The Development of Cultural Tourism: A Review of **UK Experience**

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This paper aims to identify commonalities in the successful development of cultural tourism in the UK that may be applied to other cities with similar contextual characteristics for cultural tourism development. It is also presented as a baseline for further comparative analysis. By examining and comparing the strategies of four major cities (i.e. London, Edinburg, Glasgow and Liverpool) with abundant experience in developing cultural tourism, it is found that London and Edinburgh, with an established cultural base and a large amount of 'real cultural capital', have managed to derive considerable economic benefit from its existing cultural facilities through developing cultural tourism. On the contrary, in Glasgow and Liverpool, the lack of an existing cultural base necessitated a strategy of investing continuously in new cultural attractions and events, and need to pay proportionately far more efforts than London and Edinburgh. Some implications are drawn for those cities tend to use cultural tourism for economic and tourism development. First, heritage resources are usually place-dependent, whereas art production and consumption is relatively place-independent. For those new destinations trying to overcome the dominance of the existing cultural capitals, they may focus on drama, musical performances or art displays those have higher mobility. Second, having culture is not enough. It is important to understand the needs of the cultural tourist, particularly in terms of the growing need to mix different cultural forms, such as 'high' and 'popular' culture, and 'learning' and 'fun'. Third, the event of the European Capitals of Culture is probably a good example of the new trends of cultural tourism. For instance, the brand created for Glasgow and Liverpool as European Capital of Culture status are set to last over and beyond the year of the event itself. However, care should be taken in the development of such event-based strategies.

Keywords: Cultural Tourism; Developing Strategy; United Kingdom; Case Study

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INTRODUCTION

Given its broad remit and international appeal, cultural tourism has developed to become a significant phenomenon in the travel and tourism industry and an essential element of the tourism system (Ritzer, 1999; Urry, 2001). Cultural tourism is also frequently quoted as being one of the largest and fastest growing segments of global tourism (e.g. WTO, 2004). Cultural tourism can be used as a marketing and development tool in a wide range of situations to further a wide variety of tourism policy goals. This paper aims to identify commonalities in the successful development of cultural tourism in the UK that may be applied to other cities with similar contextual characteristics for cultural tourism development. It is also presented as a base line for further comparative analysis.

THE ADVANTAGES OF DEVELOPING CULTURAL TOURISM

One of the most advantageous parts of cultural tourism is to be used as a vehicle for economic development or regeneration (Richards, 2003). Cultural tourism has been placed at the centre of many urban regeneration strategies, because it can provide the basis to reanimate city centers, rejuvenate existing cultural facilities, create new cultural centers, make the cities stand out from other areas, and change city images (Bianchini 1990; Herrero et al., 2005; Myerscough, 1988). Cultural tourism has also taken on a major role in the attraction of inward investment as seen in cities such as Glasgow in the UK. The increasingly fuzzy boundaries between cultural and economic activities means that cultural tourism is increasingly about jobs and income, and less about promotion of culture per se (Richards and Bonink, 1995).

A further advantage is that the relationship between culture and tourism is widely regarded as mutually beneficial. It is claimed, for instance, that it creates extra revenue streams for both and, as a consequence, sustains and enhances cultural resources that otherwise might disappear (Hughes, 2000). Similarly cultural tourists have themselves been regarded favorably as, for instance, being typically well educated, affluent and broadly travelled, and they generally represent a highly desirable type of upscale visitor (Holcomb, 1999). Kapodini-Dimitradi (1999) also argued that cultural tourism is seen by many policy makers as a means of developing 'quality tourism' and attracting highspending consumers. The third advantage of developing cultural tourism

is for spreading tourism both spatially and temporally, because it is relatively independent of the seasons, and like other forms of special-interest tourism it can prompt people to visit areas off the well-beaten tourist paths (Horrigan, 2009; Mohamed, 2008; Richards and Bonink, 1995; Richards 1994).

