TOURISM DEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORIES- FROM CULTURE TO CREATIVITY?

TRAJECTÓRIAS DO DESENVOLVIMENTO TURÍSTICO – DA CULTURA À CRIATIVIDADE?

GREG RICHARDS

PhD, Professor of Leisure Studies at Tilburg University
Director of the ATLAS Cultural Tourism Project
Tilburg University, The Netherlands
g.w.richards@uvt.nl

ABSTRACT

This paper traces the development of creative tourism as new form of cultural tourism. This trend has been stimulated by the growth of new consumption patterns, by more involved and skilled forms of tourism activity, and by changes in the production of tourism, such as the development of the experience economy. Arguably creative tourism also provides some answers to the increasing problems experienced in cultural tourism development, which is rapidly becoming another form of mass tourism. The paper outlines the different forms that creative tourism can take, ranging from interactive workshops and learning experiences to creative backdrops for tourism activity. Illustrations of creative tourism forms are taken from creative tourism networks, workshops, creative spaces, cultural itineraries and creative events.

KEYWORDS

Creative tourism, creativity, cultural tourism, cultural events.

RESUMO

Este artigo traça o desenvolvimento do turismo criativo como uma nova forma de turismo cultural. Esta tendência foi estimulada pelo crescimento de novos padrões de consumo, por formas mais envolventes e especializadas da actividade turística e por alterações na produção do turismo, tais como a economia de experiências. O turismo criativo também dá algumas respostas aos crescentes problemas sentidos no desenvolvimento do turismo cultural, que se está transformando rapidamente numa nova forma de turismo de massas. Este artigo descreve nas suas linhas gerais as diferentes formas que o turismo criativo pode assumir, desde workshops interactivos e experiências que envolvem uma componente de aprendizagem até cenários criativos para a actividade turística. Exemplos de formas de turismo criativas são dados a partir de redes de turismo criativo, workshops, espaços criativos, itinerários culturais e eventos criativos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Turismo criativo, criatividade, turismo cultural, eventos culturais.

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture and tourism were two of the major growth industries of the 20th century, and towards the end of the century the combination of these two sectors into 'cultural tourism' had become one of the most desirable development options for countries and regions around the world.

As the recent OECD report on The Impact of Culture on Tourism (2009) noted, cultural tourism accounted for almost 360 million international tourism trips in 2007, or 40% of global tourism. In value terms, the contribution of cultural tourism is even greater, since cultural tourists are estimated to spend as much as one third more on average than other tourists (Richards 2007).

However, the rapid growth of cultural tourism from the preserve of the elite Grand Tourists to a major industry in the 20th Century has also caused problems. Growing numbers of tourists at major sites and in small communities has raised questions about the sustainability of this new form of mass tourism. In

particular it has become harder for destinations to profile their culture among the welter of products on offer, each desperate to claim their uniqueness. There are a growing number of places in search of new forms of articulation between culture and tourism which can help to strengthen rather than water down local culture, which can raise the value accruing to local communities and improve the links between local creativity and tourism.

Many places are therefore turning to creative development strategies, or different forms of creative tourism in the process. This paper examines why and how cultural tourism is being transformed into creative tourism.

2. THE GROWTH OF CULTURAL TOURISM

In order to understand the origins of creative tourism, we first have t look at th4 rise of culture as a form of tourism consumption. In the past, culture was not something strongly associated with tourism, which was viewed mainly as a leisure activity. In Europe, only small numbers of relatively wealthy people used to undertake cultural tours with specific educational goals – the vast majority saw holidays as time for rest and relaxation. This situation gradually changed during the 20th Century, as tourists became more experienced and started seeking new experiences on holiday and more places began to recognise the value of culture as a potential means of generating tourism.

A number of vectors of cultural, social and economic change underlay the growth of cultural tourism. These included a fundamental shift in the nature of consumption, changing factors of production and changes in the nature of tourism itself.

The trajectory of consumption – from basic needs to creative needs

As society has developed, so the basis of human needs and wants has also changed. As we became increasingly able to satisfy our basic needs for food and shelter, we turned our attention to the satisfaction of 'higher order' needs, such as status and self-fulfilment. Scitovsky (1976) has described this development in terms of the shift from unskilled to skilled consumption, or from outer-directed to inner-directed consumption. People are no longer just concerned t accumulate goods, but they also want to develop themselves and their own consumption skills. People want to paint, drawn, design, photograph, sing, do yoga – a whole range of activities which will build their own skills and develop their potential.

