

AN INTERNATIONAL OVERVIEW OF CERTIFIED PRACTICES IN CREATIVE TOURISM IN RURAL AND URBAN TERRITORIES

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A large number of destinations have been experimenting a changeover from the current massified cultural tourism to a creative tourism model. In this new model of tourism, urban territories have been privileged by its implementation, and in the past 20 years, urban studies on cultural and creative industries and initiatives have been taking place in large cities marginalizing small-sized cities and specifically rural areas. This article envisages assessing the differences between rural and urban institutions/platforms, mainly certified by the Creative Tourism Network, in what concerns the practices and offers in creative tourism worldwide. A database of 20 items was organized and a

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typology was used to categorize the type of territory of intervention for each institution. A total of 24 institutions from several countries were surveyed and a qualitative analysis was done and supported by the narratives of their leaders. Urban areas revealed to have a more active and diverse creative tourism activities. The results provide the need for more consolidated communication strategies and partnerships for these activities to become economically more sustainable. In addition, this research provides researchers and practitioners relevant information of how creative tourism is developed in rural and urban territories, the gaps and lack of information, and all the possible directions toward the development of the creative tourism industry.

KEYWORDS: *creative tourism; rural tourism; management practices; urban tourism; tourism*

Creativity is a central characteristic in our society today. This concept appeared in Richard Florida (2002), who focused on the contributions of the middle class to the economic development of large metropolises.

The consensus about the definition of creativity accepted by various authors who studied the context and its conceptualization appeared in the 1990s. Creativity became one of the main trendy words in the early 2000s (M. K. Smith, 2016) and was regarded as a relevant instrument for growth and development of territories. In what concerns tourism activity, it was rapidly connected with this concept and a “creative turn” happened (Richards, 2011) not only in tourism but also in several different social and academic fields such as Literature, Architecture, and Economy.

In tourism, creativity has become a condition for the survival of many cultural destinations, trying to oppose the massification present in this activity. Urban territories have benefitted from all this creative process against small towns and rural areas. For that reason, researchers have been focusing on study of large cities, which cannot be reproduced and applied to smaller ones, let alone to rural places.

The present research was implemented for 1 year, from March 2017 to March 2018, and it corresponds to a first international effort to answer three questions: What are the main practices and activities of creative tourism that are mainly certified by the *Creative Tourism Network* (CTN)? What are the differences between creative tourism practices and activities in rural and urban territories? What sort of practices and activities can be created to expand the offer?

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This article is organized in four sections. It starts by outlining the definition of creative tourism, seeing it as a step forward in cultural tourism and as a catalyst of the development of territories. It also focuses on the differences concerning creative tourism practices in rural and urban institutions worldwide, according to different models of approach to the relationship between creativity and territorial development. The methods used are described in the second section, followed by the main results that are discussed on a global scale in the “Results and Discussion” section. In the final section, apart from the final remarks, future research directions are suggested.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Creative Tourism as a Step Forward in Cultural Tourism and a Catalyst of Regional and Local Development

Taking into consideration culture and creativity, tourism appears to be one of the main factors for economic growth (Richards, 2011). The growth of creativity was used by the tourism industry to develop an increasingly creative and ludic environment (Richards, 2011, 2014). This made it possible to organize practices that contribute to rapidly change the representations and consumptions of each space. Different consumptions of space and interactions of stakeholders (e.g., tourists, residents) lead, over the years, to a reconfiguration of spaces. There was a recognition of a strong link between creativity and regional development, for example, between creativity and place (Brouder, 2012). This suggests that a “creative effervescence” can be found in successful communities (Brouder, 2012). Also, creativity appeared to have a crucial role in the creative tourism (Tan et al., 2013).

In addition to creativity, there are several common elements within the concept of creative tourism, such as “active participation” (Binkhorst, 2007; Richards & Raymond, 2000), “co-creation” (Binkhorst, 2007; Richards & Raymond, 2000), “authentic experience” (Binkhorst, 2007), “connection with locals” (Hull & Sassenberg, 2012; Richards, 2011; Richards & Wilson, 2006), and “development of skills” (Briggs, 2005; Richards & Raymond, 2000). When speaking about creative tourism, these key elements are representative of it.

The concept is still recent. Even if Pearce and Butler (1993) referred to the term *creative tourism* for the first time as being a potential form of tourism (Richards, 2011), the term was only defined in 2000, as the kind of tourism that offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential. This is possible if the tourist participates actively in experiences and learning, themes and activities, and if the activities are presented in the destination that is being visited (Richards & Raymond, 2000). In fact, massified destinations contributed substantially to the emergence of the concept “creative tourism” in the early 2000s. Even if there is still no consensus in the definition of creative tourism, it is a fact that it is increasing worldwide (Hung et al., 2016; Remoaldo et al., 2019; Richards, 2011, 2014; M. K. Smith, 2016). Besides Pearce and Butler (1993), Pine and Gilmore (1998) highlighted the “experience economy” and the need

for the business providers to organize memorable events for costumers. Also, the transition from selling services to selling experiences as experiences can “touch” people easier than products or services. The concept of selling experiences, in the 1990s (Binkhorst & Dekker, 2009), was no longer confined to theatres and theme parks but was also presented as a memorable and personal offering rather than standardized or customized services. Creative tourism became, hence, an extension of cultural tourism (Richards & Marques, 2012).