However, cultural tourism can be a double-edged sword - it can certainly stimulate a growth in tourism to particular regions, but the growing number of destinations trying to develop cultural tourism means that competition for the cultural tourists will get even stronger, and in some areas average attraction attendances are falling (Sdrali and Chazapi, 2007). It also needs to be recognized that the cultural tourism market is becoming increasing competitive, and cultural attractions must fight for a share of the tourism market, not only with other cultural attractions, but with other tourist attractions as well (Richards, 1996a). Also, as more cities and regions compete in (re)producing and promoting themselves for tourism and culture employing the same formulaic mechanisms, their ability to create 'uniqueness' arguably diminishes (Richards and Wilson, 2006).

CULTURAL TOURISM IN THE UK

On the global stage, the UK has long enjoyed a dominant position in international tourism and the cultural industries. However, the UK is losing market share in the global tourism market and facing growing competition in the sphere of cultural production and consumption. The UK tourism product is strongly associated with culture. For example, the heritage sector has been described as a major strength of the British market for overseas visitors (Markwell et al., 1997) and is estimated to generate around 28% of all UK tourism expenditure annually (Carr, 1994). The heritage sector has also been vaunted as a major potential growth area for tourism in the UK (Prentice, 1993).

Furthermore, cultural tourism is used as a means of tackling seasonality in many local and national tourism policies. The development of cultural tourism was a cornerstone of the attempt by the British Tourist Authority to attract off-peak tourists in the "Britain for All Seasons" marketing campaign (Richards, 1996). In addition, for many post-industrial cities across the UK, the role of culture has been central in developing a tourism destination and attracting a tourism market in the achievement of an 'experience economy'. Examples of such cities in include Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, and Newcastle (Murphy and Boyle, 2006). The European Capital of Culture has also been at the

forefront of UK innovations in the cultural tourism sector. Examples are the designation of Glasgow and Liverpool as the European Capital of Culture in 1990 and 2008 respectively.

Whilst there are many recognizable elements of cultural tourism in the UK, it is difficult to locate specific policies or initiatives aimed at this phenomenon. In part this is due to the fragmentation of public policymaking, marketing and delivery systems in both the tourism industries and in cultural services at national and local government levels. Cutting across these divisions of administrative responsibilities are the priorities of national agencies within a 'UK' which contains England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In each of these countries, public and voluntary sector bodies have interests in differentiated aspects of cultural tourism (Deffner et al., 2009; Foley, 1996). Consequently, this paper aims to examine and compare the strategies of four major cities with abundant experience in developing cultural tourism. They are London, Edinburg, Glasgow and Liverpool. The choice was partly arbitrary but these four cities do have a diversity of background, especially different cultural and tourist resources available to develop cultural tourism. The data for this study were collected through literature review, document analysis and observation.

LONDON: THE DOMINATOR OF UK HERITAGE

London dominates the UK heritage scene, with museums and galleries topping the roster of UK heritage and cultural attractions. The UK's leading paid-for heritage attraction is the Tower of London, with just over 2 million visitors a year. London's Tate Modern, British Museum and National Gallery all nudge the 5 million visitor mark, followed by the South Kensington trio of Natural History, Science and Victoria and Albert. All offer visitors free admission. London has undoubtedly the highest popularity among international tourists (Mintel, 2008). London is also dominant in terms of the amount of heritage-related investment. Evidence provided by the Policy Studies Institute (1993) analysis of UK museums demonstrates that the larger national museums in the UK, located predominantly in London, increased their visits considerably, while smaller museums in provincial locations fared less well.

