local culture. In a narrower approach, cultural tourism is travelling with a cultural motivation. “it is travelling with the motivation of getting to know new cultures, participating in cultural events or visiting cultural attractions in a context where the attraction represents the unique, special culture of the visited destination” (Michalkó, 2004.)

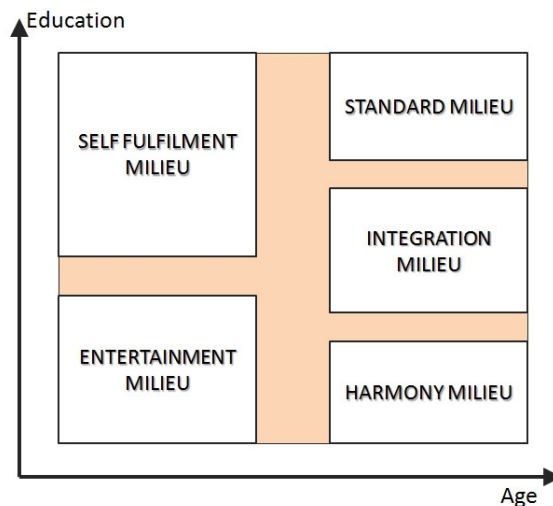


Fig. 4. Milieu model

Source: Schultze (1992)

World Tourism Organisation defines cultural tourism as „the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs” (WTO, 1985). In a broader sense, it encompasses all free movements of persons away from their places of residence and work, as well as the service industries created to satisfy the needs resulting from these movements. (WTO, 1989). A later published definition of WTO defines cultural tourism with a similar approach: “the movement of persons to cultural attractions in cities in countries other than their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs.” (WTO-ETC, 2005). In this sense, cultural tourism means all types of travelling, where the main motivation is to get to know cultural values. These travels originate from one’s demand for changes, and happen with the objective of gaining new experiences and knowledge. World Tourism Organisation (WTO) established the new development directions of tourism policies in the Manila Declaration of 1980. Besides economic importance, the document emphasized the social, political, cultural and environmental protection related aspects of tourism, and also underlined its impact on life standards. According to the declaration, the positive economic effects of tourism, the increasing number of guests and guest nights and the growing incomes from the sector are all still important factors, however, the impact

of tourism on the living conditions of tourists and inhabitants also should be taken into account. The Declaration clearly states that the economic returns of tourism cannot constitute the only criterion for the development of tourism. The right to holidays, the opportunity for the citizen to get to know his own environment, a deeper awareness of his national identity and of the solidarity that links him to his compatriots and the sense of belonging to a culture and to a people are all major reasons for stimulating the individual's participation in domestic and international tourism, through access to holiday and travel. In the practice of tourism, spiritual elements must take precedence over technical and material elements. The spiritual elements are essentially as follows: the total fulfilment of the human being; a constantly increasing contribution to education; equality of destiny of nations; the liberation of man in a spirit of respect for his identity and dignity; the affirmation of the originality of cultures and respect for the moral heritage of peoples. (WTO 1980) An additional outstanding value of cultural tourism is that it "explores and revives local cultural values, safeguards and protects traditions, provides audience for cultural events and contributes to the better knowledge of human culture. Furthermore, the extension of tourist offers inspires the creation of new cultural values, thus expanding the regions cultural and free time offers (Horváth, 1999) This way, cultural tourism contributes to the well-being of tourists, and at the same time, improves the living standard of local people. Cultural tourism includes several product types, e.g.: religious tourism, wine- and gastronomy tourism, cultural thematic travels or event tourism. However, it is not easy to define its place among the different tourist product types, because almost every form of tourism can be related to culture. Cultural tourism usually does not appear as an independent product, and cannot be separated from other motivations (for example, a participant of a scientific conference is most likely to visit a nearby exhibition or classical concert). At other occasions, cultural tourism can represent an independent tourism product: in this case, the main reason of travel is to get acquainted with cultural values, and the tourist is motivated by a cultural experience or event (e.g. a concert or a music festival). This latter tendency seems to be growing both in domestic and international practice. (Horváth, 1999)

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