

Stakeholders' analysis for services improvement: the case of Oporto's Religious heritage and tourism ecosystems

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory paper starts with a glance about the complex stakeholders' interaction inside religious heritage and tourism ecosystems, as the result of a process of social construction. The focus will be given on Oporto's religious heritage in order to identify, understand and build a broad set of processes and knowledge, which could help/guide policy makers and tourism/cultural managers, to match the interests of all stakeholders, build up the community identity and develop innovative authentic cultural tourism experiences. The methodology follows the steps of Schmeer (1999) that yields useful and accurate information, able to conduct on religious heritage and tourism stakeholders. Stakeholder analysis of Oporto religious heritage involves a process of scientifically collecting, validating and analyzing qualitative information to determine whose interests should be taken into account when developing and/or implementing a policy or program, particularly focusing the offered services.

RESUMO

Este trabalho exploratório começa com um olhar sobre a complexa interação entre os *stakeholders* no âmbito do património cultural e turismo religioso, como resultado de uma construção social. O foco será dado na herança cultural religiosa da cidade do Porto, a fim de identificar, compreender e construir um amplo conjunto de processos e conhecimento que ajudem no processo de tomada de decisão dos atores políticos, da área do turismo e gestores culturais. O objetivo é de fazer coincidir os interesses e de todas as partes interessadas, construir a identidade cultural da comunidade e desenvolver experiências inovadoras e autênticas de turismo cultural. A metodologia segue os passos de Schmeer (1999), que fornece informações úteis e precisas, capaz de definir os *stakeholders* no âmbito do património religioso e as entidades ligadas ao turismo. Esta análise envolve um processo científico de recolha, validação e análise de informações qualitativas para determinar quais interesses devem ser levados em conta na elaboração e implementação de uma política ou programa, com particular foco na área dos serviços oferecidos.

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1. SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

Throughout the world and through the ages, human societies have created a vast heritage associated to their religious beliefs and practices. Due to their significance to the community, as well as their artistic, historical, scientific or anthropological importance, it comes as no surprise that religious buildings or sites make up a considerable part of national or local heritage lists. The management of these places is part of the policies of cultural heritage management. The latter today must be framed within a complex context and be integrated to the development of the territory. The preservation, cataloging and inventory of assets represents just one of the tasks of the management policies. The promotion and heritage improvement is now a required stage within the management process. It is now unanimous that the mere presence of cultural resources is not sufficient because they could contribute to the dynamics of socio-economic and cultural development. A set of attributes have to be associated with these resources, such as accessibility and services. The relationship between heritage, tourism and development is a fertile field for study, in particular in these epoch of paradigm shift in which we assist to “the gradual transition from 3-S Tourism - Sun, Sand, and Sea - to a 3-L Tourism: Leisure, Landscape and Learning” (Carbone *et al.*, 2013). The debate about the sustainability of tourism stepped in parallel with the debate on sustainable development (UNWTO, 2010). Agenda 21 for travel and tourism Industry by UNWTO, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and the Earth Council (1997) was a milestone in this debate. It is obvious that the enhancement of heritage and its “commodification” or “touristification” should not be seen as a panacea for territories. In this regard, Inskeep (1991, p. 342) recognized positive impacts of tourist activities on a destination (conservation of important natural areas, archaeological and historic sites; improvement of environmental quality; improvement of infrastructure; increasing environmental awareness; etc.) but also negative impacts (water, air, noise and visual pollution; ecological disruption; land use problems; risks for archaeological sites; etc.).

Religious heritage, as part of the most broad cultural heritage, falls within this debate: its identitarian charge and symbolic, often associated with a strong artistic value, sometimes put this heritage at the center of great attention. For millennia, sacred places and religious celebrations have attracted worshipers. An international conference organised on October 2007 in Cordoba (Spain) by the UN World Tourism Organisation (retrieved from: http://www.unwto.org/sustainable/conf/cordoba/Cordoba_English.htm), explored the logistical, economical, cultural and ethical issues encountered in the relation between religions

and tourism). On this occasion, Mr. Francesco Frangialli, the Secretary General of the organisation, reminded participants that “tourism and religions share the use of the same cultural heritage built up in a complex relationship that is both constructive and conflictive at the same time”. The sustainability of the management of the religious heritage is not just about the technical solutions for conservation, but it is closely linked to the awareness of visitors, tourists and local residents. Hence the necessity to create services for tourists, as well as for the local community is an important matter. We verified that there was an ancestral alliance between cultural heritage and tourism based on the traditional motivation of travel: knowledge and self-knowledge, as there are theories arguing that the root of the word “tourism” did not originate from the word “tour”, but from the Hebrew “tur”, which we find in the Bible to mean journey of self-knowledge (Carbone, 2011). Peralta da Silva (1997) claims that “the material and immaterial traces of the past (...) of a particular geographical and cultural area has the capacity to symbolically represent an identity”, so if we consider religion as one of the most important manifestation of culture, the main added value that cultural heritage, in general, and religious heritage, in particular, gives to the tourism is related to its ability to differentiate a destination, conferring authenticity. The sustainability in the management of these resources, policies that provide for the preservation for future use, then becomes a priority.

