Importance of Cultural Heritage in Tourism Development: The Case of Kosovo

Arbresha Meha¹, Alberta Tahiri², Mimoza Zhubi³

Abstract: This chapter aims to provide an overview on the importance of cultural heritage of various countries endowed with such assets. Cultural heritage is also important for the development of tourism by attracting tourists and visitors. Given the development of tourism sector worldwide, issues affecting this will be discussed, focusing on the importance of cultural heritage. Special attention is paid to the case study on Kosovo, focusing on the city of Prizren and its cultural heritage. This paper clarified the importance of cultural heritage and its preservation for Kosovo in general, and for the city of Prizren in particular.

Keywords: tourism; culture; tangible heritage; intangible heritage; monuments

JEL Classification: Z30; Z32; Z39

1. Introduction

The new millennium brings innovation in all spheres of life, including tourism. Global socio-economic flows have been creating a contemporary international development environment and conditions. Tourism is a special sphere in processes of integration of various countries, peoples, cultures, religions, etc. Tourism is becoming more and more attractive, not only for economies but also in the life of mankind in general. Tourism has indeed become an integral part of human life, directly affecting economic, social and cultural development worldwide. This has made tourism very important to the economy and humanity itself, characterized by massive tourist trips of individuals of various social strata and groups. They are pursued for various purposes such as scientific research, recreation, as well as for enriching knowledge of natural beauties, historical and cultural monuments,

¹ University of Applied Science in Ferizaj, Kosovo, Address: St. Universiteti, Ferizaj, Kosovo, Ferizaj 70000, Tel.: +383 44 160 907, Corresponding author: arbresha.meha@ushaf.net.

² University of Applied Science in Ferizaj, Kosovo, Address: St. Universiteti, Ferizaj, Kosovo, Ferizaj 70000, E-mail: alberta.tahiri@ushaf.net.

³ University of Applied Science in Ferizaj, Kosovo, Address: St. Universiteti, Ferizaj, Kosovo, Ferizaj 70000, E-mail: mimoza.zhubi@ushaf.net.

customs, mentalities and languages of various countries and peoples. Thus, tourism is increasingly becoming an economic and propulsive field (Tahiri & Kovaçi, 2017:13). Tourism is nowadays a necessity, not a luxury. It changes and separates people from everyday experiences and is a defining feature for rites of passage of life events (Liu, 2005, p. 1).

Both culture and cultural heritage law matter. Culture is not a given, but it is made by humankind and is closely connected to human civilization. According to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the concept of "culture" encompasses: "ways of life, language, oral and written literature, music and song, non-verbal communication, religion or belief systems, rites and ceremonies, sport and games, methods of production or technology, natural and man-made environments, arts, clothing and shelter, food, where communities and individuals build their existence, give meaning to life and express their humanity" (Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, 2013, p. 3).

Culture thus conceived is not limited to so-called 'high culture' such as arts and literature, but it comprises ways by which nations live, systems they value, and traditions and beliefs they have (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2009). Culture is important because it constitutes the identity of individuals, groups, and societies (Lagrange, Oeter & Uerpmann-Wittzack, 2018, p. 2).

Cultural heritage represents the identity of a certain group or community. This is recognized by the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Sahu & Mahanta, 2017), holding that intangible cultural heritage provides "communities and groups...with a sense of identity and continuity." The same holds for tangible cultural heritage. UNESCO stated that "the loss of heritage...can deny communities from their identity and memory, including the physical testimony of its past" (Lagrange, Oeter & Uerpmann-Wittzack, 2018, p. 2).

The amount of welfare, both material and immaterial, heritage generates for society are determining factors of its economic value. It is more than financial benefits that certain historical objects or areas can produce through exploitation for tourist purposes. This includes benefits that are external to the market economy, e.g. values of recreational perception (Ruijgrok, 2006, p. 206).

For tourism destinations with high historical and cultural heritage and tourism value, this form of cultural tourism is clean, independent, separate and the basic form of tourism. Such destinations are mostly large European cities. Thus, cultural tourism and cultural-historical heritage are often mixed with or seen as part of urban tourism (Milenkovski, Gramatnikovski & Nakovski, 2016, p. 156).

