Tourism development in fast growing heritage cities: positive force, or threatening agent?

The case of Tatarstan in the Russian Federation

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Introduction

- Heritage is defined as traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present

- Heritage tourism represents an option to preserve cultural expressions, give jobs to local people, and benefit the economy while supporting conservation of heritage

Is heritage tourism an-all good agent for the protection of heritage?

The utterly motive to develop heritage tourism is economic

Galdini, 2007

The right balance between economic gain and undesirable impacts of tourism can be elusive

Pedersen, 2002

Tourism has the capacity to ‘consume’ heritage, to the point of compromising its sustainability

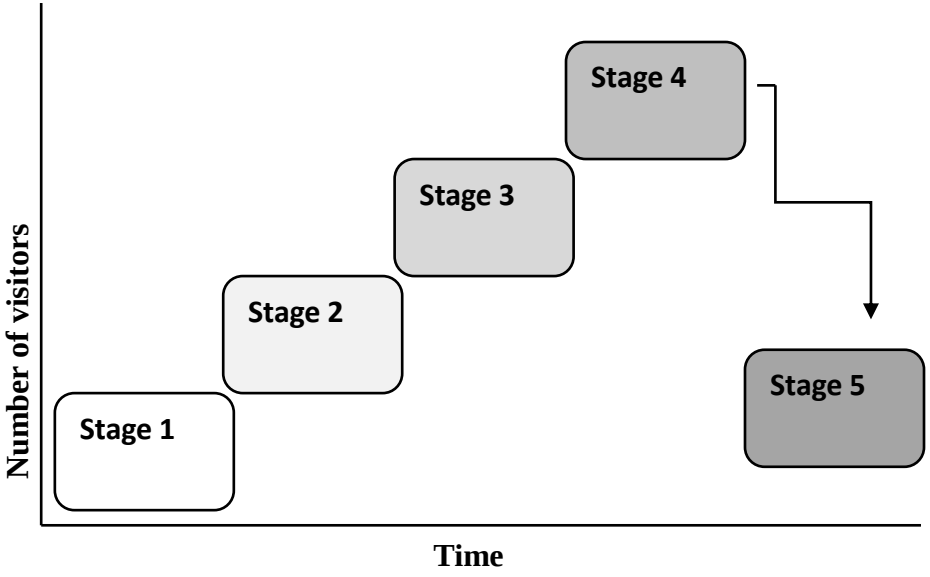
Mekawy, 2005

Introduction

To better understand the dynamics of tourism development, this paper illustrates

- The cycle of tourism development
- Implications of rapid tourism growth in heritage cities with a focus on built heritage
  - Pompeii
  - Singapore
- The case of Tatarstan in the Russian Federation

The cycle of tourism development



Stage1	• Communities start small businesses • Revenues for local people
Stage 2	• Land values increase and outsiders are attracted • Local people still benefit
Stage 3	• Degradation of environment by ignoring regulations for construction • Local people benefit as employees
Stage 4	• Most accommodation and revenues owned by foreigners. • Environment become endangered • Local residents may begin to resent tourists
Stage 5	• Degradation of environment calls for action but remedial action is slow and degradation continues. • Outsiders may decide to abandon the area

Source: adapted from Pedersen, 2002

Fast growing cities and heritage tourism: Singapore

Tourism was and still is a growing important economic activity for Singapore. Its strategic hub positioning and proximity to the “Asian tigers” makes it a popular stop-over destination

The government recognized in early stages that tourism could be an important contributor to the economy, and directed urban planning to make the country attractive to tourists

Singapore

A clear example of biased policy: “Eu Court building” in the Civic and cultural district:

- This building was selected to be torn down over the Stamford House (a similar heritage building) to widen an important street, because;
- Stamford House had ‘more outstanding architectural style [and] a greater potential to become an active and successful commercial centre’

Roots, 1991, pp. 5 cited in Yeo & Huang, 1996

Fast growing cities' and heritage tourism: Pompeii

Discovered in the 16th Century, it was conserved throughout time, thanks to a sudden volcano eruption in the year 79 A.D.