Ironically this growing desire for creativity coincides with a diminishing amount of available time in which to be creative. One route is to be creative in interstitial time at home, via the Internet, another is through travel, as holidays often provide the only significant block of free time that pressured creative class has. They are also demanding more 'real' experiences of everyday life.

The trajectory of production – from goods to experiences

At the same time, the nature of production has shifted dramatically. Pine and Gilmore (1999) have shown that the previous stages of the economy based on the production of goods or services have been replaced by the an economy specialised in the production of experiences. Increasing competition forces producers to differentiate their products by adding value, such as additional features or services. However, over time, competitors can reproduce these features and the value of the product, and therefore productivity, declines. In the experience economy the product is a unique experience for the consumer, which cannot be replicated so easily.

The trajectory of tourism – from mass tourism to cultural tourism to creative tourism?

Tourism as an industry has also undergone major transformations in line with the rise of skilled consumption and the experience economy. Tourism is of course one of the phenomena closely identified with the rise of the service industry, and in many countries it is the most important single service industry. Tourism grew rapidly in the latter half of the 20th century because the basic inputs were cheap and easy to mass-produce. The rise of mass tourism also brought about several negative impacts, such as overcrowding, environmental problems, degradation of local culture, etc. Cultural tourism, in contrast, was often viewed as a 'good' form of tourism, which was small-scale, high-spend and low impact. Perhaps most importantly, cultural tourists themselves were perceived as desirable visitors, because they were usually wealthy, well-heeled and well-behaved.

In the past, cultural tourism was also largely based on cultural heritage – particularly those elements of heritage, such as museums and monuments, which can be consumed by large numbers of people. In Europe, for example, Europa Nostra has estimated

that 50% of European tourism is related to such resources, and the ATLAS research programme has shown that over 50% of cultural tourists visit museums and monuments.

The convergence of these different trajectories of change in consumption, production and tourism style served to create a cultural tourism boom from the 1980s onwards. The ATLAS research has underlined how cultural visits have tended to grow as a proportion of tourism consumption, reaching 36% of those surveyed in 2008. This growth, coupled with the perception of cultural tourism as high value tourism, encouraged many countries and regions to develop specific cultural tourism programmes, and to design marketing efforts targeted at cultural tourists.

3. CULTURAL TOURISM: A VICTIM OF ITS OWN SUCCESS?

There is no doubt that tourism and culture are now inextricably linked, and that cultural tourism is a major segment of global tourism. However, there are also signs that cultural tourism is now becoming a victim of its own success. The work of Paolo Russo (2002) in Venice has underlined how historic city centres can suffer from a 'vicious cycle' of cultural tourism development, in which famous sites attract large numbers of tourists, degrading the quality of experience and driving 'serious' cultural tourists away The falling appeal of the destination forces suppliers to concentrate on new, lower value markets, chiefly consisting of excursionists.

Other problems are also evident. There is a certain irony in destinations seeking to develop their uniqueness through cultural tourism. In fact, many places follow similar strategies in order to achieve their uniqueness, which ends up making those places feel and look the same. This is the problem of 'serial reproduction' is clearly evident in the development of many products related to cultural tourism, which include elements such as:

Iconic structures (e.g.Bilbao Guggenheim)

Megaevents (e.g. European Capital of Culture)

Thematization (e.g. Cultural routes)

Heritage mining (e.g. historic quarters)

These strategies are recognisable in cities across the globe, and the means of consuming these products are also becoming increasingly familiar: the tourist bus, the city card, the guided tour.

The major problem with this process of 'McCulturization' to paraphrase Ritzer (1993), is that the very people targeted by these products are repelled by them. Just as cultural tourists are becoming more experienced, more sophisticated and better able to structure their own tourism experiences, so the cultural tourism product being offered is becoming more standardized, more ridged and less engaging. One cultural creative describes their dissatisfaction with (post)modern existence thus: 'I was accumulating experiences without changing very much'.

The ATLAS research has indicated that the experiences enjoyed most by cultural tourists tend to be those small-scale, less visited places that offer a taste of 'local' or 'authentic' culture. Tourists increasingly say that they want to experience local culture, to live like locals and to find out about the real identity of the places they visit. Clearly new types of cultural tourism products are needed.