2. Literature Review

The value of tourism is well-known and an uncontested fact for both developing and developed economies. Despite economic trends and market instability, tourism has continued to grow and develop and its values are related not only to economic development but also to socio-cultural and environmental issues (Hooper, 2016). Heritage has in the last forty years become not only the synonym of monuments, archaeological artifacts, culture, regional and national identity, but its meaning and its relationship to tourism is more visible and has evolved. A close relationship between heritage and tourism has enhanced, though sometimes complicates, its development. Many see tourism and heritage – and indeed a seemingly natural relationship between them, especially in terms of addressing matters of environmental, cultural and political concern (Hooper, 2016).

Heritage tourism is growing faster than any other sector of tourism industry, with a large number of people visiting cultural and historical sites, and is seen as important for economic development and reduction of poverty worldwide (UNWTO 2005). Heritage tourism refers to tangible and intangible cultural, historical and natural elements of the past and present, and their use as tourism resources. It includes all tangible, built cultural elements such as castles, historic buildings, cathedrals, houses, museums, farms and archaeological relics, as well as intangibles elements such as language, festivals, music, religion, food, etc. Nowadays the heritage industry also recognizes landscapes that portray lives of people in their families, the life of the miner, the fisherman, of children, men and women (Timothy & Nyaupane, 2009, p. 3).

Heritage is universal and belongs to everyone. It has to do with culture, history, natural and built sites. Heritage management is often complex and problematic for a country's identity and local culture. There is indeed a need to manage and interpret locations in a way that addresses the relationship between location-based values and the associated features around them. Value-based management is viewed among the most important approaches to heritage management, and public heritage sites are usually managed by professional managers, but not private ones (Howard, 2003, p. 1). The closest connection of "heritage" is to the perception of inheritance, while in the French literature this word represents "legacy" (Howard, 2003, p. 6).

Heritage is considered a common value. As such, preservation and sustainability of intangible and material cultures, objects and places of art brings positive value to communities and benefits everyone. Thus heritage has an impact on the formation of both individual and community identities; yet it also has to do with local residents and communities, often resulting in social inconsistencies (Silverman & Ruggles, 2007, p. 3).

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) defines cultural heritage as both tangible and intangible. Tangible cultural heritage includes movable items such as sculptures, manuscripts, paintings, coins, and immovable items such as archaeological sites and monuments. It also includes underwater cultural heritage such as underwater ruins, shipwrecks, and cities (UNESCO, 2017). Based on its nature and tangible physical properties, tangible heritage is visible and easy to recognize. As Foote points out, the durability of tangible cultural heritage objects "describes them as resources for communication and transmission of information outside interpersonal contact box" (Salvatore, 2018).

Referring to monuments, UNESCO's Declaration Concerning Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage (2003) states that "a significant component of the cultural identity of individuals and communities is cultural heritage, so any action for its destruction has a bad consequences on human dignity and human rights" (Silverman & Ruggles, 2007, p. 5)

Protection of cultural heritage was included in the founding mission statement of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) (Campfens, 2020), an organization of museums and museum professionals created after World War II. Seven decades later, ICOM's central work is the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural goods and protection of heritage in emergency situations. Given increased threats to cultural property worldwide, technological development and innovation, as well as well-defined policy and ethical guidelines guarantee ICOM's role in protecting cultural heritage internationally. This is especially conflicts that have escalated into armed ones, not common even since ICOM's creation in 1946 (Murphy, 2016).

2.1. Cultural Heritage and Kosovo's Cultural Institutions

Tourist circulations in the world and in our country are not only for recreational purposes, but have in them a cultural content, acquainting the visitor with country's the culture and ethno-social motives. Values of both early times as those of ancient times are present in Kosovo. There are also various cultures, best evidenced by their clothing, folklore, traditional games, etc. They are all important values for the development of tourism (Recica & Millaku, 2011, p. 370).

