



III. THE PUBLIC AND CROSS-CULTURAL CASES OF TRAVELING

REVITALISATION OF PUBLIC SPACES IN THE CONTEXT OF CREATIVE TOURISM

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The paper discusses a model of creative tourism, which can be used for revitalisation of public spaces. The model is discussed on the basis of the concept of active participation and creative workshops. The creative process of cultural production and active learning about the destination should engage tourists as well as residents. As a result, generated unique travel experiences, developed skills or produced long-lasting objects would contribute to the revival of a site. In creative tourism, a city and its atmosphere, community arts initiatives and other local creative activities are seen as objects of tourism. By defining the role of a tourist as an active participant in cultural processes, the model of creative tourism encourages to use such formats as creative workshops for travelling experts in the process of revitalisation of public spaces.

Keywords: active participation, city branding, creative tourism, creative workshops, revitalisation of public spaces.

Introduction

At the end of the 20th century, a shift in production and consumption practices encouraged an emerging discourse on creativity as well as fuelled discussions on creative tourism. This notion defines a behavioural pattern of tourists and new forms of leisure that became a part of tourist experience. The keywords for defining this form of tourism are active participation, engagement, collaboration between tourists and residents, non-standard approaches to leisure and the urban surrounding.

In this paper, a concept of creative tourism is examined through the analysis of creative approaches as tourism resources. Besides, the tourist is given the role of a co-producer of the process of cultural production as well as an active contributor to the daily life of a holiday destination. Some implemented creative tourism solutions

are explored in order to map the range of creative tourism forms and discuss the perspective of creative tourism as a tool for urban development. As creative workshops empower residents to form their everyday surroundings, one case is analysed to reveal how collaborative, creative and participatory activities can become a potential tool for revitalisation of public spaces in the context of creative tourism.

Creative tourism: consumption, production and participation

The model of traditional cultural tourism is perfectly illustrated by overcrowded beaches in Turkey and long queues at the entrance of the Louvre. As Greg Richards (2010) underlines, in the 21st century, cultural tourism is becoming a victim of its own success. Hyper-reality produced by the symbolic economy and commercialised tourism led to significant competition. Mass audiences resulted in negative consequences, such as standardisation and decreasing quality of cultural products, lower market value, overcrowded areas and degradation of local culture.

Creativity is the main driving force of the industry, economy, urban development and social life of the 21st century. It is also valuable in the search for solutions to problems of cultural tourism. Culture-led development strategies are replaced or supplemented with creative development strategies. The latter offer a new direction for unique and original experiences. In this respect, tourist activities are refocused on participation in local creative economies, which, in turn, invest into place branding. As Richards and Julie Wilson (2007) emphasise, this process involves the shift of tourism resources from tangible culture and heritage toward intangible culture and creativity that led to the rise of creative tourism. Creative tourism takes the focus of tourists off traditional form of culture and passive consumption of ready-made products suitable for a wide audience, e.g. museums, built heritage, monuments or outdoor recreation like beaches or mountains. Instead, it emphasises the creative consumption of a site or culture through images, identity, lifestyles, atmosphere, narratives, creativity and media (Richards, Wilson 2007: 18). The model¹ of creative tourism makes a commodity out of the intangible culture, which embraces lifestyles, narratives, media, etc. And it is creativity (or creative approaches to reshaping of traditional tourism offers if to be more precise) that starts generating new tourist experiences and provokes creative consumption. Creative consumption can be characterised by the orientation of consumers toward the “originality” of products and services that contribute to lifestyles of consumers and express their identity.

In the model of creative tourism, tourists are seen as co-producers of tourism experiences rather than passive consumers of the ready-made products. Esther Binkhorst (2007) points out two directions for the development of creative tourism. In both cases, she stresses the importance of tourist participation in the cultural production: “First, people today are more decisive in the process of shaping their own narratives, a phenomenon that pre-eminently develops during leisure and tourism. This results in

¹ The model means a configuration of creative tourism processes, which were described by some of authors. The paper discusses the model of creative tourism by Richards (2010, 2011).

numerous stories full of ever-more original tourism experiences. Second, it involves ‘the creation of things’ at the destination – the painting, cooking, making handicrafts and so on <...>’ (Binkhorst 2007: 131). The participation of the tourists in shaping of new narratives enables us to examine creative tourism as a tool for redeveloping and promoting various localities through alternative narrations and taking part in place branding.

