

May 2022

Investigating the Potential Impacts of Mega Archeological Projects in Egypt

Adla Ragab

Cairo University, adla.ragab@feps.edu.eg

Ahmad M. Ragab

Minia University, ahmad.ragab@mu.edu.eg

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.aaru.edu.jo/fjss>



Part of the [Economics Commons](#), and the [Tourism and Travel Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ragab, Adla and Ragab, Ahmad M. (2022) "Investigating the Potential Impacts of Mega Archeological Projects in Egypt," *Future Journal of Social Science*: Vol. 1: Iss. 1, Article 1.

DOI: 10.54623/fue.fjss.1.1.1

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.aaru.edu.jo/fjss/vol1/iss1/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Arab Journals Platform. It has been accepted for inclusion in Future Journal of Social Science by an authorized editor. The journal is hosted on [Digital Commons](#), an Elsevier platform. For more information, please contact rakan@aarj.edu.jo, marah@aarj.edu.jo, u.murad@aarj.edu.jo.

Investigating the Potential Impacts of Mega Archeological Projects in Egypt

Adla Ragab^a and Ahmad Muhammad Ragab^b

^aEconomics Department, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt

^bTourism Studies Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Minia University, Minia, Egypt

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Specialization:

Economics and Tourism

Keywords: Cultural tourism, heritage investments, tourism, Egypt.

Corresponding Author:

Adla Ragab
adla.ragab@feps.edu.eg

ABSTRACT

Cultural tourism has gained considerable prominence as a tool contributing to the social and economic development of countries. This paper investigates the potential impacts of recent mega archeological projects in Egypt. Three main questions are addressed in this study, including 1) How do stakeholders perceive the importance of mega archeological projects in Egypt?, 2) What are the potential economic, social, and environmental implications associated with mega archeological initiatives in Egypt?, and 3) How to utilize mega archeological projects to upscale Egyptian tourism? To provide answers to these questions, international experiences highlighting the return on cultural heritage investments are reviewed, and a quantitative survey is designed based on the triple bottom line approach. The findings of this study reveal that stakeholders recognize the foremost importance of the recent mega archeological projects in Egypt. This importance can be reflected in the role of such projects as an effective strategy to reinforce the competitive advantage of Egyptian tourism, enrich economic growth, support inclusive community development, and contribute to sustainable development. Also, the results indicate that the recent mega archeological projects can contribute to the tourism recovery in Egypt by attracting more purposeful cultural tourists, who are wholly motivated by culture, encouraging non-cultural tourists to partake in cultural activities, promoting domestic tourism flows, maximizing tourism contribution to GDP, and providing more job opportunities empowering women and youth. This paper concludes with proposed actions that can assist in utilizing the mega archeological projects for upscaling Egyptian tourism.

I. Introduction

Cultural heritage is frequently referred to as an economic and social asset for development, whether it is tangible or intangible cultural heritage. Tangible cultural heritage includes immovable works (e.g., monuments, archaeological sites), movable (e.g., paintings, sculptures, coins, manuscripts), and underwater works (e.g., shipwrecks, underwater ruins, and cities). Intangible cultural heritage includes oral traditions, performing arts, and rituals (UNESCO, 2003). Throsby (2012a) explained that initiatives of international organizations, such as the World Bank, in any development field often involve investments in capital facilities that are expected to last for a long time and generate a rate of return over time, thus the characterization of cultural heritage as an asset is suitable. In this regard, many studies confirm that the restoration and preservation of cultural heritage can help developing countries improve local economic development, reinforce social integration, and support poverty alleviation (Orders & Vanoers, 2011; Nocca, 2017). This is supported by Petti *et al.* (2020) who concluded that although cultural heritage is not an exclusive focus of any of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is mentioned explicitly in SDG 11.4 and contributes indirectly to the achievement of other SDGs. Furthermore, the activity of cultural heritage restoration and preservation, in integration with urban regeneration and sustainable tourism, can support countries and communities develop their cultural identities by rediscovering and revitalizing rich historical backgrounds and civilizations that bring communities together and lure visitors to seek hidden historical treasures. In this view, the World Bank considered the integration between cultural heritage, urban regeneration, and sustainable tourism as tools to reach the "Twin Goals"; reducing global extreme poverty to 3% by 2030 and promoting shared prosperity (World Bank, 2018a). Therefore, developing countries, that continue to expand in terms of economy and population, realized the need of recognizing and preserving their cultural heritage sites and historic landmarks. Tombs, monuments, places, and intangible heritage are all being slowly maintained or renovated as part of a larger effort to understand not only their historical significance but also their value for sustainable tourism development and modern urban landscapes (World Bank, 2018b).

During the past few decades, many countries have made substantial investments in reviving, conserving, and restoring historic and heritage sites. Egypt is among these countries; it has ventured recently several mega archeological projects in addition to the continuous efforts in excavations and explorations. These projects receive substantial government funding and therefore the worth of these projects needs to be evidently understood. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the potential impacts of recent mega archeological projects in Egypt. Furthermore, we focused on the triple bottom line approach by assessing the potential economic, social, and environmental dimensions related to these initiatives in Egypt. To do this, international experiences highlighting the return on cultural heritage investments were reviewed. Additionally, a quantitative survey was conducted to assess the awareness and perception of stakeholders on the potential effects of mega archeological projects in Egypt. This paper has two contributions: (1) raising the awareness about the magnitude of mega archeological projects for tourism in Egypt, especially for post-COVID-19 recovery, and (2) proposing future actions that enable the expansion of the cultural heritage tourism market in Egypt.

II. Background on Cultural Tourism

i. Cultural Tourism

Cultural heritage is a leading component of tourism resources that attracts millions of tourists to visit destinations every year. In the meantime, if managed, developed, and invested sustainably, tourism can be a great resource that promotes and preserves tangible and intangible heritage. Many countries rely on promoting cultural heritage as a particular tourism type that aims to enrich tourists' cultural, cognitive, and historical values and be a significant source of economic development for many destinations, often referred to as cultural tourism. Cultural tourism has gained considerable importance as a tool contributing to the overall social and economic development in different countries. For this reason, many efforts have been made by international organizations and various countries to achieve a successful, mutually beneficial relationship between cultural heritage and tourism. For example, in 1999, the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization adopted the "Global Code of Ethics for Tourism", which stipulated that "Article 4: tourism, a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and a contributor to its enhancement." The United Nations General Assembly approved this Global Code in 2001 (UNWTO, 2019). In this vein, UNESCO and UNWTO cooperate closely to raise awareness about the strong connection between tourism and cultural heritage and encourage countries to develop their policies and strategies for cultural tourism. In 2015, the UNWTO and UNESCO organized the first conference on cultural tourism in Cambodia, resulting in the "SIEM REAP Declaration on Culture and Tourism: Building a New Partnership Model" (UNWTO, 2015). This declaration identifies a set of priorities and opportunities for action in cultural tourism, with a particular focus on UN SDGs 2030. It included five fundamental principles that involved (29) commitments. The basic principles are: 1) building new models of partnership between tourism and culture, 2) promoting and protecting cultural heritage, 3) strengthening the link between peoples and advancing sustainable development through cultural routes, 4) reinforcing the close ties between tourism and living cultures and creative industries, and 5) supporting the contribution of cultural tourism to urban development. In 2017, the UNWTO adopted the first definition of cultural tourism as follows (UNWTO, 2018: 13):

“Cultural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination. These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions.”