The emergence of this new breed of cultural tourist coincides with the growth in 'prosumption' – the process by which the consumer becomes a producer of the products and experiences they consume. We are already used to doing a large element of the work i producing services, as Ritzer demonstrated in the case of fast food and Disney-style entertainment, but as people demand more individualised and engaging experiences, so the level of consumer involvement is increasing.

The skilled consumer often knows more about the experiences they are consuming than the people who are supposed to supply them. Not surprisingly, therefore, skilled consumers have begun to take the lead in experience production. Lifestyle entrepreneurs start lifestyle businesses, travellers construct their own itineraries on the Internet, compiling flights and hostel beds and combining these with couches borrowed from friends on social networking sites. These travellers no longer buy the packaged excursion, but creatively shape their own experiences, based on what they want to see, when they want to see it when they want to see it, These experiences usually emphasise active involvement in local culture, rather than the highlights of global culture.

3. FROM CULTURAL TO CREATIVE TOURISM

Faced with these changes in the nature of experience production and consumption, destinations could continue offering the same mass cultural tourism products they always have, but they do this at the risk of losing a very important part of the market. Admittedly, these new forms of tourism are difficult for the traditional tourism sector to deal with, but there are major opportunities in working with rather than ignoring creative tourism.

Richards (2000: 18) have defined creative tourism as: «Tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken».

This definition has a number of important implications:

Creative potential

The tourist is provided with the tools to develop their own creative potential, and to take something more than souvenirs home with them.

Active involvement

The consumer is actively involved in the creative process, and this involvement creates the potential for genuine exchange and engagement with local people and local culture.

Characteristic experiences

Creativity can happen anywhere, but the important thing is to link the creative process to the destination and to anchor it in local culture, creativity and identity. This requires not just creativity on the part of the tourist, but also the destination.

Co-creation

The concept of creative tourism implies a level of co-creation, or co-makership between visitors and locals. Co-creation covers an emerging body of knowledge about the way in which products, services and experiences are made jointly by producers and consumers. At its most crude, this concept involves using the consumer's knowledge of the product in order to improve it and to provide a closer fits with consumer needs. However, in the context of creative tourism there is usually a much

more important dimension of co-creation at work, which involves a reversal of the normal power relationships attached to tourism. This is most evident in projects such as the Opuwo workshop in Namibia, where the Finnish designer Satu Miettinen (2008) has run craft workshops for tourists. These workshops are led by local women, who rather than serving tourists in bars or restaurants, or selling them trinkets in the market, now become their teachers and co-workers, guiding them in the skills required to make traditional objects and initiating them into their cultural significance.

4. EXAMPLES OF CREATIVE TOURISM EXPERIENCES

Our research on the relationship between tourism and creativity suggest that there are a number of ways in which they can be linked in order to enhance the tourism product and the visitor experience.

Types of creative tourism experiences

Experience	Delivery
Learning	Workshops
Tasting	Experiences
	Open ateliers
Seeing	Itineraries
Buying	Shop window

These types of experiences can be delivered in a variety of ways, including the creation of networks, itineraries, courses and events. The summary below provides some examples. Many more examples can be found in Richards (2006; 2007).

Creative tourism networks

The most developed creative tourism network can be found in the city of Nelson, New Zealand, where Creative Tourism New Zealand has been established as a network of creative businesses offering products to tourists (www.creativetourism.co.nz). The network provides a wide range of creative experiences, including bone carving, Maori language classes, weaving, felting and woodwork and New Zealand gastronomy. The focus is very much on learning experiences, with a range of hands-on workshops being run by local tutors (Raymond 2007).

Creative Tourism Barcelona (www.barcelonacreativa.info) takes a slightly different approach, acting as an intermediary to link creative producers in the city with people from other parts of the world who want to engage in creative activities there. This more artistic approach to the development of creative tourism provides a platform through which potential creative tourists can indicate the types of creative activities they are interested in, and they are then put in touch with local creative sector actors who can provide the facilities or resources to make it happen. More recently, Creative Tourism Barcelona has also been developing more specific creative activities with creative producers which can be offered to groups of 'creative tourists' on demand.