Cultural heritage was among priority sectors in the 2015-2018 Program of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo. Heritage includes tangible and intangible cultural and religious heritage inherited over centuries. Through its Government Program and other stakeholders, Kosovo ensures preservation, protection, conservation and promotion of cultural and religious heritage. It also ensures that these facilities are under state protection (National Strategy for Cultural Heritage 2017-2027, p. 15).

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The Government of Kosovo has adopted the 2017-2027 National Cultural Heritage Strategy. It includes, among other relevant documents, the Letter of Kosovo Institutions to the National Delegations of UNESCO, which emphasizes Kosovo's commitment to the protection, preservation and conservation of heritage. The legal basis are laws in force, namely the Law on Special Protective Zones, Law on Cultural Heritage, Law on Freedom of Religion, Law on Expropriation, Law on the Village Zym i Hasit, Law on Institutions of Culture, Law on Construction, Law on Local Self-Government, and Law on Spatial Planning. It also includes bylaws and international standards and best practices on cultural and religious heritage (National Strategy for Cultural Heritage 2017-2027, p. 15).

Kosovo's cultural heritage encompasses the historical, cultural and artistic traditional heritage developed over years and centuries. It is a treasure that incorporates historical, aesthetic, cultural, traditional and artistic values, including a rich archaeological heritage and other cultural landscapes. Like other Southeastern European countries, Kosovo has not built a proper system, in line with international standards, for protection and conservation of cultural heritage. This is mainly due to the former communist system, which broke out into the armed conflict during 1998-99. Cultural heritage was among the sectors destroyed. During Kosovo's transition efforts to recover and develop the sector were intensified. Starting with consolidation of institutions, supported by donors and other stakeholders, the cultural heritage sector improved significantly and is now an important priority of the Government. The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, in charge of this sector, has continuously worked in advancing and protecting heritage and including it in Government priorities (National Strategy for Cultural Heritage 2017-2027, p. 21).

"Cultural heritage contains, archaeological, architectural, spiritual and movable heritage" (Official Gazette: Law on Cultural Heritage, Art. 2).

"Architectural heritage includes monuments, ensembles of buildings and architectural conservation areas" (Official Gazette, Law on Cultural Heritage, Art. 2). Monuments include buildings and constructions sites, ensembles of buildings include urban or rural buildings, while architectural conservation areas combine human and nature work. All these areas are famous for their historical, artistic, archaeological, scientific and social values (Official Gazette, Law on Cultural Heritage, Art. 2).

"Archaeological heritage includes buildings and structures, movable objects, settlements, monuments, which are protected by an Archaeological Reserve and the remains should be left unbroken" (Official Gazette, Law on Cultural Heritage, Art. 2).

"Movable heritage includes objects that represent human creativity or natural development, well-known for their historical, artistic, archaeological and spiritual values" (Official Gazette, Law on Cultural Heritage, Art. 2).

"Spiritual heritage contains culture, traditions, language, customs, music, ritual, dance and other artistic expression (Official Gazette, Law on Cultural Heritage, Art. 2).

Kosovo is divided into seven cultural heritage regions (Database of Cultural Heritage of Kosovo):

• Prishtina region, consisting of 118 heritage sites, in seven municipalities;

• Prizren region, consisting of 500 heritage monuments, 383 architectural monuments and 13 movable ones, in six municipalities;

• Peja region, consisting of 856 cultural and natural heritage monuments, in three municipalities;

- Mitrovica region, consisting of 64 assets, in five municipalities;
- Gjakova region, consisting of 148 monuments of all categories;

• Gjilan region, consisting of 174 monuments placed under temporary protection; and

• Ferizaj region, consist of 130 assets in the list of Cultural Heritage for Temporary Protection, in four municipalities.

2.2. Cultural Heritage of the City of Prizren

The region of Prizren comprises the municipality of Suhareka, Malisheva, Rahovec, Dragash, Mamusha and Shtime. The town of Prizren is known for its historical, cultural and art heritage.

The city of Prizren is an ancient city with beautiful, rich and unique cultural heritage in numerous museums and archaeological monuments that give great value to this city for both residents and visitors. Prizren also has a very good geographical position, a place where various cultures have historically interacted, and is one of the most visited regions in Kosovo.