At the international level, cultural tourism is regarded as one of the fastest-growing types of tourism. The UNWTO (2018) reported that cultural tourism trips accounted for 40% of international tourist trips. Also, European Commission (2019) confirmed that cultural tourism in Europe accounts for (40%) of the total tourism market in the European Union, meaning that 4 out of every 10 tourists choose a tourism destination based on the cultural heritage attractions in these destinations. Moreover, a survey conducted on residents of the European Union countries in 2016 indicated that 68% believe that cultural heritage has an important impact on travel decision making, and 61% of respondents reported that they visited a historical or archaeological site during their tourism trips (European Commission, 2017). Indeed, the growth in demand for cultural

tourism is accompanied by a parallel evolution of new cultural attractions and activities to attract more cultural tourism visitors. For example, the number of museums in Spain increased by 100% from 1980-to 2012. In France, there is a large number of cultural sites and activities that attract visitors, as there are 40,000 historical and archaeological sites, 38 heritage sites inscribed on UNESCO's list of World Heritage sites, 8,000 museums, and around 500 festivals taking place annually (Richards, 2014). These figures confirm that the link between culture and tourism is an indispensable tool to support the competitive advantage of destinations in international tourism markets. The OECD (2009) summarized the benefits that countries may reap as a result of their interest in cultural tourism, as follows: generate job opportunities; increase the volume of business; enhance government revenues; promote diversification of the national economy; generate local and foreign investment in heritage sites and resources; attract more visitor flows interested in heritage; increase tourism revenues based on cultural and heritage products; create opportunities for partnerships at several levels; preserve local traditions and culture; build the community's pride in the national heritage; and, raise awareness of the economic, social and historical importance of heritage sites.

ii. International Case Studies of Cultural Heritage Investments

There are numerous reasons for reviving, conserving, and restoring historic and heritage sites. Among these reasons are recognizing the outstanding universal value of historic and heritage sites, magnifying sites' image for socio-economic benefits, building community pride, and improving or preserving the quality of life. Pederson (2014) stated that revitalizing and restoring historic and heritage sites catalyze a full range of tourism direct and related activities and benefits achieving heritage tourism-led economic development, leveraging greater promotional and marketing efforts through lower costs, enhancing destinations' image and profile to reposition themselves in tourism markets, raising awareness and pride among nationals, leveraging funding opportunities, and supporting socio-economic growth. As such, economists have recently focused their attention on cultural heritage assets as a contributor to economic development and have been able to examine the economic effects of cultural heritage investment projects. These effects can be reflected in the longer-term positive economic growth generated by these types of projects, such as stimulating local tourism development, employment, investment, and revenues, in addition, to attracting international and domestic visitors. This was in line with the argument of Arezki et al. (2009) who said that having a UNESCO World Heritage site at or near a tourism destination can generate a positive relationship between the extent of the tourism sector and economic growth. Rypkema (2008) found that a one-million-dollar investment in cultural heritage would result in 38 jobs, \$1.3 million in household income, and \$202 thousand in taxes. Similarly, historic rehabilitation projects in Europe generated 16.5% more jobs than investing in new buildings, with each direct job in the cultural heritage industry generating 26.7 indirect jobs (Rypkema, 2008).

In this context, World Bank confirms the notion that cultural heritage contributes to effective economic growth rather than simply consuming budgetary resources (Cernea, 2001). The following part illustrates successful case studies that demonstrated the linkages between investment in cultural heritage and local economic development.

- 1) Spain (Guggenheim Museum Bilbao):** when a deteriorating industrial city in the Basque province decided to invest \$228.3 million in building a modern art museum in 1997, critics questioned why the government would waste so much money on something, not of priority (Plaza, 2007). However, these investments were effective. Before the opening of the museum, Bilbao attracted less than (100) thousand visitors annually; within a year after the

museum's opening, the city attracted more than a million visitors, a tenfold increase. By 2011, the museum continued to attract more than one million visitors, generate Euro 275 million in gross domestic product annually, provide 5,885 jobs, and tax revenues equivalent to Euro 42.2 million. For environmental impacts, there was a reduction of 14.7% in water use, 9% in fuel consumption, and 6.75% in electricity consumption between 2006 and 2011 (B+I Strategy, 2011).

- 2) **China (Gansu):** this project was characterized as the first project entirely focused on cultural heritage in China, where it focused on conserving main cultural heritage sites. The World Bank contributed a financing amount of \$38.4 million to the total project cost of \$57.8 million. This project aimed to help Gansu Province generate benefits for local communities through the development of sustainable cultural tourism (Ebbe *et al.*, 2011). The economic impacts analysis reflected the following gains (World Bank, 2019):
 - The number of visitors increased from 2.2 million visitors in 2008 to 7 million visitors in 2014.
 - Revenues generated from the developed heritage sites increased at an annual rate of 25.6%.
 - In general, tourism revenues in 2014 at project sites exceeded the expected estimates for 2025 by 70%.
- 3) **Macedonia (Skopje Old Bazaar):** the project focused on leveraging heritage assets and developing local communities' skills adjacent to key cultural assets. After completing the project in 2005, the total investments flowing into the rehabilitation of heritage amounted to about \$2.5 million. The number of international visitors nearly doubled after 2005 compared to their number before that year. The project resulted in a 73% increase in the number of employees per business in Skopje (Throsby, 2012b).
- 4) **Georgia (Zemo Kala):** the project took a site-specific approach to heritage-led urban regeneration. This resulted in significant increases in the number of tourists visiting the site and the development of tourism-related facilities, including shops, restaurants, and hotels. The daily number of international and domestic visitors to stores increased by 40% in ten years. The average spend per international tourist in the project area was three times higher than that of the local population and 2-fold compared to other heritage areas in Tbilisi. In addition, most visitors considered the restoration of Zemo Kala had improved Tbilisi as a place to live, and the social cohesion had improved in the area (Throsby, 2012b).
- 5) **Lebanon (Port of Tyre):** a heritage-led urban regeneration project in the Port of Tyre region in Lebanon, has shown an increase in real estate values, the number of jobs, and income levels. Before the project, the number of businesses operating on this site was very few, and most tourism revenues were directed to foreign tour operators. The option to stay overnight was lacking, and there were few incentives for visitors to stay in the Port of Tyre region for more than a few hours. According to the latest analysis of the economic impact of the urban regeneration project in the Tyre region, the commercial business in this region increased from 2009-to 2015 in terms of diversifying its goods and services by 52%. An increase of 60% was achieved in the employment and job opportunities available to the local community in the tourism sector and 50% in job opportunities in the culture and creative sectors (World Bank, 2017).
- 6) **Mexico:** cultural heritage investment projects led to large and significant long-run local gains in Mexico, which amounted to a 10% increase in domestic tourism revenues, a 2% increase in direct local employment, and a 2.5% increase in total employment (direct and