Creative Spaces

Particular spaces have also been developed to offer creative learning experiences to visitors in different parts of the world. For example the Italian coffee producer illy's Università del Caffè provides courses on all aspects of coffee and coffee making at 11 different locations (http://www.illy.com/wps/wcm/connect/us/illy/the-world-of-coffee/universita-del-caffe/). Since 1999, approximately 22,000 students have graduated from this institution. The Valrhona chocolate company provides similar courses for gourmets and professionals in their L'Ecole du Grand Chocolat in Southern France.

In Barcelona different forms of accommodation have tapped into the creative sector to develop new experiences. The Chic and Basic hotel has staged fashion shows, using its individually-designed bedrooms to showcase the products of young local designers. The Equity Point hostels group (http://www.equity-point.com/hostelart/index_es.html) runs a 'hostelArt' programme, giving young artists an opportunity to exhibit their work in hostel rooms and introducing young travellers to the creative sector in Barcelona. The Camping House Barcelona (http://www.barcelona-house.com/CHcast/arquitectostxtC.html) is a new concept in tourist accommodation, providing guests with the sensation of camping in the middle of the city, and adding design value to their stay.

Events

Cities around the globe are busy developing their 'eventfulness' (Palmer and Richards, forthcoming) in order to utilise the creative power of events to help the city achieve its wider cultural social and economic goals. Many of the new types of events being developed are not just about passive audience attendance, but the active involvement of creative producers and others in the 'co-creation' of events.

In the Swedish city of Umea, for example, the bid to stage the European Capital of Culture in 2014 is being run on an open source principle. Instead of the programme being designed by 'experts' in the cultural sector the event is being planned and programmed with direct involvement of local people. For example, local schoolchildren created a blog which was used as the basic script for an opera performance to which they were later invited. By extending this open source or co-creation concept to the national and international arena, this also becomes a strategy to develop creative tourism. The audience is not there simply to consume, but also to take an active part in producing the experience.

The Festes de Gràcia is a local festival in a district of Barcelona which has developed into a major celebration for the whole city. The key element of this event is the decoration of local streets by residents, using recycled materials. Each street is themed, and there I a high level of creativity involved in creating a totally new space from discarded items such as water bottles and milk cartons.

Cultural Itineraries

Cultural itineraries can also be a means of linking together creative enterprises and events, stimulating visitors to see a number of different activities in a specific region. The Craft Route of the Alto Minho in Northern Portugal includes a large number of crafts producers, most of whom work from home. The brochure and website given tourists the possibility of visiting these producers, but the lack of any form of contact apart from telephone makes it difficult for non-Portuguese speakers. As a practical solution to the problem of dealing with foreign tourists, the tourist board has now begun to sell craft products in its information centres. Sales are supported by demonstrations from crafts producers during the high season.

The results of this initiative have been positive, with a rapid increase in craft sales. Producers said they were happy with the increased sales and with the extra marketing efforts by the tourist board. The main problem was that the project-based funding finished after three years, leading to a lower level of marketing activity and lower sales.

As a new approach to the cultural itinerary concept, the Council of Europe is developing a 'Cultural Corridor' scheme, initially in South East Europe. The Council of Europe defines Cultural Corridors as: "Networks of interaction and economic exchange based on culture and creativity, incorporating principles of sustainability, fairness and inclusion, based on wide stakeholder partnerships which are rooted in solid institutional frameworks that stimulate regional socio-economic development".

The basic idea is to create networks which move beyond physical routes linking cultural sites to include the full range of creative assets in a region (Richards, Russo and Grossman 2008).

Creative backdrops

Many cities have a reputation of being 'creative' in one way or another, just as Santa Fe does. In many cases this creativity is experienced by the visitor not so much in the direct consumption of creative activities, but rather through the general atmosphere or buzz of the place as a whole, which is generated by the creative sector. This strategy is currently being employed in Shanghai and Beijing, as newly developing creative clusters are opened up and marketed to tourists.

5. DEVELOPING CREATIVE TOURISM IN THE FUTURE

Many of the creative tourism initiatives currently operating are still at en early stage in their development. However, we can already identify many key success factors which are likely to continue to be important in the future. Most importantly, creative tourism must be developed to link local creativity with creative people who travel. This can provide an antidote to the serial reproduction of culture and what Lee has termed 'Find and Replace' Economic Development. Instead, the combined creativity of local people and visitors can be harnessed to maximise the distinctiveness of places.