UNESCO, 2006

The opening of Pompeii to the public derived in fast growth of under-regulated tourism: 863,000 visitors in 1981 to 2.6 million in 2004

Jacot, 1999 and UNESCO, 2006

Pompeii

With the excavation of the city, priceless frescos and mosaic tiles were exposed to climate and uncontrolled tourism

Wilkinson, 2003

Insufficient personnel patrolling the area could not prevent vulnerable pieces from being damaged or stolen

Jacot, 1999

Heritage preserved for almost 17 centuries was slowly battered, neglected, vandalized or destroyed

Wilkinson, 2003

Pompeii

It is estimated that over two million tourists visiting 12 ha. open for the public, are responsible for the disappearance of 10% of the ruins every year

Varga, 2003

Although some conservation efforts were in place, the Italian government decided to declare Pompeii a state of emergency in July, 2008

Hooper, 2008

The case of Tatarstan

Created in 1920 as the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic with Kazan as capital

Part of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic for over 70 years, declared itself independent in 1992

Tatarstan is one of the most economically developed republics of the former USSR. Its independence from budgetary transfers have made it stronger

Melo & Ofer, 1999

Heritage tourism development in Tatarstan

Beyond its natural beauty, Tatarstan is rich in cultural heritage, represented in ancient history, historical monuments, archaeological digs and architecture

CTT, 2008

An accelerated economic growth and a governmental plan to develop heritage tourism are now raising the need to properly manage its invaluable heritage

Heritage tourism development in Tatarstan

Tatarstan is not precisely ensuring a good practice in heritage tourism management at the moment, since there are already some examples of poor performance

To commemorate the Kazan Millennium Celebration important cultural monuments were restored, while others were destroyed to make place for hotels and complementary infrastructure

Bezrukova, & Ukhov, 2007

Heritage tourism development in Tatarstan

Tatarstan authorities have decided to partially transfer responsibility of the protection and restoration of heritage to private investors

Yakovleva, 2006

Without effective law enforcement, this practice is inefficient, some of the privately owned heritage has already been destroyed or restored beyond recognizable shape

Bezrukova, & Ukhov, 2007

Heritage tourism development in Tatarstan

Tatarstan is in a ‘race’ to open its borders to international investment, at the expense of local ownership

Since January 1995, there is a tax exemption from local profits and property taxes for 3 to 5 years for companies with at least 30% foreign equity totaling $1 million or more. Foreign investors can own land and buildings

Melo & Ofer, 1999

Conclusions and recommendations

- The cases of Singapore and Pompeii illustrate that heritage tourism is not a panacea
- Together with additional income, local employment opportunities, and revalorization of heritage, tourism brings unwanted effects and costs that fall directly on heritage and the local community
- This dual nature of heritage tourism calls for opportune planning and regulation of its development

Conclusions and recommendations

- Tatarstan has great potential to develop heritage tourism with the advantage of being in an early stage of the process

- It needs to adjust its policy: aspects such as raising awareness on the value of monuments, revitalizing cultural events, strengthening laws for the protection, and recognizing heritage; are critical

Training programme to be started per April 1, 2009

- 1. Realising an Expert Centre at TISBI University, Kazan
- 2. 6 weeks intensive course [in NL + Tatarstan]
- 3. Duration of the programme: 3 years, including monitoring
- 4. Train-the-trainer courses:
  - * cultural, historic and natural heritage, including tourism
  - * "MATRA" philosophy: [programme of Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs]
    - making people aware of the value and importance of heritage
    - transformation processes
    - good governance
- 5. Setting up voluntary organisations [on heritage] in Tatarstan
- 6. Setting up an MBA focussing on cultural heritage and sustainable tourism at TISBI University

7. Reinforcement of institutional contacts between TISBI University and Wageningen University

Discussion

- - What about the problems of
  - Tourism <-> cultural heritage <-> nationalism
  - Tourism <-> cultural heritage <-> religious tensions
  - Tourism <-> cultural heritage <-> ethnic tensions

Discussion, continued

- The problem of
  - Short term versus long term thinking
  - “Killing the goose with the golden eggs”.

[Other] questions?

- Thank you!

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