indirect). They also found that investment in this sector creates a positive multiplier across local economies, even yielding positive externalities on the development of local services (Faber& Gaubert, 2019).

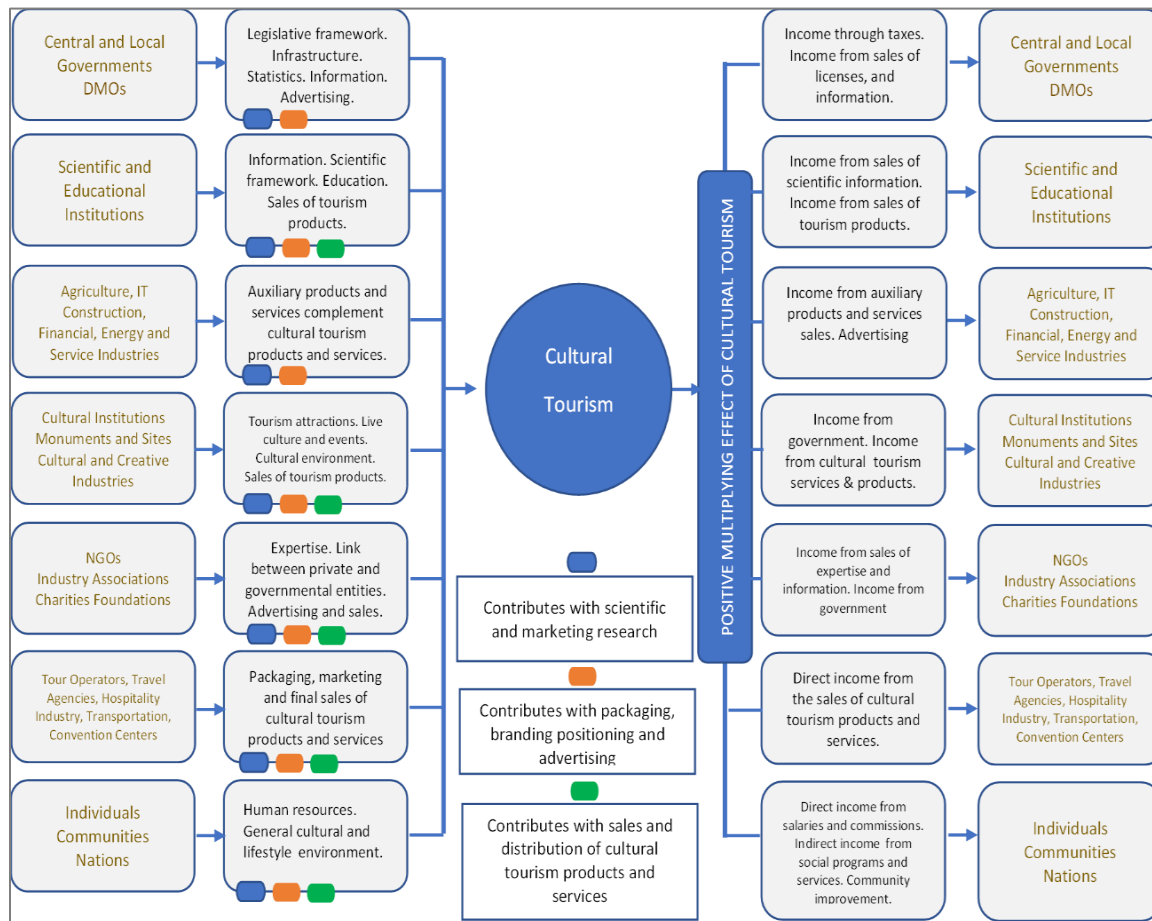
- 7) **United States (Statue of Liberty):** a cultural landmark where visits surged from one million in the early 1980s to more than five million in 2000, partly owing to a substantial renovation project undertaken concurrently with the site's World Heritage nomination (Pederson, 2014). Also, In New York City, over 98 thousand jobs are directly generated by cultural tourism trips, with another 36 thousand indirect and induced jobs. These cultural tourism jobs provided \$6 billion in direct government earnings and \$738 million in local tax revenue for New York City residents. Each cultural visitor spends an average of \$83 more than a non-cultural visitor.

Based on the abovementioned case studies, it is obvious that investments in cultural heritage projects can be a path to diversify the economic base of a city, utilize heritage assets for local economic development, and increase tourism. As seen in the discussed case studies, cultural heritage investments proved to be an effective strategy that encouraged economic development. For the communities adjacent to the heritage sites, benefits begin during restoration works in the form of short-term employment and skills building. However, over time, economic spillovers resulting from increased visitors generate more employment, more business opportunities, and increased incomes across a range of directly- and indirectly related service and experience providers. One or more site restorations can also stimulate local urban regeneration and revitalization by improving an area and thereby attracting more local and visitor spending. The review of international case studies provided key lessons as follows (World Bank, 2018c):

- Adopt a long-term strategic planning approach for the restoration of cultural heritage.
- Utilize and cultivate citizens' sense of responsibility for their national cultural heritage.
- Integrate culture and urban regeneration, as well as sustainable tourism development.
- Apply the heritage-led urban regeneration approach for cultural heritage rehabilitation and conservation.
- Assure effective coordination to maximize the advantages of public-private partnerships.
- Create long-term cultural tourism promotion plans with quantifiable metrics and tailored action plans for sustainable tourism development.

Concerning the public-private partnerships, Csapo (2012) ascertained that the utilization of cultural heritage for promoting cultural tourism is a complex system. Thus, it is essential to have a clear understanding of the involved stakeholders and their roles to establish a successful and strategic partnership scheme that enables the creation of a thriving cultural tourism product (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Key Stakeholders Involved in the Formation of Cultural Tourism Products



Source: Csapo, J. (2012). The role and importance of cultural tourism in the modern tourism industry. Strategies for tourism industry-micro and macro perspectives, 10, pp. 201-212.