Towns surrounding the region of Prizren are also known for their archaeological, cultural and artistic heritage, with traditions that make them unique, like language, clothing, art, food, dance, etc. These towns also have rare natural beauties. Rahovec is known for its relics of ancient settlements from Roman-Illyrian times, Malisheva has the beautiful and very special Mirusha waterfall and the Fllad cave.

Suhareka has many archaeological sites, while the beauties of the Sharr mountain make Dragash very famous, including other natural and spiritual beauties.

According to the 2002-2003 inventory and database, the region of Prizren has over 500 heritage monuments: 383 architectural monuments, 113 archaeological sites and 13 movable monuments.

Some of many monuments of Prizren worth mentioning are the following:

- Gazi Mehmed Pasha Turkish Bath;
- Watchtower Archaeological Museum;
- Open Archaeological Museum;
- Building of the League of Prizren;
- Shatërvan Fountain;
- Stone Bridge;
- Prizren Castle;
- Sinan Pasha Mosque;
- Lumbardhi Gorge of Prizren;
- Marash Mahala Complex, etc.

3. Methodology

The methodology of this paper is based on the study of literature, research papers and reports on the importance of cultural heritage in tourism development. Research was also based on the study of policy-related and historical background of tourism industry in Kosovo, specifically of the town of Prizren.

The research methodology includes surveys with respondents from seven regions of Kosovo: Prizren, Mitrovica, Ferizaj, Peja, Gjilan, Prishtina and Gjakova. Primary data were collected through a questionnaire addressed to 228 respondents. It was focused on issues seen as problematic and neglected and possible solutions to advance development of tourism in the first place, and then other benefits such as GDP growth and good image of Kosovo.

4. Results

Issues discussed for the purpose of this paper are explained in more detail in this section, which presents results obtained in this study. Primary data were collected

through a questionnaire addressed to 228 respondents, 28 of whom did not provide information on their gender and age, 69% were female and 31% were male. The biggest number, 42%, belong to the 35-50 age range, 32% to the 26-35 range, 16% from the 18-25 range, and 10% older than 51. All respondents were Albanians, from the following regions: 46.5% from Prizren, 16.7% from Mitrovica, 11% from Ferizaj, 10.1% from Peja, 9.2% from Gjilan, 6.1% from Prishtina, and 0.4% from Gjakova.

When it comes to the biggest challenge facing cultural heritage, 57.5% of respondents think it is political issues, 28.1% stated it was professional knowledge, and 14.5% said it was administrative issues.

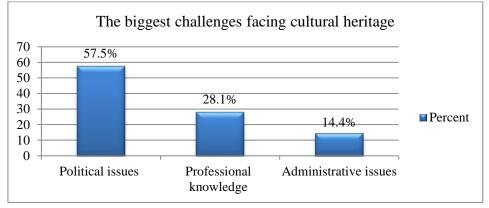


Figure 1. The Biggest Challenges Facing Cultural Heritage Source: Author

Institutional care in preserving cultural heritage based on respondents is: partially (68.4%), slightly (25.4%), not at all (4.8%) and very well (1.3%).

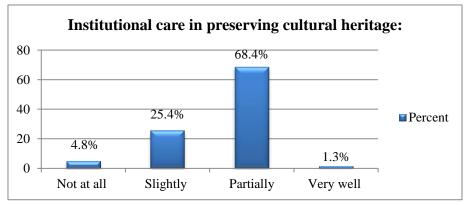
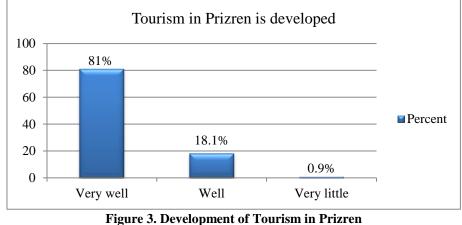


Figure 2. Institutional Care in Preserving Cultural Heritage Source: Author

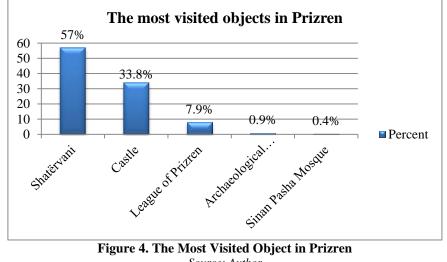
81% of respondents value development of tourism in Prizren as very well, 18.1% of them well, and 0.9% as very little.