On the other hand, development of skills, creative production and consumption build a new tourist experience, which converts their holiday time into active learning. Similarly to Binkhorst, Richards and Crispin Raymond note, that creative tourism “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” (Richards, Raymond 2000: 18). UNESCO Creative Cities Network also defines creative tourism as travel directed toward an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place, which provides a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture (UNESCO Creative Cities Network 2006: 3). Consequently, in creative tourism, participatory activities and the connection between locals and tourists are the key elements in the development of tourist skills and learning about the destination. The more active is participation and engaging collaboration, the greater is the expected outcome in terms of unique experiences or knowledge.

As Richards (2011) points out, the catalyst that determines the intensity of participation and collaboration is creativity with environments, people, processes or products as carriers. It manifests as a background or activity (Richards 2011). Creativity as a background covers lower intensity interaction and activities, such as buying (shop window) or seeing (itineraries). It requires awareness and observation from tourists to experience holiday destination and culture. Creativity as an activity covers high-intensity interaction throughout participatory activities, such as tasting (experiences, open ateliers) or learning (workshops, courses). In this form, it fully involves tourists and residents into collaborative and creative process of skill development, cultural production, consumption and place branding.

The sections below examines creativity as a background and creativity as an activity.

Creativity as a background: city branding and creative atmosphere

Creativity as a background is closely related to the concept of a creative city, contemporary urban planning and architectural narratives. Cities that develop creativity-led strategies enhance their environment and atmosphere by shifting from cultural branding to creative spaces (Evans 2007). In pursuit of a new brand that is attractive to a creative tourist, a city gains a number of aspirations: cosmopolitan culture, creative production and consumption, creative clusters, showcased designer city, the creative class as the new Bohemia, cultural trade, art markets and comparative advantage.

The creative process of city branding keeps residents and the creative sector highly involved. In Stockholm, local artists are encouraged to display their works in public

spaces. The Stockholm Metro is known as the longest (110 km) art gallery in the world. Almost every metro stop houses unique installations, paintings, sculptures, mosaics and other art works of about 150 famous artists, architects and designers. The city of Stockholm demonstrates its attention to local artists and their work through the creative space that attracts thousands of visitors.

The motion picture industry strengthened the identity and distinctiveness of town Matamata in New Zealand. Matamata surroundings were used to film *The Lord of The Rings* and *The Hobbit*. The rolling hills of *The Shire* were brought to life under the name *Hobbiton* and remains open as a tourist attraction. *Hobbiton* tour at the movie set offers tourists the opportunity to develop their creative potential through place participation. A fully guided tour of the movie set takes tourists to Hobbit holes, the *Green Dragon Inn* and other sights that can be recognised from the films (*Hobbiton Movie Set Tours 2012*). As Paul Cloke (2007) points out, this living film space is a form of creative performance that helps to reconstitute places as tourist magnets. In cities like Stockholm or Matamata, tourists can experience and learn about the place and culture via creative atmosphere and creative backdrops created by residents or the creative sector.

Creativity as an activity: participation, the ritual of interaction and experience

Creativity as an activity requires a high level of involvement in the creative process from tourists and residents. Glassblowing in Riviera, Rumba classes in Barcelona, baking croissants in Paris and other creative or artistic activities turn residents into teachers and tourists into students. This informal education takes place at a school of daily life specific to a certain travel destination. For instance, *Backstreet Academy* is referred to as a marketplace for a unique travel experience. It connects tourists with experts of a particular field, artists and craftsmen from Nepal, India, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos. Artists offer courses in local arts and culture, handicrafts, sports, relaxation or traditional food (*Backstreet Academy 2015*). The courses open up possibilities for tourists to create a masterpiece – a pot, mask or bag – with the assistance of residents and learn about traditions while taking part in them. First-hand knowledge gained through the direct experience is the best way to take in and feel the culture of a city.