III. Tourism and Mega Archeological Projects in Egypt

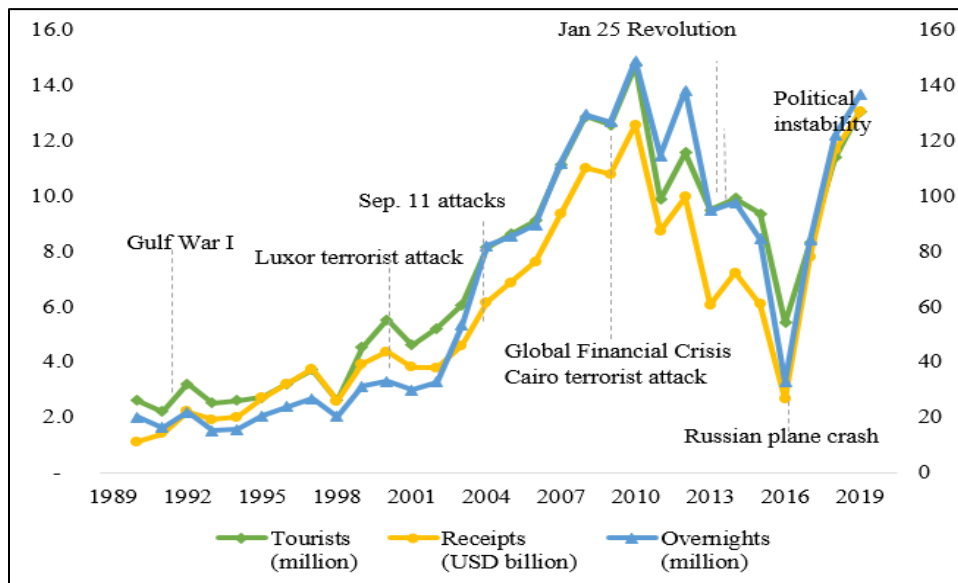
i. Overview of Tourism in Egypt

Egypt is home to one of the world’s oldest civilizations, the Pharaonic civilization, dating back to 3500 BC along the Nile River Valley. Indeed, ancient civilization contributes significantly to Egypt's growing tourism industry. Plentiful papyruses, sculptures, and inscriptions found in Egyptian temples demonstrate that ancient Egypt saw internal travel between areas for attending religious festivals and trade. Also, during the King Khufu era (26th century BC), the first international trade trip from Egypt to the Land of Punt was organized, followed by King Sahure and Queen Hatshepsut in the 25th century BC and 14th century BC, respectively. Importantly, Egypt's image as a cultural and historical tourism destination has grown significantly because of the Great Pyramids, the last remaining one of the ancient world's seven wonders. Egypt's reputation as a tourism destination evolved from what it had been for many years as a gigantic open-air museum, owing to its vast historical heritage, natural and environmental assets, and artistic and cultural richness (Ragab, 2016). By the end of the nineteenth century, Egypt had entered the contemporary tourism era. Egypt experienced the modern pattern of tourism when Thomas Cook

organized a 222-day tour to Egypt following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 (Wahab, 1996). Egypt became a mass-tourism destination at the end of the 1990s, offering 3S tourism products (sea, sun, and sand) in addition to the traditional culture tours.

Tourism is one of the most important sectors in the Egyptian economy. It is a vital source of foreign exchange and service exports as well as a significant contributor to GDP growth. Egypt had a considerable increase in international tourist arrivals from over one million in 1982 to 2.5 million in 1993, 8 million in 2005, and 14.7 million in 2010 (MOTA-Egypt, 2020). So far, the year 2010 is the peak for inbound tourism in Egypt, in terms of inbound tourism flows, whereas tourist overnights reached 147.7 million and inbound tourism receipts achieved nearly \$ 12.5 billion. These tourism revenues accounted for 49.2% of services exports in Egypt in 2010 and about 20% of foreign exchange generated in the Egyptian economy. Consequently, 2010 indicators positioned Egypt in the 18th place in the worldwide top destinations list and granted it the first ranking in both the Middle East and Africa in terms of tourism revenues (CBE, 2020). However, Egypt has had various crises before and after that peak year of 2010, which have slowed tourism growth and dramatically decreased tourism's economic and social contributions across the country. As shown in figure 1, the average annual growth rate from 1990-to 2019 was 5.7% for inbound tourists, 6.9% for overnights, and 8.9% for inbound tourism receipts.

Figure 2
Inbound Tourism Indicators, 1990- 2019.



Source: Prepared based on MOTA-Egypt, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (several issues). *Inbound Tourism Indicators. Cairo.*

However, the Egyptian tourism sector is resilient and bounces back promptly after crises. This is evident in the inbound tourism performance in 2018 and 2019, indicating the prospect of restoring Egypt's tourism rates to their average growth (Figure 2). In 2018, Egypt welcomed around 11.3 million tourists, up 36.8% from 2017. At the same time, tourism revenues increased by 49.4% in 2018, to \$ 11.6 billion. Inbound tourism revenues reached an all-time high of \$ 13.0 billion in 2019, a 12.1% rise from 2018 (MOTA- Egypt, 2020). Despite these remarkable growth rates in 2019, Egypt, like all other countries, witnessed a drastic reduction in inbound tourism in 2020 due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Inbound tourists declined sharply from 13.0

million in 2019 to 3.7 million in 2020 (-72%), overnights from 136.3 million to 43 million (-68%), and inbound tourism receipt from \$ 13 billion to \$ 4.4 billion in 2020 (-66%) (MOTA-Egypt 2021& CBE, 2021).

Notwithstanding, the cultural tourism market share in Egypt is relatively low which is not in line with the historical and cultural position of Egypt. According to the available data, cultural tourists represented only 6% and 4.7% of total inbound tourists and overnights, respectively (Table 1). The leisure market was more than two-thirds of the total, confirming the fact is Egypt is a “3S” mass tourism destination. It is worthwhile mentioning that these percentages focus on the main purpose of the trip referring to purposeful cultural tourists who are wholly driven by culture. However, non-cultural tourists who visited museums and archeological sites as a secondary activity during their trips to Egypt are not counted in these statistics (Table 1). Hence, when considering purposeful cultural tourists and non-cultural tourists participating in cultural activities, the share of cultural tourism in Egypt would be much higher as shown in table 2.

Table 1
Inbound Tourism in Egypt by Main Purpose of Trip, 2017.

