

INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL FOCUS
CULTURAL TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT
TOURISM ECONOMICS

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In a world where more than half of the population already lives in cities and more than 90 percent of urban growth is occurring in the developing world (Licciardi and Amirtahmasebi, 2012), cities have the potential to serve as incubators of innovation and technology. However, there are also many challenges for cities that can be classified into economic, environmental, and social threats. Cities, for instance, consume 75 per cent of worldwide energy production and generate 80 per cent of CO₂ emissions (Lazaroiu and Rosciab, 2012). The 'smart city' paradigm, which has been adopted by many cities worldwide, represents an environment where innovation and technology supplement activities and services of a city in order to provide benefits to the residents and visitors. In Europe, initiatives for sustainable development of cities have been characterised and defined by a number of factors including environmental sustainability, economic development and a high quality of life.

The greater global mobility, the information boom and the increased knowledge-sharing between people in recent years facilitate the development of urban structures and lead to higher levels of city tourism demand. Crowding, congestion, waiting time in front of tourism attractions, emissions, and pollution caused by mass tourism in cities, however, are negative effects of uncontrolled tourism development in urban regions. There are also obvious conflicts when cities, for instance, claim that they want to become 'smart' (or 'green') and at the same time launch projects to increase air transportation by building additional runways and attracting additional airlines. The relationship between tourists and citizens, or the tourism industry and the local community, is also increasingly compromised by uncontrolled tourism development in cities.

In addition, cities often struggle to modernize without losing the unique character embodied in their downtowns and historic centres. One of the problems most frequently raised is that cities are in danger of losing their authenticity. The standardization and transparency of products and services make city tourism offers increasingly interchangeable. City tourism services are probably the most highly standardized products compared to other tourism offers and, since they became available through online booking engines, they are readily available for purchase everywhere. When cities expand rapidly, conservation and continued use of cultural heritage may provide the basis for the needed authenticity. Many cities worldwide have therefore looked into the opportunities to further develop their cultural tourism offerings.

Progress in understanding the city tourism phenomenon and measuring its social, cultural and economic impact can only be made by intensifying the communication and cooperation between researchers, professionals, and policy makers.

In 2014, the AQR-IREA workshop, which was the 5th international ERSA Workshop, focused on Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Urban Development and was hosted by the Faculty of Economics and Business of University of Barcelona. The aim of this workshop was to provide an in-depth analysis of the relationships between cultural tourism, heritage and economic growth in general, and between cultural tourism and sustainable urban development in particular. After a very lively discussion in the workshop, authors were invited to submit their papers for this special in *Tourism Economics*. Seven papers, that passed a rigorous reviewing process and which appear in this special focus, provide a good summary of the presentations and discussions during the workshop. Similarly to the workshop this special focus covers a wide range of topics, from the description of a successful destination marketing information system for city tourism to a very riveting research topic such as the social impact of tourism development in cities.

The first article serves as an introductory article for this special focus and is a summary of the keynote provided by Professor Karl Wöber during the workshop. *“Towards A Sustainable Urban Tourism Development in Europe. The Role Of Benchmarking And Tourism Management Information Systems. A Partial Model Of Destination Competitiveness”* by Irem Önder, Karl Wöber and Bozana Zekan, describes TourMIS, an online marketing information system which serves as a platform for exchanging tourism statistics among the leading tourism destination marketing organizations in Europe. In this article the authors present the bottom up, micro-level approach of TourMIS for collecting measures about sustainable urban tourism development. Zooming into a city level and discovering and analyzing already existing sustainable tourism indicators is considered to be more feasible and rewarding than introducing new approaches for measures without any direct practical implications. The authors provide a synthesis of various initiatives that are proposing frameworks for sustainable tourism indicators for sub-national regions and suggest applying data envelopment analysis (DEA) for benchmarking urban tourism destinations. Finally, they demonstrate

the applicability of their approach by introducing a partial model for measuring destination competitiveness based on data available in the TourMIS database.

The second article *“Cultural Resources As A Factor In Cultural Tourism Attraction: Technical Efficiency Estimation Of Regional Destinations In Spain”* by Luis César Herrero-Prieto and Mafalda Gómez-Vega is another study along the line of performance analysis of tourist destinations. The main contribution of this article, which analyses the performance of 17 Spanish regions, is taking the regions as territorial units and exploring their performance in cultural tourism from a tourist flow perspective. The analysis, which includes the definition of a hypothetical production function linking cultural resources and demand, gives technical efficiency scores for the regions which have been selected for investigation. For this purpose, the authors have developed a two-stage procedure: first, measuring performance by non-parametric methods, and secondly, analysing how other external variables such as reputation, accessibility, the omnivorous nature of cultural tourism as well as the scope of the regional cultural sector might determine these efficiency ratios. The findings of this research have not only implications for economic development and regional disparity analysis, but also strengthen the role of cultural tourism vis-à-vis economic policy making on national and local levels.