The more engaging is the participation in open courses, ateliers, or workshops, the stronger is the social interaction between local people and tourists. Social interaction can be defined as the ritual of interaction (Collins 2004). It involves tourists and residents acquiring symbols that have membership significance and emotional energy charge. Randall Collins (2004) highlights that as one person passes symbols to the other, their stock of membership symbols is renewed or supplemented. Symbols tend to be repeatedly used and chained together over time, but each time emotional energy is different. People are attracted to particular practices or activities because of the unique emotional energy they can gain from them. Sometimes, creative collaborative activities create an emotional value so great that even a tourist feels local.

“Welcome home! Be a temporary citizen of Barcelona...” is the motto of project *Barcelona House* – a new concept of tourist accommodation established and running by residents in urban areas of Barcelona. *Barcelona House* offers tourists to stay in one of the two guests’ houses, go local, live local and become a part of the community. The project fully engages tourist into the daily life of the neighbourhood. They discover local stores, restaurants and bars, communicate with residents, taste local products and visit places. Visitors have to “go local” for up to twelve times to acquire the unique souvenir that cannot be purchased as the only way to get it is to earn it by becoming a new local (Barcelona House 2010).

Creativity as a tourist activity is developed in the form of courses or workshops, where participants are fully engaged in the process. The outcomes of this process are high-intensity interactions, identity formation of tourists and residents, tangible (pots, masks or bags) and intangible (experiences, skills and knowledge) tourism products. Active involvement of tourists in local activities blurs the distinction between tourists and locals. Tourists start taking an active part in the development of local narratives, rituals and the image of the place (Lavrinec 2010). According to Jekaterina Lavrinec, in this model, the “tourist routes” as well as routine everyday routes of the locals become an object of mutual reconfiguration. It turns the locals into curious explorers of their cities and reserves a possibility for tourists to gain some local knowledge (Lavrinec 2010: 61). This mutual transformation through the cooperation of the locals and tourists is an important aspect of creative tourism. It has an impact on the revitalisation of urban and rural localities and the place branding process.

Creative tourism and the revitalisation of public spaces

Examples of Stockholm and Matamata cities or *Backstreet Academy* and *Barcelona House* projects demonstrate that forms of creative tourism become more engaging and ubiquitous. Every creative industry sector (literature, cinema, music, crafts and folk arts, design, media arts and gastronomy), community art initiative or local creative activity can turn into an object of tourism. It may also evoke critical debates on the radical change of everyday life in cities and neighbourhoods as epicentres of creative tourism. The concept of creative tourism receives strong support from expert institutions and networks. For example, the *Creative Tourism Network* fosters the creative tourism around the world (Creative Tourism Network 2014) and the *Creative Cities Network* helps countries to showcase cultural pedigree, exchange know-how and develop local creative industries on a global platform. The promotion of the concept is based on the idea, that this form of tourism does not require large financial investments and can be developed using only local resources and creative capital (UNESCO Creative Cities Network 2009–2014). At the same time, creative tourism helps small entrepreneurs to earn more income, generates value and plays an essential role in the social and economic development as well as in revitalisation of urban and local sites. Creative tourism is seen as an appealing development strategy especially for the development of countries or economically unstable regions.

Local people and their initiatives are the drives and enhancers of creativity-led development strategies. As Charles Landry and Fred Brookes (2006) point out, land-use planners are no longer the only discipline involved in city-making. “We now know that the physical alone does not make a city or a place, the art of city-making involves all the talents and disciplines” (Landry, Brookes 2006: 11). Local communities can contribute to place-making via creative tourism by realising their creative ideas and sharing them with others. If there is synergy between a local community and urban practitioners, locally presented in a small town or neighbourhood, the local community gains more creative energy. In the study on the cultural revitalisation of the wooden neighbourhood of Šnipiškės, Lavrinc demonstrated the effect of creative activities initiated by urban practitioners in close cooperation with the locals. Such efforts shift the local cultural life and push forward the formation of local social networks (Lavrinc 2014). Creative tourism not only helps to realise the potential of participatory activities and is the source of original tourism experiences. It also brings emotional excitement and knowledge about a local culture. This way, it enriches tourists, promotes and fosters local lifestyles, and revitalises urban spaces.