In London, the cultural industries and tourism has for a long time a tight relationship. In the case of the performing arts, for instance, the Arts Council of Great Britain has long identified the importance of the arts as a tourist attraction. The London based Society of West End Theatres

claimed, as early as 1982, that overseas visitors to London were probably responsible for West End theatres remaining open during the summer. More recently the Wyndham report on London's West End theatre also stressed the positive and significant nature of the theatre—tourism connection. (Hughes and Allen, 2002)

Attractions in London are broadening their offerings to incorporate a stronger experiential element. For instance, the Tower of London launched an interactive exhibition – 'Hands on History', that encourages children and adults to explore the history of arms and amour. Elsewhere, promotional crowd pullers such as 'Kids Go Free' weekends are usually guaranteed to add visitor numbers. A further generator of interest in castles and stately homes has been their increasing involvement in the summer music scene, with many now offering 'picnic on the lawn' styled events, or even fully fledged festivals (eg. Hampton Court). Galleries have also added visitor numbers, yet again primarily a response to improving the visitor experience with populist exhibitions and improvements to their permanent displays. Major events at the UK's two leading galleries, Tate Modern and the National Gallery, featured favorites such as Gilbert and George and a Renoir Landscapes exhibition.

EDINBURGH: CASTLE AND FESTIVALS

Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland and is an attractive historical city. Edinburgh is interesting in that an important part of its tourism and cultural policies is based on festivals. The three main Edinburgh festivals - the Tattoo, International Festival (opera, music, dance, and theatre), and Fringe Festivals (theatre, mime, drama), are one of the longest running festival events held in the UK. Thus, Edinburgh can justly claim to be one of the main festival cities in Europe, justifying on this claim alone Bianchini's (1990) description of the city as a 'cultural capital'. The evidence from Edinburgh suggests that festival tourism can make a significant economic contribution to the local and regional economies of cities. Given the relatively small amount of public subsidy given to the festivals, it is a very efficient way of generating local income and employment as well as regional and national employment (Richards, 1996a).

Edinburgh, especially the Castle, is also a major tourist destination in its own right irrespective of the festivals. Much of the rest of tourism outside the festival period could also be referred to as cultural tourism but has more to do with 'heritage tourism' than with 'arts tourism'. Foley (1996) has taken Edinburg Castle as an example to illustrate some issues

in developing cultural tourism. First, the complex situation of the Castle as a symbol of Edinburgh and Scotland, as a heritage monument, as a tourist attraction and as a military facility pose a number of management problems. A careful balance must be maintained between the need for visitor access and the need for security, the need to develop income generation and the need to preserve the atmosphere of the castle, and the need to achieve a higher throughput of visitors while minimizing overcrowding at peak times. The Castle managers are particularly concerned with issues of marketing and income generation, at a time when changing government policies are placing more emphasis on selfgenerated income. **Options** being assessed include: commodification (or Disneyfication) while developing products, offering tours to enhance visitor management and encourage further expenditure, the contracting out and/or franchising of some services and the use of the image of the castle for licensing and endorsement of 'quality' products and services etc.

In terms of visitor marketing, two strategies have been adopted to reach different target markets. First, there is a need to attract those with disproportionately high per diem spend rates to boost trading income. This group is likely to contain a high proportion of foreign holidaymakers and business tourists. These are reached through marketing at travel trade exhibitions throughout the world. Similar exhibitions in Europe are used to reach tour (especially coach) operators and a package ticket is offered for entry to a number of the properties. In all cases, executives concede that the castle is used as the flagship with which it is possible to increase interest in other, less well-known properties. The second strategy is to broaden the socio-economic base and to increase visitor throughput. For instance, advertisements in the Daily Record, a newspaper with a mainly manual-occupation readership have led to a substantial amount of free publicity (Foley, 1996).

GLASGOW: 1990 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

Glasgow made a major attempt in the mid-1980s to change its image firstly with the promotional campaign 'Glasgow's Miles Better' together with the introduction of Mayfest, a major annual arts festival. In 1990, Glasgow became European Cultural Capital and prior to this £ 2.5 billion (Euro 3.5 billion) was invested in infrastructure and in new cultural facilities (Richards, 1996a). The designation of Glasgow in 1990 could be regarded as a turning point for the European Capital of Cultural event. Glasgow, unlike its predecessors, was not a capital city or one of the

established 'cultural destinations' of Europe (Van der Borg, 1994). Glasgow won the nomination against competition from other British cities largely on the basis of promised commercial sponsorship and the fact that it planned to use the event to stimulate urban regeneration and to boost the image of Glasgow as a cultural city. This approach apparently fitted the UK government's emphasis on public-private sector partnership (Todd, 1988).