In order to achieve this, creative tourism development needs to be based on a number of key principles:

Know who you are and where you are

Distinctiveness is about those factors that make places stand out from the others. This is not just about the tangible assets that places have, but also about their intangible resources, including atmosphere, ambiance, skills and creativity.

Use local capacity

Creative tourism is based on those aspects of creativity that are characteristic of the place visited. Importing ideas or skills is often counter-productive to the development of creative tourism (although the knowledge of how to implement creative tourism may have to be 'borrowed' from elsewhere).

Build on what you have

There is no need to engage in major construction of new facilities – the trick is to use those you have more creatively. A refitted cave, a renovated factory or an ice hotel would usually be more interesting than a new five star hotel.

Develop quality not gimmicks

Although creativity often depends on spontaneity, risk and surprise, it is not a question of using gimmicks or following fashionable trends. For creative tourism it is more important to deal with quality and authenticity, or re-interpreting or innovating tradition.

Use creative resources as a catalyst

Whereas the basic strategy of cultural tourism depends on the reproduction of culture into fairly static products for tourists, creative tourism should be viewed as a process which can stimulate further change. The use of local crafts as a basis for creative tourism experiences should provide a means of innovating the production of souvenirs.

All of these basic principles can help destinations to rethink and refit cultural tourism in interesting and innovative ways. in doing so, places can not only increase their potential to attract creative tourists, but can also increase their general creative potential, helping to address broader cultural, social and economic problems. At a very basic level, for example, the recognition of minority cultures as a source of creativity and skills rather than tradition or cultural objects immediately places these groups in a new position vis a vis the mainstream economy, the tourism industry, the tourists and society as a whole. Individuals who possess unique creative skills are placed in a new position of power as the purveyors of knowledge and the teachers of skills. The tourist is also transformed from an insensitive individual who is ignorant about local culture into a pupil and a colleague who is there to receive and exchange knowledge with their hosts. Such proactive

forms of creative tourism are unlikely to grow into the kind of mass tourism experiences currently seen in many cultural tourism destinations.

6. CONCLUSION

Creative experiences are an increasingly important part of the tourism landscape, and creative tourism development strategies are now being adopted in many destinations around the world. Creative tourism can potentially address some of the pitfalls of contemporary cultural tourism models and can help to make places more distinctive and engaging for residents and visitors alike. However, the development of creative tourism is still at a fairly early stage, and there is much research needed to identify best practice and critical success factors. In the future it is likely that different models of creative tourism development will emerge, guided by the characteristics of the destination and the co-creation activities of tourism producers and consumers.

REFERENCES

ATLAS (2009): *ATLAS Cultural Tourism Research Project*, www.tram-research.com/atlas.

OECD (2009): *The Impact of Culture on Tourism*, OECD, Paris.

MIETTINEN, S. (2008): "Creative tourism as tool for local empowerment", in: *Changing experiences. The development of creative tourism*, ATLAS, Arnhem.

PINE, B.J. and GILMORE, J.H. (1999): *The Experience Economy*, Harvard University Press, Boston.

RAYMOND, C. (2007): "Creative Tourism New Zealand: The practical challenges of developing creative tourism", in *Tourism, Creativity and Development*., Routledge, London, pp. 145-157.

RICHARDS, G. (2007, ed.): *Cultural Tourism: Global and local perspectives*, Haworth Press, New York.

RICHARDS, G. and RAYMOND, C. (2000): "Creative Tourism", *ATLAS News*, no. 23, 16-20.

RICHARDS, G., RUSSO, A.P. and GROSSMAN, M. (2008): *Cultural Corridors in South East Europe: Refinement of concept and development of pilot projects*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

RICHARDS, G. and WILSON, J. (2006): "Developing Creativity in Tourist Experiences: A Solution to the Serial Reproduction of Culture?", *Tourism Management* 27, 1209-1223.

RICHARDS G. and WILSON, J. (2007): *Tourism, Creativity and Development*, Routledge, London.

RITZER, G. (1993): *The McDonaldization of Society*, Pine Forge Press.

RUSSO, A.P. (2002): "The 'vicious circle' of tourism development in heritage cities", *Annals of Tourism Research* Volume 29, Issue 1, January 2002, Pages 165-182

SCITOVSKY, T. (1976): *The Joyless Economy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.