2. OPORTO RELIGIOUS TOURISM

What is meant by religious tourism segment? This issue divides researchers such as Turner, Morinis, Vukonić; Olsen & Timothy; Schelhe, Kaszowski, Bremer, Preston, Messenger, producing an energetic discussion. The debate was initiated by the 70s, but gained some strength during and after the 90s. It reflects on the inherent complex concepts of "religion" and "religious journey" philosophy, defending himself just a visitor to a religious space, a religious celebration or festivity is not enough to be classified as a religious tourist (Richards and Fernandes, 2007). Likewise, we know today that tourists visiting religious places are driven by other attractions such as cultural, socializing with family or simply visit places of authenticity (Olsen & Timothy, 2006). At the heart of "religious tourism" meaning, emerge divergent and challenging forces, contesting the presence of "tourism" inside the “religious” matter of faith. Tourism is not the first person motivation on visiting a places of religion and the intrinsic link of the religious heritage cultural tourism (Gonzalo , 2006). Although it is unanimous among the various authors, that the conceptual construction of "religious tourism" is much more close to “pilgrimage” them to “tourism”. We discuss the characteristics and

environments of those trips, but it is said that a pilgrimage involves a logistic linking the host and the availability of tourist area, being a tourist experience associated to a religious experience as featuring Richards and Fernandes (2007). Something that Olsen and Timothy (2006) refer to as "spiritual journeys" and invoking a "modern religious pilgrimage."

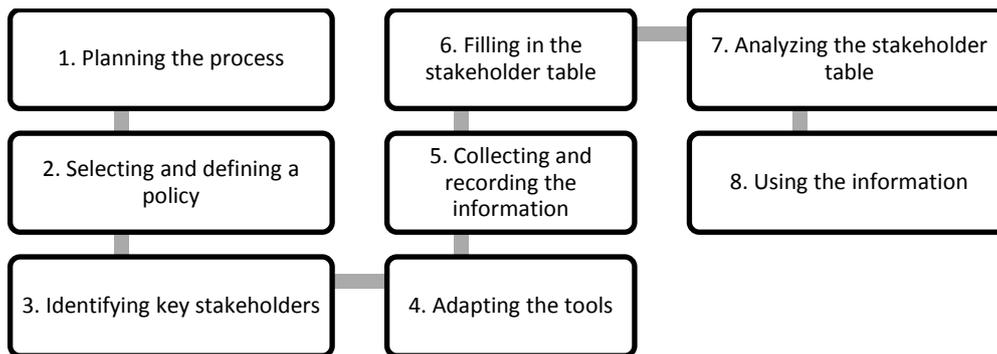
Trying to associate the pilgrimages to tourism, Griffin (2007) identified as "pure pilgrimage" the Lourdes, Mecca, Chiang Mai and Fatima (in Portugal) trips, as an interesting distinction that promotes a differentiated thought regarding environments, travel experiences and ways of acting. The acceptance of pilgrimages as part of the segment "religious tourism", transmitted by Vukonić (1998), revealed interesting possibilities for people movement and local economy development. Timothy and Olsen (2006) are of the opinion that religion and spirituality motivate travel and are currently an important segment of international tourism, drawing attention to the fact that churches, monasteries, holy places are part of the international tourism marketing. Collins-Kreiner and Gatrell (2006) assume that, based on data collection analysis from their research process, the "religious tourism is a complex process and the practices of tourists and pilgrims are unique and different at the same site" . We believe as Turner and Turner (1978) that "the tourist is half pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist". We do not intend to enter in this great debate, which reflects whether or not the pilgrim is a tourist or whether or not the religious tourism is cultural tourism. Our big argument is if religious tourism is an empowering segment, ensuring its own sustainability. One of the ideas developed by us focuses on the issues of the Way of Santiago in Oporto as singular product inside the tourist offer.

The PENT (2013-15) reinforces the approach of religious tourism to pilgrimage into consideration that makes "religious tourism / pilgrimage". Although little explicit on this option seems to consider pilgrimage as an essential, if not the only element in this segment. The PENT (2007) value proposition bets on 10 strategic tourism products, where one of them, Touring Cultural and Landscape focus on our singular "History, Culture and Tradition", with a weight of 20% in the European demand and a 8% forecast growth in Portugal, for the next 10 years (PENT 2007, p. 63). This strategic document focuses on supply's enrichment, developing and innovating on traditional Portuguese contents as differentiated factors. It should be promoted itineraries that take advantage of odd places in the country with natural, scenic, historic and cultural heritage. This policy also aimed to develop and adapt distinctive experiences elements of the cultural offer, but doesn't reveal any specific policy for the Religious Tourism. The PENT 2013-15 policy was able to strength religious and cultural tours, targeting them for generalist and thematic strands, as well as individualizes the Religious Tourism (pent 2013-15, p. 15). To

individualize Religious Tourism, giving it a strategic role, we simultaneously enhance the visit to buildings and / or religious sites motivated by the desire to discover these spaces in a cultural perspective and, above all, the pilgrimages to Marian devotion (especially Fatima), the Portuguese Way of Santiago and even the Jewish quarters.