Glasgow was the only city to generate significantly more visitors than its predecessors, partly because of the large number of events staged. The Glasgow event had an impressive range of cultural activities, including big names such as Pavarotti. The argument for this approach was that the investment would be repaid directly through tourist expenditure, and indirectly through improvements in the image of the city and increased economic investment (Richards, 1996a). Glasgow is also the only city to carry out a full assessment of the impact of the Cultural Capital event. The study indicated that the Cultural Capital event stimulated over £32 million in visitor spending, against a total public sector investment of about £22 million. During 1990, 3 million visitors came to Glasgow, compared with 2.4 million the year before (Myerscough, 1991). As a result of tourist expenditure, the Glasgow event was undoubtedly an economic success.

However, the success of Glasgow was not without criticism. One of the major oppositions is that cultural tourism is often promoted for political and economic reasons which have little connection to the 'way of life' of local residents. This was arguably the case in the Glasgow event, which staged a series of high culture events with little reference to the rich local culture of Glasgow itself. A bitter debate about the content and aims of the 1990 event occurred therefore between organizers trying to maximize economic revenue from wealthy tourists coming to see cultural highlights such as Pavarotti and local activists trying to promote a more 'Glaswegian' culture (Boyle and Hughes, 1991). Richards (1996b) described this phenomenon as a 'closed circuit', where events and attractions provided for the professional culture consumer by the professional culture producer, with little reference to the local population.

The example of Glasgow showed that new events can successfully attract tourists to new regions. However, some doubts were the extent to which such event can produce long-term economic and social benefits. According to Richards (2000), the effects of the Cultural Capital event are normally temporary. Cities should also guard against the development of 'Festivalisation' which threatens their cultural sustainability through the commercialization of everyday life. Local inhabitants may end up feeling

that they are part of an extravagant 'show' being staged primarily for the benefit of tourists.

LIVERPOOL: 2008 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

Situated in the north-west of England, Liverpool's port has always been a gateway to the rest of the world and, although known around the globe as the home town of the Beatles, the city has long suffered a poor reputation. A grey city but one which, in the past decade, has undergone a quiet yet radical physical and social regeneration process, Liverpool saw in the European Capital of Culture title the opportunity to show itself off to the world. The culture bid and the new brand with the establishment of the Liverpool Culture Company in 2000, together with an eight-year-long, run-up program, ensured Liverpool's victory against 11 other British cities. The proposed cultural program featured a different 'cultural' theme each year, leading up to 2008 and beyond (Nobili, 2005).

According to Laura (2008), A surge in cultural tourism has seen Liverpool rise in UK league tables to the third favorite city to visit and the fourth most visited, and figures from January to September 2008 show that more than a quarter of all these international and national visitors were in the city for the first time. One of the major success stories is Tate Liverpool, which saw a spectacular 200% visitor rise with the Gustav Klimt exhibition. Other statistics include: National Museums Liverpool has set new records, welcoming its two millionth visitors in September 2008. Art attractions such as The Walker, the Bluecoat, FACT and new Victoria Museum and Gallery, have attracted more than 2.5 million visitors. Summer events, which included The Tall Ships Races, Mathew Street Festival, Go Superlambananas and La Machine, attracted a further 2.5 million (Laura, 2008).