Purpose	Share in tourists	Share in overnights
Holidays, leisure and recreation	70.8%	67.0%
Visiting friends and relatives	8.3%	12.1%
Business and professional	7.1%	5.1%
Culture	6.0%	4.7%
Health and medical care	3.3%	6.6%
Education and training	1.7%	2.5%
Other	2.8%	2.0%
Total	100%	100%

Source: CAPMAS (2018). Inbound Tourism Survey results in 2017. Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics. Cairo.

In 2019, the number of museums was 81, and the number of archeological sites was 141. Together, they welcomed more than 14 million foreign and domestic visitors. Herein, domestic visitors represented a considerable share (48%) of total visitors to archeological sites (CAPMAS, 2021). For revenue, both types of cultural tourism attractions achieved around EGP 990 million (\$ 59 million) in 2019 (Table 2). That means, on average, museums and archeological sites' revenue per visitor did not exceed EGP 70 or \$ 4 per visitor in 2019, which is considered low compared to other countries.

Table 2
Museums and Archeological Sites Performance in Egypt, 2019.

Indicator	Museums	Archeological sites	Total
Number of units	81	141	222
Visitors (Thousand)	5,316	8,815	14,131
Revenue (EGP Thousand)	256,056	734,423	990,479

Source: CAPMAS (2021). Annual Bulletin of Cultural Statistics. Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics. Cairo.

Herein, the question arises: would the recent mega archeological projects contribute to attracting more cultural and non-cultural tourists and support the tourism recovery in Egypt? The potential answer to this question is introduced in the following section of this paper. In the same context, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF) reports on the travel and tourism competitiveness global index (TTCI), Egypt achieved remarkable progress in the total online search volumes related to cultural heritage brand tags (cultural tourism digital demand) moving from the 33rd in 2015 to 4th rank among 150 countries in 2019. However, the current ranking of Egypt in terms of the number of designated World Heritage cultural sites and oral and intangible heritage practices and expressions does not reflect the sizable cultural heritage, historical assets, and artistic and cultural richness that Egypt has (Table 3).

Table 3
Competitiveness of Cultural Tourism in Egypt

Indicator	2015	2017	2019
Number of World Heritage cultural sites	34	36	38
Oral and intangible cultural heritage	60	56	52
Cultural tourism digital demand	33	8	4
WEF TTCI report included 141 countries in 2015, 136 countries in 2017, and 140 countries in 2019			

Source: *World Economic Forum (2019). Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019.*
<https://reports.weforum.org/travel-and-tourism-competitiveness-report-2019/>.

ii. Recent Mega Archeological Projects in Egypt

For many decades, the notion of reviving, conserving, and restoring historical and cultural sites in Egypt directed the strategies and policies of the MOTA to promote cultural tourism and city break tourism. These types of tourism are based on niche markets that attract high-end categories of tourists. Several archeological projects were planned in Egypt; however, many challenges were encountered in their implementation; the lack of capital and the required financial resources were critical. Since 2014, with the complete return of security and stability in the country and with the political motivation to finalize all unfinished tourism projects either from construction or technological sides, a thorough list of archeological projects was decided to be achieved. Also, it is decided to make use of fresh ideas by encouraging young experts and the new generation of archeologists to help reform institutions in charge of bringing ancient Egypt into the 21st century. For example, many efforts had been made in the historical and cultural sites to upgrade technical capacities; shifting to a specialized modern lighting development in museums showing and presenting the pieces to illustrate the aesthetic architectural details of archaeological buildings. In addition, cameras and surveillance systems with the most up-to-date international technology were installed. Moreover, a new fire alarm system was introduced in all museums to preserve the archaeological sites and maintain safety and security. Furthermore, digitalization, a bar code-supported system to identify panels that clarify basic information of the monuments displayed within museums, was introduced. For the advancement of the services provided to visitors, other steps had been taken such as: developing museum presentation scenarios to tell history sequentially; offering electric cars (Golf Car) for visitors, especially in large areas, to conserve the environment and reduce emissions; raising the efficiency of the walking paths by developing guidelines showing services and visiting routes, and enhancing the archeological information in the sites. After seven years of efforts, initiatives to restore existing museums, build new museums,

and develop archaeological sites, where the Egyptian people and tourists can reap the rewards, have finally been implemented.

In 2018 and 2019, the Nuba, Hurghada, Sohag Museums, and the Islamic Art Museum in Cairo opened after replacement, reconstruction, and development. In 2020, 3 new museums opened in three tourist destinations: the Museum of Sharm El Sheikh, the Museum of El Sheikh, and Cairo's Royal Carriages. The importance of these areas lies in the fact that the city of Sharm El-Sheikh - for example - is considered one of the most famous tourist destinations in Egypt, as it attracts different nationalities such as Italians, Russians, Ukrainian, other Europeans, and Arabs. It is also known for the largest number of hotel capacity in Egypt with a share of about 35% of the total existing hotel rooms. Likewise, it is recognized among the top international diving destinations where tourists can enjoy recreational and sports activities. The opening of the museum's first phase, which cost EGP 812 million on an area of 140 thousand m², will enrich the destination's attractiveness with a cultural tourism product. For the city of Kafr El Sheikh, the idea of establishing a museum in this governorate, at the cost of EGP 62 million, revolves around displaying aspects of the daily life of the ancient Egyptians and the modern era, creating a mixture of cultural and rural tourism product and providing a rich experience for museum visitors. In Cairo, the Royal Carriages Museum (a cost of EGP 63 million) was opened recently, and many other cultural heritage projects were implemented as well. The National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC) in the old capital of Cairo, called El Fustat, was constructed and opened. Also, the restoration of the historic Palace of Baron Edouard Empain (cost of EGP 175 million), the Belgian engineer who was fond of Egyptology and the founder of Masr Al Jadidah district in the east of Cairo and chose the name "Heliopolis", meaning the city of the sun. Moreover, the urban regeneration project for the El-Gamaliya area in the Fatimid Cairo at the cost of EGP 30 million as well as the renovation of Al-Azhar Mosque (cost of EGP 50 million). In Giza, no one can deny the importance of the Saqqara discoveries which were among the most important archaeological discoveries of 2020 globally. In Alexandria, the "Eliyahu Hanafi Synagogue" was restored in the neo-Gothic style and is located on Nabi Daniel Street at the cost of EGP 97 million. In Minia, a self-financed project to restore the Monastery of Anba Badaba, which is considered one of the most important churches in the region. As well as the opening of Prince Youssef Kamal Museum on the banks of the Nile River in Nagaa Hammadi, at the cost of EGP 31.5 million.