Case study: travelling architecture workshops

Next, I will discuss a series of architecture workshops, which took place in Lithuania in 2013. They represent a case of local creative tourism in the form of creative activities, which bring together young urban practitioners and residents of a small town. In the local context, creative cooperation between urban practitioners and residents is still rare – there are only a few groups in Lithuania, such as *Laimikis.lt* (acting since 2007) or *Beepart* (acting since 2011). One recent initiative by *Architecture [Children] Fund* started series of creative workshops in 2013 to develop creative activities in neighbourhoods with the aim to revitalise them (Architektūros [...] fondas 2010–2015).

Architecture [Children] Fund initiated the project *Travelling Architecture Workshops 2013*, which was one of the largest-scale series of workshops in 2013. The event embodied two forms of creative tourism, i.e. itineraries and creative workshops. During the project, the team of volunteers from *Architecture [Children] Fund* visited sixteen different towns in Lithuania. In each town, they held a 3-day creative workshop. Volunteers collaborated with local children to create and implement ideas that resulted in valuable long lasting objects (Architektūros [...] fondas 2010–2015). The creative workshops enhanced environments and the atmosphere of sixteen different towns. The aim of the case study on *Travelling Architecture Workshops 2013* is to reveal how revitalisation of public spaces can be achieved using collaborative and creative participatory activities, more precisely creative workshops as a form of creative tourism.

The project *Travelling Architecture Workshops 2013* brought together architects, volunteers and local children of sixteen different Lithuania towns. It demonstrated that care for the public environment does not require as much materials and resources, but rather awareness and creative approach. *Travelling Architecture Workshops 2013* spent three days in every town. The first day was dedicated to meeting the community,

making friends with residents and getting familiar with town environment: highlights, public spaces, legends, local realities, daily life, etc. The first day opened up opportunities for local children to become guides and teachers to architects and volunteers. At the end of the day, all workshop participants shared ideas on improvements of the environment that could make the town a better place to live. Potential objects and sites for their implementation were discussed, plans and concepts were created. The second day and the first half of the third day were dedicated to the process of creation. Three days of hard and collaborative work resulted in valuable objects. They used only local resources and the creative capital of architects, volunteers and residents (Figs 1–2). Each workshop ended with an event for the local community to introduce new or renewed objects and revived public spaces.



Fig. 1. Stadium space in Viečiūnai before (left) and after (right) creative workshops. Result: the paving renewed and cleaned from grass, making it suitable for skateboarders and skaters. The space is equipped with urban furniture and ramps. Photo by Aurelija Slapikaitė-Jurkonė



Fig. 2. New public spaces in Teneniai after creative workshops. Two in one: bed/pergola (left); rope obstacle course (centre) and a labyrinth drawing used to renew the paving of the amphitheatre in the park (right). Photo by Tadas Jonauskis

Although towns showed initiative and participated in *Travelling Architecture Workshops 2013* voluntarily, some communities felt worried and insecure in the beginning. Residents tried to provoke organisers and volunteers, checking their determination and objectives. Sometimes, there was miscommunication, dissatisfaction or indifference. However, three days of intensive communication between the parties revealed the cause: especially strong interaction rituals that emerged during workshops. Local children were aware of spaces and surroundings of their towns but had very poor theoretical knowledge about building styles or urban planning. To architects and volunteers (differently than children and residents), every town space was un-

discovered and unfamiliar, but they had the theoretical knowledge they could share. Local children come up with ideas of objects that could be created or improved while architects and volunteers showed how to do it. Communication and knowledge sharing generated new experiences for architects, volunteers and especially residents and shaped their identities, perception and approach to the environment as well as a workshop as a tool for enhancement of spaces.