Considering that the effects of above events may be only short-term, a current concern in Liverpool is to maintain and promote the gains made in 2008 by Liverpool's culture and tourism sectors. Obviously, the momentum of one-year events are fragile, and for continued success it is essential that culture, tourism and other businesses across the city develop the synergies to be gained by working together in 2009 and beyond. Some of Liverpool's arts practitioners that the momentum of 2008 is not yet secured. The Liverpool Culture Company expects the 2009 funding round to be 'highly competitive'; and everyone anticipates that sponsorship will be difficult to come by in the current financial situation. So it's unsurprising that Liverpool's arts practitioners are currently nervous, some of them already publicly predicting 2009 will be a tough call.

DISCUSSION

This research indicates that while there are general factors that contribute to successful cultural tourism development in the UK, local contextual characteristics are influential, making the development unique to each city. According to Bianchini (1990), there are two particular categories of cities where cultural tourism is a primary objective of cultural policy. The first of these is 'declining cities', such as Glasgow, Liverpool, Sheffield, and Birmingham in the UK. They have used cultural policy to support strategies for the diversification of their economic base and the reconstruction of their image. These cities have suffered decline due to the disappearance of their old manufacturing base. New investment in inner city arts and cultural projects became the means for reconstructing the external image of many European cities. The aim was to attract new investment and to generate physical and environmental renewal through service industries expansion. Investment in the arts sector was a major catalyst for economic development. Bianchini's other major category of cities where cultural tourism is particularly important he refers to as 'cultural capitals', such as London and Edinburgh. These are cities which are recognized as major cultural centers but have had to invest heavily in cultural infrastructure just the same because of competition from other European cities. They are investing to maintain their lead in the European league table.

The effectiveness of using cultural tourism as a tool for economic and tourism development depends on the context in which such a policy is pursued (Richards, 1996a). The above four case studies serve to illustrate this point. London and Edinburgh, with an established cultural base and a large amount of 'real cultural capital' have managed to derive considerable economic benefit from its existing cultural facilities through developing cultural tourism. The economic benefits have also been cumulative over time. In Glasgow and Liverpool, the lack of an existing cultural base necessitated a strategy of investing in new cultural attractions and events. In spite of the spin-offs to other areas of the economy in Glasgow or Liverpool itself, there is little hard evidence to suggest that the events have generated a lasting tourism benefit, which needs to constantly stage new events to attract tourists. In the absence of 'real cultural capital' accumulated over a long period of time, as in London and Edinburgh, Glasgow and Liverpool require continuous new investment to compete with other cities. In the long run, of course, the investments currently being made by Glasgow will be converted into 'real cultural capital' which can then be exploited by the tourism and culture

industries much more effectively. In the short term, however, there is little doubt that 'new' cultural destinations (e.g. Glasgow and Liverpool) are at a distinct competitive disadvantage relative to the established cultural capitals (e.g. Edinburgh and London). The latter have a critical mass of cultural attractions which stimulate a higher degree of overnight and foreign tourism, which significantly increases the economic benefits of cultural tourism. Other cities trying to establish themselves as cultural destinations, such as Glasgow and Liverpool, need therefore to pay proportionately far more efforts than those established 'cultural capitals' such as London and Edinburgh.

CONCLUSIONS

The typology provided by Bianchini (1990) and the above discussions have the following three implications in developing cultural tourism especially for those cities lack of existing cultural base but tend to use cultural tourism for economic and tourism development:

First, in the spiraling competition for the attention of potential consumers, the established cultural capitals still seem to have a marked advantage. Part of the explanation for the spatial concentration of cultural tourism lies in its reliance on the built heritage (Richards, 1996a). Heritage resources are usually place-dependent, whereas art production and consumption is relatively place-independent. For example, it is only possible to visit the British Museum in London, but the musical CATS, for example, has been staged in 130 cities worldwide. Although the increasing importance of notions of authenticity (Urry, 1990) makes it difficult to reproduce some sights in other places, drama or musical performances or art displays, on the other hand, are far more mobile. This has an important implication for the development of cultural tourism in cities, and particularly in those 'new' destinations trying to overcome the dominance of the existing cultural capitals. That is, having 'culture' is not enough. It is important to understand the needs of the cultural tourist, particularly in terms of the growing need to mix different cultural forms, 'high' and 'popular' culture, and 'learning' and 'fun'.