The next article *“Learning At The Museum: Factors Influencing Visit Length”* by Juan Gabriel Brida, Chiara Dalle Nogare, and Raffaele Scuderi presents a study on the determinants of the length of stay at a museum. The study is based on a survey among 390 visitors to the museum of Vittoriale, the most popular museum of the shores of Lake Garda in Italy. The authors consider visit duration as a proxy for learning, as a visit to a museum by a tourist is seen as a chance for not only enjoying, but also for engaging with the cultural offer. Tourists were asked about their motivation for visiting the museum, and their responses were condensed by multiple component analysis to two distinct dimensions. Logit and duration data econometric models were then used to analyse the relationships between these core dimensions of motivations and the expected and actual duration of a museum visit. In this analysis, a further set of economic, socio-demographic, trip-related and psychographic control variables were used. The findings show some light evidence that recreational motivation may have some positive impact on actual duration and that museums seem to meet their expectations as cultural disseminators, even when their visitors’ motivation is mainly recreational.

The fourth article of this special focus is entitled *“Cultural Participation Of Tourists - Evidence From Travel Habits Of Austrian Residents”* and is authored by Marta Zieba. This paper examines how the individual characteristics of tourists and the attributes of a trip affect the decision whether those visitors would choose cultural participation as their primary travel reason. The author studies the effect of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of tourists and of the attributes of their trip on both the likelihood and the frequency of their cultural participation. The data was gathered based on a national telephone survey in Austria which is regularly conducted by the Austrian Statistical Office. Using observations of 8,587 respondents and their 14,646 trips, a series of logistic and negative binomial regressions were employed. Although

tourism is often promoted as a way to escape from everyday routines, the actual choice of cultural consumption appears to be dictated by individual characteristics of tourists and the character of a trip. The findings of this study have practical implications for cultural managers both in Austria and in global markets.

The fifth article *“UNESCO Sites And Performance Trend Of Italian Regional Tourism Destinations: A Two-Stage DEA Window Analysis With Spatial Interaction”* by Tiziana Cuccia, Calogero Guccio, and Ilde Rizzo is another paper related to performance analysis of regions. This paper analyses the role of UNESCO sites for the tourism performance of Italian regions between 1995 and 2010. The authors study the effect of the inscription in the World Heritage List on the dynamics of efficiency measures that were calculated using a two-stage Data Envelopment Analysis window analysis. In addition, the authors test for the presence of spatial dependence in the efficiency of tourism destinations. The results, which have been consistently achieved under different model assumptions, reveal that the World Heritage List does not play a significant role in enhancing technical efficiency of tourism destinations. Also the spatial analysis does not show any significant spill-over effects of efficiency.

The sixth article *“Development Of Cultural Tourism And Wellbeing Of Urban Residents: A Case Of German Magic Cities”* by Oksana Tokarchuk, Roberto Gabriele, and Oswin Maurer puts a special focus on the social dimension of urban sustainability. Many cities consider development of cultural tourism as opportunity to sustain employment and economic growth in the area. However, the effects of the increased flow of tourists on the local economies and the lives of local residents are not always positive. Careful consideration of benefits and pitfalls of the development of city tourism is necessary in order to sustain balanced urban development. In this final article, the authors evaluate the experience of tourism development in 10 German cities – the ‘German Magic Cities’, a marketing initiative and knowledge exchange network of some leading tourism cities in Germany. The aim of this paper is to investigate the effect of city tourism on the wellbeing of urban residents. In a survey among local residents, the authors study the effect of tourists’ nights spent in city centres on the perceived quality of life of urban residents. Based on the results of the study, the authors suggest policy implications that prevent negative effects of tourism development and improve the living conditions of inhabitants.

The final paper analyses one of the type of tourism more usual but less quantified and characterized: the day-trip movements. It presents a methodology for the operational definition, quantification and characterisation of day trippers, for be used at local or regional levels. The methodology stresses the importance of concepts as “daily urban systems” and other similar aggregations to define what is one of the main features of tourism: “usual environment”. Different systems of quantification of day trippers are developed, based on both primary (fieldwork) and secondary data, and they are applied to the case of a *comarca* in the province of Barcelona (Catalonia). The results show the relevance of the phenomenon of “same-day trips” (for tourism) and the interest for defining and characterising this phenomenon correctly in order to implement tourism policies that address the different profiles presented by day trippers.

This special focus is a collection of outstanding research papers related to cultural tourism and urban sustainable development. Nevertheless, it presents only a snapshot of the very lively current discussions on how cultural tourism can serve as a driving force for the local economic development. It aims to inform, inspire, and encourage many more such efforts which are desperately needed in order to provide answers to the many questions pertaining to modern urban development. We want to thank all workshop participants, authors, reviewers, and all others who were actively engaged in the production of this special focus.

Editors

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