In 2021, many other openings took place despite the COVID-19 Crisis. For example, the first factory for archeological replicas in Egypt and the Middle East named "Konouz" was inaugurated. The first tourist restaurant in the Giza Plateau was opened; the restoration of Imam Al- Shafi'i mosque and mausoleum were completed; two new museums of Egyptian antiquities in Terminals 2 and 3 at Cairo International Airport were opened; and the development of 3 sites on the path of the Holy Family Journey in Egypt as part of the reviving project of Trail of the Holy Family in Egypt. At the top of all these projects, work in the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) continued in full swing, as MOTA confirmed. The GEM is designed to be the largest archaeological museum in the world; with an area of 117 acres (500,000 m), it will contain more than 100,000 pieces from the Pharaonic, Greek, and Roman eras, and it is expected to welcome more than 5 million visitors annually. In addition, the ministry announced the success of the re-installment of King Tut-Ankh-Amun's third Shrine from the Egyptian Museum in Tahrir, after the support and protection of the first and second Shrines of King Tut by a professional team. This team spent around 14 hours of meticulous and delicate work in preparation for displaying the Shrines of the young King.

All these efforts were combined with the restoration and development of temples in Upper Egypt and the excavations of archeological missions, which did not stop. It is worth mentioning the glittering display of the big event of the Pharaohs' Golden Parade, which was held in Cairo in April 2021. In which twenty-two mummies belonging to Kings and Queens of the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt were moved from the Egyptian Museum in Tahrir Square, where they resided for more than a century, the new museum NMEC. The Parade included: Ramses II, the longest-reigning pharaoh, and Queen Hatshepsut, one of Egypt's few female pharaohs. This Parade was broadcast live on local and international media and had double advantages. A grand opening of the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC), where the country's oldest monarchs were set to land, and an invitation to tourists to return to visit Egypt after the pandemic.

IV. Research Methods

i. Research Questions

Based on the literature review, we concluded that investments in cultural heritage and mega archeological projects bring a wide range of benefits at the national and sub-national levels. These benefits can be assessed by way of a triple bottom line approach that considers not only the economic effects but also the social and environmental impacts (Slaper & Hall, 2011). Thus, the following questions were established in this research:

- Q1. How do stakeholders perceive the importance of mega archeological projects in Egypt?
- Q2. What are the potential economic, social, and environmental implications associated with mega archeological initiatives in Egypt?
- Q3. How to utilize mega archeological projects for upscaling Egyptian tourism?

To address the study objective and questions, a quantitative survey instrument was developed.

ii. Participants

Due to the nature of this research, a purposive sampling method was used which is chosen based on the expertise of the subject matter. Invitations were sent to the target participant asking them to complete an online form. A total of 147 responses were received. Although this sample is comparatively small, Rose *et. al.*, (2014) explained that a sample size of 100 respondents is an adequate level for statistical analysis at a 90% confidence level. The respondents were from different sectors as shown in table 4. Out of the 147 respondents, 32% were affiliated with the private sector (travel agencies, hotels, etc.), 22.4% were belonging to the public sector (e.g., government), and 21.8% were tour guides.

Table 4
Sample Distribution by Sector

Sector	Frequency	Relative Frequency
Private sector (Travel Agencies, Hotels, etc.)	47	32.0%
Public sector (e.g., government)	33	22.4%
Tour guide	32	21.8%
Academia	21	14.3%
Media	14	9.5%
Total	147	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors.

iii. Survey Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section 1 comprised 10 statements covering the perception of the importance of mega archeological projects, economic impacts, social impacts, and environmental impacts. Respondents were requested to provide their answers for this section statements on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). While section 2 of the form addressed the participant’s viewpoints on how to utilize Mega Archeological Projects for upscaling Egyptian tourism through 8 statements. Respondents reported their opinions for each stamen in this section on a five-point Likert scale (1 = not important, 5 = very important). To determine the internal consistency reliability of the multi-item scale utilized in this study, the Cronbach alpha was calculated. Field (2009) said that, in general, a scale with an average of 0.8 is considered reliable. As a result, this scale was reliable and valid for the purposes of this research, with an overall coefficient of 0.950. Reliability coefficients ranged from 0.610 to 0.891 for the scale dimensions (table 5) demonstrated strong internal consistency, indicating that the relationships between the study dimensions were reliable for further investigation.

Table 5
The Internal Reliability of the Study Dimensions

Dimension	Cronbach’s alpha
Awareness of importance	0.872
Economic value	0.788
Socio-cultural value	0.891
Environmental value	0.610
Total	0.950

Source: Prepared by the authors.

V. Results and Discussions

The overall score for each item was calculated by calculating the mean of respondent's responses across all questionnaire statements (Table 6). For the awareness of the importance of mega archeological projects in Egypt, the overall mean score was high at 4.20 (SD = 0.842). In this study’s dimension, there was a considerable level of agreement for all statements, notably, for “inspire Egyptians to re-discover their local culture and history promoting domestic tourism” (M = 4.37, SD = 0.951), “re-brand Egypt’s image in international tourism markets” (M = 4.17, SD 1.043), and “attract more cultural tourists and encourage non-cultural tourists to partake in cultural activities” (M = 4.15, SD = 1.043). The analysis of respondent’s opinions on the economic value of mega archeological projects in Egypt revealed that a prominent level of agreement (M = 4.14, SD = 0.929) associated with “promote sustainable tourism empowering women and youth”. For the possible Socio-cultural value related to mega archeological projects in Egypt, respondents reported a high level of agreement associated with “enrich tourism to support inclusive community development” (M = 4.12, SD = 1.040), and “enrich tourism to be a powerful catalyst for urban regeneration (M= 4.10, SD= 0.934). However, the highest mean, (M = 4.37, SD = 0.744), was associated with the probable role of mega archeological projects in Egypt concerning the environmental issues. In this, respondents asserted a high level of agreement for “support protecting and enhancing cultural and natural heritage” (M = 4.54, SD = 0.644), and “influence tourists, employees, and businesses to be more conscious of environmental pressures and ecological footprint” (M = 4.21, SD = 1.061).

These findings answered the first question of this research at hand indicating the high level of awareness among relevant stakeholders about the importance of mega archeological projects in Egypt. Also, the questions regarding the triple values of mega archeological projects in Egypt were answered signifying the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental values that would be created from investing in cultural heritage and mega archeological projects in Egypt. These results were consistent with the outcomes of international case studies of cultural heritage investments discussed in the second section of this study. Moreover, through respondent's opinions, it is obvious that the recent mega archeological projects can contribute to the tourism recovery in Egypt by attracting more purposeful cultural tourists who are wholly motivated by culture, encouraging non-cultural tourists to partake in cultural activities, promoting domestic tourism flows, maximizing tourism contribution to GDP, and providing more job opportunities empowering women and youth.