Second, but also related to the first implication, as argued by Richards (1996a), first-time visitors are far more likely to visit a large number of cultural attractions in an attempt to 'do' the cultural highlights of the destination. The importance of cultural attractions as a motive for visiting declines after the first visit. For the repeat visitor and the 'general cultural tourist', the need for authentic cultural experiences will be less pressing, and the combination of learning and entertainment, high and

popular culture, tradition and innovation will probably be most appealing. As such, for the cities like Glasgow or Liverpool, the strategy is to find out more about specific 'cultural tourism' market segments and understand their motivations and interests. Outside the major international 'must-see sights', the decision by tourists to make a cultural visit, and therefore participate in 'cultural tourism' is often a spontaneous one, stimulated by local promotion and innovation (Richards and Bonink, 1995). For instance, in its attempt to capture the new market highlighting cultural inspiration and deeper experiences, the Scottish Borders, for example, have been promoted as "the real Scotland" since 1996. More recently, the British tourism marketing campaign in 2000 described the Scottish Highlands as "characterful" and the West Highlands as "romantic" to differ from mass tourism (Prentice, 2001). Furthermore, Tate Liverpool also introduced some innovative programs, such as traditional headphone hires were replaced with multimedia tours of its Gustav Klimt exhibition, which users could download to their iPods. Visitors to the exhibition were able to access the content on mobile phones and MP3 players through the gallery's Wi-Fi network, or download it before their tour from the Tate's website or iTunes (Mintel. 2008).

Third, the event of the European Capitals of Culture is probably a good example of the new trends of cultural tourism, where the prospects of changing the city go beyond the strictly cultural goods aimed at the very organization of the event. The analysis of this study suggests that the European Capital of Culture title acts for cities as a catalyst and trigger for the branding of a city. The brand created for Glasgow and Liverpool thanks to their European Capital of Culture status are set to last over and beyond the year of culture itself, as culture becomes part of the cities' marketing mix (Nobili, 2005). However, the nature of the European Capital of Culture has undergone a clear change in the past decade. What started as a purely 'cultural' event has become a vehicle for regional economic development (Richards, 1996a). In this new task, the effectiveness of the European Capital of Culture event is mainly assessed by the capacity to attract tourists to that event, namely the economic impact. Such new cultural tourism strategies will probably be based increasingly around events and festivals rather than static cultural attractions. Care will need to be exercised in the development of such event-based strategies. As reported by Mintel (2004), whilst the European Capital of Culture event does have a positive impact on visitor numbers and expenditure to the host city, the visitors attracted are mainly local residents, followed by domestic tourists, and then foreign tourists.

Moreover, as Britton (1991) has pointed out, the multiplication of events and festivals places growing emphasis on novelty and spectacle as the basic motivation for attendance. In the longer term, events can suffer from a 'waning effect', whereby increasing levels of investment are required to generate similar visitor numbers. This pattern is already evident in some areas, particularly where there are few 'traditional' attractions to support the development and marketing of events (Richards, 1996a). The staging of major events often depends on the financial security of a large audience, which can often be best guaranteed in the existing 'cultural capitals' (e.g. London and Edinburgh).

Finally, the decline of the major economic activity of the region requires new sources of income to be found. In traditional manufacturing areas, cultural tourism is seen as a way of generating tourism business from scratch. For traditional tourist destinations which rely on significant tourism flows for their survival, the development of cultural tourism is often a response to the problems of tourism itself -including overcrowding, seasonality or a decline in the number of staying visitors (Gotti and Van der Borg, 1995; Richards, 1996a). In order to maintain this competitive advantage in the global tourism market, however, UK will not only have to make effective use of traditional British culture, but will also have to extend her capacity to develop new cultural products and strategies.

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