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How does Tourism, as a Globalized Social Phenomenon, Interfere with the Current Processes of Heritagization in the Mediterranean Area?

Introduction

By far the world's largest tourism flow is the mass transfer of tourists from the colder northern regions of Europe southwards to countries bordering the northern coast of the Mediterranean (World Tourism Organization, 2003). This amounted to around 116 million arrivals in 2000 - about one-sixth of all tourist trips worldwide (World Tourism Organization, 2003). This phenomenon has an impact on the realm of heritage policies in the Mediterranean, which is undergoing profound mutations: their scope has become wider and deeper. Beside landscapes (particularly along the coastal areas) and gastronomy (the Mediterranean diet), it now also includes tourism strategies (territorial branding towards a variety of audiences from Northern Europe, the Gulf, Asia or the US) (Daguzan, 2016).

Climate Change, Tourism and Heritagization

According to the World Tourism Organization (2003), altered weather patterns induced by climate change could mean that northern Europe becomes more

attractive and reliable during the summer months, while the Mediterranean generally deteriorates in its appeal for the holidaymaker: the temperatures may become too hot, tropical diseases may become prevalent, there may be water shortages, the landscape may become arid, and freak events in the form of forest fires and flash floods may become more frequent. The coast may become eroded and low-lying coastal amenities such as resort complexes and golf course inundated. As a result, it is speculated that the world's largest tourist flow from northern Europe to the Mediterranean could gradually become less. The tendency in the future could be, that Northern Europeans either holiday domestically or at least increasingly within northern Europe (World Tourism Organization, 2003).

Regarding the processes of heritagization in the Mediterranean area, especially the coastal area would benefit from this shift. A large share of cultural world heritage sites is located in coastal areas of the Mediterranean region, as several ancient civilizations have developed in this region. Some of these sites will gradually be exposed to hazards in the future which will potentially lead to losses in economic revenue, as these world heritage sites are particularly popular tourist destinations (Reimann. et. al., 2018). Of 49 cultural world heritage sites located in low-lying coastal areas of the Mediterranean, 37 are at risk from a 100-year flood and 42 from coastal erosion, already today. Until 2100, flood risk may increase by 50% and erosion risk by 13% across the region, with considerably higher increases at individual world heritage sites (Reimann. et. al., 2018).

The interplay between tourism and cultural heritage is not always regarded by those involved in the preservation of heritage.

This neglect stems from historical tensions. For example, excesses during the so-called Grand Tour of continental Europe, when young British upper-class youth visited Europe as part of their education (Towner 1985), fueled a negative view of the relationship between tourists and heritage preservationists. A further augmentation of negative impacts occurred after the 1960s when a breakthrough of charter tourism occurred. Tourism was regarded as an endemic disease with roots in a pseudo-world (Boorstin 1961) or as an invasion of grasshoppers (Turner & Ash 1976) creating a beaten and damaged track (Buzard 1993) in the place of interest. Later on, tourism was regarded as part of an international economic development project (deKadt 1976), more or less commodifying heritage (Cohen 1988, Ritzer & Liska 1997). Nevertheless, most of these views concern tourism's impact on cultural heritage and also on local residents. Hence, as an exogenic phenomenon, it naturally has an impact on endogenic conditions at the destination (Nilsson, 2018).

The concept of heritagization itself is a process to adapt use of culture heritage to promote images favorable for the political management. It is a final stage of a social process, where cultural heritage is used in order to have wished political impact on the visitors (Nilsson, 2018).

Explicitly, the heritagization process is a process from a function of a place, developed by ethnic, religious or social conditions, towards a situation characterized by more or less obsolete traditions, in order to promote certain nationalistic ideas. The goal in these situations is to establish political control over the acculturation process (Nilsson, 2018).

For example, the Mediterranean diet was one of the first food-related nominations on the international cultural heritage list.

The participation and consent of the Mediterranean people and their belief in a common identity is a great part of the holistic conception of their food tradition - the so-called *diaita* (Marques da Silva, 2018). Initially the inscription's proposal was motivated by a long-term strategy that aimed at promoting an "umbrella brand" of agro-food products, and then extended to the whole Mediterranean space (Nilsson, 2018).

Conclusion

The impact of cultural tourism is at least two-fold: on the host society and on the tourists themselves. The impact on the host society is, beside the economic and social consequences of tourism, often a matter of strengthened self-esteem and perceptions of one's own identity (Nilsson, 2018).

Furthermore, adaptation methods and protection standards vary considerably across Mediterranean countries due to large socioeconomic differences between northern, eastern and southern parts of the region, therefore leaving most world heritage sites with limited protection from coastal hazards (Reimann. et. al., 2018).

Nevertheless, the World Tourism Organization (2003) suggests some mitigation tactics that the industry might employ. For example: adaptation to changes in the seasonality of tourist arrivals – e.g. the increased heat of the Mediterranean during the summer months may lead to reduced visitor numbers during the peak season but an increase during the shoulder months; co-operation with governments in order to deal with problems such as those associated with health, availability of water and vulnerability of infrastructure; recognition of the vulnerability of some eco-systems – e.g. wetland areas; the introduction of alternative attractions (such as the sinking of a ship to provide a focus for divers

to replace lost coral dive sites); and the recognition that the tourism industry will be required to meet more stringent insurance conditions (World Tourism Organization, 2003).

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