Source: Author

30.3% of respondents highlight the value of tourism for economic development of the city, whereas 68.9% of them do not see such a link.

The most visited objects turn out to be the following: Shatërvani, by 57%, Castle, by 33.8%, League of Prizren, by 7.9%, Archaeological Museum, by 0.9%, and Sinan Pasha Mosque, by 0.4%.



Source: Author

Asked what helps to promote tourism in Prizren, 49.1% of respondents think it is highways and road infrastructure, 32% said it was the DokuFest film festival, 11% think it is TV and other promotion sites, and 7.9% of them think it is internet portals like www.przrenpress.com, etc.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Culture and heritage, through values, beliefs, art, monuments, constructions and other elements, represent people's national identity and integrity. It allows nations to understand their past history and personal identity (7th Diversity Matters, Preserving Culture and Heritage through Generations).

Heritage is an important element for tourism. A country's cultural heritage may attract more tourists from around the world and can become a catalyst for tourism development in the country.

Kosovo, with its cultural heritage values, is very attractive for development of tourism. Kosovo's cultural and material heritage was created between ancient civilizations and after the new era. Kosovo inherits a rich cultural heritage and is part of the world cultural heritage.

Although a small country, Kosovo's cultural heritage is quite rich. This has influenced that visits to cultural-historical monuments are not missing, as different groups of the population organize visits to these monuments in various parts of the country for various purposes.

Given that this paper focused in more detail on cultural heritage of the city of Prizren, we found that its historical values not only contribute to its development as a city, but also to the development of Kosovo as a whole. Numerous monuments left from the past suggest that this area has been inhabited since ancient times.

To remind once again, most visited objects turn out to be Shatërvan, by 57%, the Castle, by 33.8%, the League of Prizren, 7.9%, the Archaeological Museum, by 0.9%, and Sinan Pasha Mosque, by 0.4%.

The most important to be done regarding tourism and cultural heritage in Kosovo is further promotion of tourist destinations in various ways and protection of cultural heritage by state mechanisms in charge so that the value of cultural-historical monuments is not and remains valid for a long time, thus showing the identity of Kosovo as a country with history.

Given the results shown in this paper and the need for further development and promotion of tourist destinations, the following proposals are made:

• Reviewing the List of Cultural Heritage for Temporary Protection by the highest instances of institutions, in a professional way and by persons with relevant or specialized knowledge;

• Maintenance and restoration of all cultural heritage objects;

• Preparing, assisting and participating in Working Groups in the country, region and beyond for adequate professional training on objects of cultural and historical importance;

• Collection, analysis and classification of data for the development of a Regional Cultural Heritage Plan, as well as action based on a plan aiming to reach the level of a developed country that has cultural heritage;

• Organizing field visits for students and community groups, in order to familiarize them with the values and potential of our country's cultural heritage;

• Providing support for students to conduct research and various cultural heritage activities in the country and to provide ideas for the development of tourism;

• Organizing exhibitions in schools engaging young people in the promotion of cultural heritage;

• Drafting policies and formulation of strategies to increase competitiveness of Prizren as a tourist destination at the national and regional level;

• Accelerating restoration of the Castle and facilities located inside it, as attractions that will increase the number of visitors, then arrange an elevator to make it easier for visitors to climb;

• Providing special transport and a Tweeter account explaining to visitors every detail on the history of Prizren and facilities it possesses;

• Banning circulation of vehicles in the old part of the city during summer;

• Given the importance of Prizren, it can be considered an interesting park for visitors;

• In Prizren special attention should be paid to the promotion of the local atmosphere and of citizens' hospitality, as well as to more promotion on websites such as TripAdvisor, Booking.com, etc., and more publicity on the festivals.

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