3. STAKEHOLDERS' ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

Stakeholder Analysis is a methodology used to facilitate institutional and policy reform processes by accounting for and often incorporating the needs of those who have an interest in the reforms under consideration. With information on stakeholders, their interests, and their capacity to oppose same kind of reform or policy, project managers can choose how to best accommodate all benefits, thus assuring policies adopted are politically realistic and sustainable. In addition, it provides an idea of the impact of the project on political and social forces, illuminates the divergent viewpoints towards proposed schemes and the potential power struggles among groups and individuals, and helps identify potential strategies for negotiating with opposing stakeholders. Based on this idea, our research group follows Schmeer's (1999) methodology steps which yield useful and accurate information about Stakeholder Analysis as a tool to identify important heritage/tourism actors and as an innovative instrument for participatory processes. In particular, we are able to conduct the discussion about the tourism policy integrated in PENT 2013-15 regarding the decision to make autonomous the segment of religious tourism from the broader cultural tourism, arguing about the sustainability of this decision. The letter indeed has implication on the management and the creation of services associated to the religious heritage. Particularly, we approach the stretch of the "Camino de Santiago" (also known by the English names "Way of St. James") which passes through Oporto city, being considered as a part of the whole touristic urban ecosystem. By applying the Schmeer's methodology, we want thus contribute to solve a controversial policy (the autonomy of Religious Tourism from Cultural Tourism) and provide an open, transparent and collaborative activity, aiming to solve conflicts by identifying all people, groups and institutions, which have an interest in the project: it helps identifying those who can have a creative approach in the process, in order to build differentiators' products and services. Stakeholder analysis of the Camino de Santiago in Oporto involves a very complex process of scientifically collecting, validating and analyzing qualitative information. There are eight major steps in Schmeer's stakeholder analysis process:



4. APPLYING THE STAKEHOLDERS' ANALYSIS

Schmeer (1999) identifies three purposes for the application of the results:

- Delineate the aim of the analysis;
- Identify the users of the information;
- Devise a plan for using the information and this study focuses on the one “to provide input into other analyses” (p. 5).

The users of information will be policy makers and religious tourism managers that may use the results to plan or develop their future activities. For a stakeholder analysis to be useful, it must be focused on a specific policy or issue. The Investigation question (the policy): How to individualize religious tourism and create sustainable itineraries according PENT 2013-15? (Step 1). The working group work then with policymakers to define the main ideas to implement (Step 2) and to do this we need to develop a list of the stakeholders related to the policy (Step 3). We adopted as List of Possible Stakeholders those indicated in European Tourism Indicator System Toolkit (2013, p.14)

1. Private sector representative/s
2. Destination management organization
3. Tourism authority
4. Destination marketing/Public Relations agency
5. Local authority staff concerned with employment/economy
6. Education institutions
7. Local community organization
8. Local authority planning department

9. Organization concerned with preservation of local culture/heritage
10. Local authority transport department
11. Local authority climate change officer
12. Local authority waste management department
13. Local water and sewerage provider
14. Local authority noise control department
15. Local electricity provider
16. Organization concerned with protection of the local environment/wildlife
17. Local authority department with responsibility for protected areas

The working group plan to interview the identified stakeholders to gain accurate information on their positions, interests, and ability to affect the project (Step 4). We have chosen to use the Schmeer's Stakeholder Characteristics list:

I.D. Number	Interest
Position and Organization	Alliances
Internal/External	Resources
Knowledge of Policy	Power
Position: Supports/Opposes/Neutral	Leadership

At this point we can collect and record information (Step 5) and fill in the Stakeholder Table (Step 6). The stakeholders involved into the "Camino de Santiago" as a Religious Tourism" product, will be categorized by their power and salience attributes:

- Promoters;
- Defenders;
- Latents;
- Apathetics.

The stakeholder position needs to be understood and measured their potential support or opposition for the proposed project (Step 7). The use of the information generated (Step 8) for the Camino de Santiago stakeholder analysis will be discussed during the Planning the Process, and it will be reviewed again once the results have been analyzed.

CONCLUSION

Stakeholder Analysis is a critical tool in clarifying the micro policy area and can help identify interested parties that should be incorporated inside an inclusion decision-making process. For an effective integration between Heritage interests and Tourism objectives inside Oporto, all stakeholders must build a common vision and mission, which consider: an interpretation and implementation of an heritage plan that embraces sustainable religious tourism; integrate national, regional and local governments policies and frameworks that recognize sustainable tourism as an important vehicle for managing their heritage; commit all stakeholders to sustainable development; promote broad stakeholder engagement in the planning; promote quality tourism products and services that encourage responsible behavior among all stakeholders; guarantee a balanced approach between site-conservation and site-promotion; identify strategic opportunities for economic growth and job creation. With this article we therefore wish to emphasize the importance of unanimity and sharing behind the policies of tourism development. The choice of strategies regarding the services to be associated with cultural heritage for its enhancement, are highly dependent on this process and it justifies the methodological efforts made by researchers to contribute to the construction of unanimity and participation among stakeholders.

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