In the assessment of utilizing mega archeological projects for upscaling Egyptian tourism, there was a high level of importance on all suggested actions (Table 7). Based on the mean score across statements, we can prioritize the actions that foster the role of recent mega archeological projects in flourishing tourism in Egypt as follows:

- 1) enriching the Egyptian cultural tourism content on the internet ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.777$).
- 2) raising local awareness of the important role of cultural tourism in Egypt ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 0.749$).
- 3) producing and collect data for informed planning and decision-making ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 0.814$).
- 4) encouraging digital platforms that consolidate booking systems for transport, admission tickets and accommodation, etc. ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.809$).
- 5) investing in digital transformation for visitor management and access, and site interpretation ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.838$).
- 6) consolidating alliances with international media partners to promote the new Archeological Projects ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.912$).
- 7) actively involving communities and cultural practitioners in tourism strategies and management planning ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 0.924$).

Table 6
Respondent's Awareness of The Importance of Mega Archeological Projects in Egypt

Dimension/Item (n= 147)	Mean	SD	Trend
Awareness of importance	4.20	0.842	Agree
Re-brand Egypt's image in international tourism markets.	4.17	1.043	Agree
Attract more cultural tourists and encourage non-cultural tourists to partake in cultural activities.	4.15	1.043	Agree
Inspire Egyptians to re-discover their local culture and history promoting domestic tourism.	4.37	0.951	Strongly agree
Encourage stakeholders to rethink tourism to better support sustainability and SGDs.	4.10	0.917	Agree
Economic value	4.03	0.931	Agree
Attract high spending tourist segments maximizing tourism contribution to GDP.	3.92	1.113	Agree
Promote sustainable tourism empowering women and youth.	4.14	0.929	Agree
Socio-cultural value	4.10	0.911	Agree
Foster intercultural dialogue and strengthen Egypt's 'soft power.'	4.07	1.038	Agree
Enrich tourism to support inclusive community development.	4.12	1.040	Agree
Enrich tourism to be a powerful catalyst for urban regeneration.	4.10	0.934	Agree
Environmental value	4.37	0.744	Strongly agree
Support protecting and enhancing cultural and natural heritage.	4.54	0.644	Strongly agree
Influence tourists, employees, and businesses to be more conscious of environmental pressures and ecological footprint.	4.21	1.061	Agree

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Surprisingly, “involving communities and cultural practitioners in tourism strategies and management planning” was the lowest in terms of importance in contrast to the lessons learned from international case studies on successful cultural heritage investments which confirmed the high importance of involving communities in cultural heritage assets development initiatives.

Table 7

Respondent’s Opinions on Suggested Actions to Upscale Tourism in Egypt Through Mega Archeological Projects

Item (n= 147)	Mean	SD	Trend
Consolidating alliances with international media partners to promote the new archeological projects	4.28	0.912	Very important
Raising local awareness of the key role of cultural tourism in Egypt	4.43	0.749	Very important
Enriching the Egyptian cultural tourism content on the internet	4.46	0.777	Very important
Encouraging digital platforms that consolidate booking systems for transport, admission tickets, accommodation, etc.	4.35	0.809	Very important
Investing in digital transformation for visitor management and access, and site interpretation.	4.29	0.838	Very important
Actively involving communities and cultural practitioners in tourism strategies and management planning	4.13	0.924	Important
Increasing historical sites and museums’ attractiveness and competitiveness by offering entertainment facilities and activities	4.42	0.835	Very important
Producing and collecting data for informed planning and decision-making.	4.38	0.818	Very important

Source: Prepared by the authors.

VI. Conclusion and Policy Implications

Cultural tourism has gained considerable importance as a tool contributing to the overall social and economic development in different countries. The World Bank confirms the fact that investments in cultural heritage projects contribute to effective economic growth rather than simply consuming budgetary resources. This paper investigated the potential impacts of recent mega archeological projects in Egypt. To achieve the study objective, international experiences highlighting the return on cultural heritage investments were reviewed, and a quantitative survey was designed based on the triple bottom line approach.

This paper has two contributions: raising awareness about the magnitude of mega archeological projects for tourism in Egypt, especially for post-COVID-19 recovery, and proposing future actions that enable the expansion of the cultural heritage tourism market in Egypt. The findings revealed that the stakeholders recognize the foremost importance of recent mega archeological projects in Egypt. This importance can be reflected in the role of such projects as an effective strategy to reinforce the competitive advantage of Egyptian tourism, enrich economic growth, support inclusive community development, and contribute to sustainable development. Also, the results indicated that the recent mega archeological projects could contribute to the tourism recovery in Egypt by attracting more purposeful cultural tourists who are wholly motivated by culture, encouraging non-cultural tourists to partake in cultural activities, promoting domestic tourism flows, maximizing tourism contribution to GDP, and providing more job opportunities empowering women and youth. This research was not without limitations. Because of the low response rate, the sample size was somehow small. Also, due to the lack of relevant data, this study did not provide measurable indicators about the potential economic and social impact of cultural projects in Egypt. Future research may fill this gap when data becomes available. Also, an important proposed area for future studies is the compilation of Heritage Satellite Accounts as an extension of the Egyptian Tourism Satellite Accounts.

It is concluded that to move forward with a heritage-led regeneration program in Egypt, decision-makers would need to determine the key historic areas to study and identify the opportunities for revitalization based on heritage. Establishing in-depth profiles for heritage sites, that take into consideration each area's competitive advantage in terms of heritage assets, investment opportunities, and the type of regeneration suitable is the first step in guiding investment financing and encouraging private sector development. Furthermore, to utilize the mega archeological projects for upscaling Egyptian tourism, policymakers need to focus on enriching the Egyptian cultural tourism online content; encouraging cultural tourism start-ups and entrepreneurship; creating a "Cultural Egypt Pass" that grants access to top cultural heritage attractions with a discounted single-ticket; raising local awareness of the vital role of cultural tourism; and assuring effective coordination to maximize the advantages of public-private partnerships.

These proposed actions can contribute, directly or indirectly, to create a more enabling business environment by boosting investment in tourism, shifting from quantity towards quality, strengthening 'decent work' and improving tourism productivity, and pursuing greater social inclusiveness with a focus on women's empowerment, youth engagement, and support for local communities, encouraging businesses and tourists to purchase services and goods produced by the poor, and supporting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, improving connectivity and facilitating seamless travel, and exploring policies and instruments for green finance and investment relevant to tourism.