As organisers of the project noticed, revived spaces and objects created during the workshops immediately gained popularity among the locals. Besides, the workshops attracted children from other towns to participate and become more familiar with their neighbouring town. Communities were pleasantly surprised by results of the workshops. They expressed their gratitude to organisers of the project: “Thank you for spending these few days with us. We were pleased to participate in the project. We received great ideas, enriched and enhanced our town” (a representative of Teneniai town community). Architects and volunteers were very pleased to achieve the main goal of the project. Moreover, local children promised to foster and care for their environment. Organisers believe that residents will continue with the work started during *Travelling Architecture Workshops 2013*. This project can be considered the beginning of something much greater, the initial stimulus to take action.

According to the case study on the project *Travelling Architecture Workshops 2013*, workshops as a form of creative tourism can be a potential tool for the revival of public spaces. They can encourage residents to:

- take initiative, by demonstrating that only they are responsible for their environment and quality of life;
- use the creative potential and show that imagination, creativity and local resources are the only things needed to revive and foster the environment;
- demonstrate openness, foster the local culture and environment by letting professionals from different fields or creative strangers into their daily lives;
- show that cooperation and creative teamwork can bring positive tangible and intangible outcomes.

Every community can independently develop creative tourism and contribute to the urban atmosphere, branding and environment or earn more income using the model of *Travelling Architecture Workshops 2013*. For example, similar workshops can turn into annual projects, town traditions, festivals or series of events that attract visitors, bring profit and improve local living conditions.

Conclusions

Analysis of the discourse on creativity revealed that creativity is the catalyst that reshapes traditional tourism resources. It also sets the focus of tourists on active learning, skill development and experiencing the travel destination with its culture through the atmosphere, narratives, images, community art initiatives and participatory local activities. As a result, creativity became a popular product for cities that seek to attract creative tourists. This aspiration led to the implementation of creativity-led development strategies based on the model of creative tourism for creative city branding.

As case studies demonstrate, the concept of creative tourism blurs the distinction between the notions “local” and “tourist”. Besides, it broadens the understanding of tourist practices. As creative collaborative practices turn into a form of tourism activity, a tourist becomes a contributor to the local life rather than a passive consumer. Creative tourism activities enable tourists to take part in the daily life of the locality, enhance holiday destination and contribute to the formation of identities of tourists and residents, generate first-hand knowledge and direct experiences.

The case study on *Traveling Architecture Workshops* reveals that creative workshops can be a tool for the revitalisation of public spaces in the context of creative tourism. It has a potential to implement ideas of participants in public spaces, turning them into valuable long-lasting objects. However, it is important to note that in the revival of spaces, the success of creative workshops as a form of creative tourism depends on initiatives of workshop participants, their creative potential, willingness to collaborate and openness to changes.

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VIEŠŪJŲ ERDVIŲ GAIVINIMAS KŪRYBINIO TURIZMO KONTEKSTE

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje kūrybinio turizmo modelis, nukreiptas į viešųjų erdvių gaivinimą, yra aptariamas remiantis aktyvaus dalyvavimo ir kūrybinių dirbtuvių koncepcija, kuri įtraukia tiek turistus, tiek vietinius gyventojus į kūrybinį kultūros produkcijos procesą ir aktyvų mokymąsi apie turistinę vietovę siekiant sugeneruoti unikalias keliavimo patirtis, tobulinti gabumus ar gaminti ilgai išliekančius objektus, kurie prisideda prie viešųjų erdvių gaivinimo. Kūrybiniame turizme miestas ir jo atmosfera, bendruomenės meno iniciatyvos ir kitos vietinės kūrybinės veiklos tampa turizmo objektu. Apibrėžiant turisto, kaip aktyvaus dalyvio kūrybiniame procese vaidmenį, skatinama gaivinti viešąsias erdves pritaikant kūrybines dirbtuves, kaip kūrybinio turizmo veiklas, kuriose dalyvautų keliaujantys ekspertai.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: aktyvus dalyvavimas, miesto prekinio ženklų kūrimas, kūrybinis turizmas, kūrybinės dirbtuvės, viešųjų erdvių gaivinimas.