References

- Arezki, M. R., Cherif, R., & Piotrowski, J. M. (2009). *Tourism specialization and economic development: Evidence from the UNESCO World Heritage List*. International Monetary Fund: Geneva.
- B+I Strategy (2011). *Study of the Economic Impact of the Activities of the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao*. Retrieved 25/10/2021, from https://prensa.guggenheim-bilbao.eus/src/uploads/2012/09/Estudio_de_Impacto_Economico_2011-ENG.pdf.
- CAPMAS (2018). *Inbound Tourism Survey results 2017*. Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics: Cairo.
- CAPMAS (2021). *Annual Bulletin of Cultural Statistics*. Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics: Cairo.
- CBE, Central Bank of Egypt (2020). *Balance of Payments Performance*. Central Bank of Egypt: Cairo.
- CBE, Central Bank of Egypt (2021). *Balance of Payments Performance*. Central Bank of Egypt: Cairo.
- Cernea, M. M. (2001). *Cultural heritage and development: a framework for action in the Middle East and North Africa*. World Bank: Washington, D.C.
- Csapo, J. (2012). The role and importance of cultural tourism in modern tourism industry. *Strategies for tourism industry-micro and macro perspectives*, 10, 201-212.
- Cullen, F., & Lovie, D. (2015). *Newcastle's Grainger Town: An Urban Renaissance*. Historic England: London.
- Ebbe, K., Licciardi, G., & Baeumler, A. (2011). *Conserving the past as a foundation for the future: China-World Bank partnership on cultural heritage conservation*. World Bank: Washington, D.C.
- European Commission (2017). *Cultural Heritage. Special Eurobarometer*. European Commission: Brussels, Belgium.
- European Commission (2019). *Cultural tourism*. Retrieved 05/11/2021, from https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/cultural_en.
- Faber, B., Gaubert, C. (2019). Tourism and economic development: Evidence from Mexico's coastline. *American Economic Review*, 109(6), 245-93.
- MOTA- Egypt, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. (2020). *Inbound Tourism Indicators*. Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities: Cairo.
- MOTA- Egypt, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. (2021). *Inbound Tourism Indicators*. Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities: Cairo.
- Nocca, F. (2017). The role of cultural heritage in sustainable development: Multidimensional indicators as decision-making tool. *Sustainability*, 9(10), 81-108.
- OECD (2009). *The Impact of Culture on Tourism*. OECD: Paris.

- Pederson, A. (2014). *A Framework for Defining a World Heritage Path to Tourism: Small Island Developing States (SIDS)*. Retrieved 01/11/2021, from <https://whc.unesco.org/document/143518>.
- Petti, L., Trillo, C., Makore, B. N. (2020). Cultural heritage and sustainable development targets: a possible harmonisation? Insights from the European Perspective. *Sustainability*, 12(3), 92-116.
- Plaza, B. (2007). *The Bilbao effect (Guggenheim Museum Bilbao)*. Retrieved 02/11/2021, from https://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/12681/1/MPRA_paper_12681.pdf
- Ragab A., Ragab A.M. (2016) Egypt. In: Jafari J., Xiao H. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Tourism*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-01384-8_323
- Richards, G. (2014). *Tourism trends: The convergence of culture and tourism*. Academy for Leisure NHTV University of Applied Sciences: Netherlands.
- Roders, A. P., Vanoers, R. (2011). Bridging cultural heritage and sustainable development. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*. 1 (1), 5-14.
- Rose, S., Spinks, N., & Canhoto, A. (2014). *Management research: Applying the principles*. Routledge: Oxfordshire, England.
- Rypkema D. et al. (2020). *Twenty-Four Reasons Historic Preservation is Good for Your Community*. Retrieved 19/11/2021, from <https://www.placeeconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/City-Studies-WP-Online-Doc.pdf>
- Rypkema, D. D. (2008). Heritage conservation and the local economy. *Global Urban Development Magazine*, 4(1), 1-8.
- Slaper, T. F., & Hall, T. J. (2011). The triple bottom line: What is it and how does it work. *Indiana business review*, 86(1), 4-8.
- Throsby D. (2012a). Heritage Economics: A Conceptual Framework. In Licciardi, G., & Amirtahmasebi, R. (Eds.). *The economics of uniqueness: investing in historic city cores and cultural heritage assets for sustainable development*. World Bank Publications: Washington, DC.
- Throsby, D. (2012b). *Investment in Urban Heritage: Economic Impacts of Cultural Heritage Projects in FYR Macedonia and Georgia*. Urban development series; knowledge papers no. 16. World Bank: Washington, DC.
- UNESCO (2003). *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. Retrieved 05/11/2021, from <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention#art2>
- UNWTO (2015). *Siem Reap Declaration on Culture and Tourism: Building a New Partnership Model*. Retrieved 05/11/2021, from http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/unwto_unesco_siem_reap_declaration_en.pdf
- UNWTO (2017). *Muscat Declaration on Tourism and Culture: Fostering Sustainable Development*. Retrieved 05/11/2021, from <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/epdf/10.18111/unwtodeclarations.2017.26.05>

- UNWTO (2018). *Tourism and Culture Synergies*. United Nations World Tourism Organization: Madrid
- UNWTO (2019). *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*. Retrieved 05/11/2021, from <https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2019-10/gcetpassportglobalcodeen.pdf>
- UNWTO, United Nations World Tourism Organization. (2012). *International Tourism Highlights, 2012 Edition*. Retrieved 25/10/2021, from <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284414666>
- Wahab, S. E. (1996). Tourism development in Egypt: Competitive strategies and implications. *Progress in Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 2(3-4), 351-364.
- WEF, World Economic Forum (2019). *Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019*. Retrieved 03/11/2021, from <https://reports.weforum.org/travel-and-tourism-competitiveness-report-2019/>
- World Bank (2017). *Lebanon - Cultural Heritage and Urban Development Project*. Retrieved 03/11/2021, from <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/604321498843122368/pdf/ICR00004079-06152017.pdf>
- World Bank (2018a). *Achieving the Twin Goals Using Cultural Heritage, Urban Regeneration and Sustainable Tourism: Lessons Learned from Seoul*. Retrieved 04/11/2021, from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/02/07/achieving-the-twin-goals-using-cultural-heritage-urban-regeneration-and-sustainable-tourism-lessons-learned-from-seoul>
- World Bank (2018b). *Seoul's experience in culture heritage, sustainable tourism, and urban regeneration*. Retrieved 04/11/2021, from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/608081517569173554/Seouls-experience-in-culture-heritage-sustainable-tourism-and-urban-regeneration>
- World Bank (2018c). *Cultural Heritage, Sustainable Tourism and Urban Regeneration: Capturing Lessons and Experience from Japan with a Focus on Kyoto*. World Bank: Washington, DC.
- World Bank (2019). *China - CN-Gansu Cultural Natural Heritage: Implementation Completion Report (ICR) Review*. Independent Evaluation Group (IEG). Retrieved 04/11/2021, from <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/523081547507243569/pdf/China-CN-Gansu-Cultural-Natural-Heritage.pdf>