Creative tourism gives tourists the opportunity to develop creative potential and skills by being actively involved in the creative processes. Visitors wish to increasingly engage with firsthand genuine experiences, by using simple materials and imagination and even take home unique pieces which they made themselves (Hung et al., 2016). Visitors exchange experiences and engage with local people and local culture and are part of the process of cocreation together with them. Then, locals themselves become teachers guiding them through their culture either through workshops, open ateliers, events, or cultural itineraries (Richards, 2011).

One cannot forget that the opportunity to develop creative potential makes competition among tourist destinations fierce due to the growing number of regions/territories (mainly cities) that try to compete for international tourists (Remoaldo et al., 2014; Yankholmes & Akyeamong, 2010). Also, this forces producers (private and public) to develop initiatives where imagination and fantasy play a relevant role while trying to adjust to tourists’ demands. In fact, the experience economy, as is known, forced business providers to develop memorable events (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). This also contributed to creating distinctive places (Richards, 2011). Nevertheless, it is not often we have genuine and authentic experiences that are endowed with a real commitment from local communities.

On one hand, cultural tourism is considered a static observation of happenings from the past. On the other hand, creative tourism can be seen as a kind of transference of the past into the present and the future via the relationship between local community and tourists (Hull & Sassenberg, 2012).

For distinct reasons, therefore, creative tourism appears as a key option for development. In the first place, it answers to the need for tourism to reinvent itself, as well as to the need for destinations that are enrolled in a saturated market, to change its approach to tourists. It can also show different approaches that can satisfy tourists’ wishes for more meaningful and fulfilling experiences (Prentice, 2001; Richards & Marques, 2012; W. L. Smith, 2006).

The role of the tourist is reinforced in creative tourism, as he becomes a coauthor of the touristic experiences (cocreation with unique value for himself—Mossberg, 2007) contributing to unique, unrepeatable, and nonreproducible experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). This includes a more interactive kind of activity linked to both a location and its people (M. K. Smith, 2016). This reflects the more demanding profile of present-day tourists who need to have higher levels of interaction and an educational, emotional, social, and participative interaction with the place, with people from that place and feel like a citizen.

“Live like a local” (Binkhorst & Dekker, 2009; Richards, 2014; Stolarick et al., 2010) or “becoming a citizen” (M. K. Smith, 2016) are quite usual designations for tourist experience with locals.

Current research insists on the possibility of developing creative initiatives, mainly in urban territories, using them as the main examples (Brouder, 2012; Richards, 2011, 2014; M. K. Smith, 2016). In the late 1990s, places (cities) became centers of consumption and “consumptional identities” were identified to distinguish those kinds of places from each other (Crew & Beverstock, 1998) through creative strategies. But what about rural and small cities? Can they successfully adopt the same strategies to their territories? Perhaps all the people and places have the potential to be creative, but operationalizing such potential can be quite difficult (Brouder, 2012). Every location has the potential to provide a unique combination of knowledge, skills, physical assets, social capital, and “atmosphere,” which make places particularly suited for specific creative activities (Richards, 2011). This is true, but only few can make it sustainable, as being noticeable at national and international levels requires much more of such potential.

Although cultural and creative events may be effective in a limited regeneration effort, single events are not sufficient to change the image of a small-sized city (Richards, 2014) as identified in the study developed by Carvalho et al. (2011) for Loulé city (a small-sized city in the Algarve and one of the municipalities certified by the Creative Tourism Network).

The dynamics of creative development and tourism could be a very interesting advantage for small- and medium-sized cities (Den Dekker & Tabbers, 2012). A model of creative tourist development based on three stages was suggested by Den Dekker and Tabbers (2012): dialogue, seeing possibilities, and converting changes. The first step is endowed with the need of dialogue between all stakeholders, actors, and tourists. The second step involves analyzing the interests of the market and their potential. Creators and developers need to acknowledge new initiatives and trends. Finally, opportunities and initiatives adjusted to the results are needed for the success of the programs.

A successful approach to creative tourism is not only linked to the definition of its meaning, but to the correct approach to the creative network. The municipality and all actors must play a central role in the development of creative activities in medium-sized cities and rural areas.

Being so, could we conclude that locals (private and public stakeholders) must be the main organizers of these kinds of activities? Is this the only way to contribute for a local and sustainable development? Could we consider that tourists have a creative tourism experience if a company from another country organizes a 1-/2-week workshop about painting or photography? Or could it be considered creative tourism if the organizers are local, but the activity does not involve the local heritage (e.g., organize a workshop of Flamenco in Barcelona, knowing that it is typical from Andalusia)? In other words, is creative tourism only endowed with the process—having a memorable

and creative experience—or should we use that designation if the creative initiatives have a strong link with the local community and local and regional actors are the main organizers (e.g., organization of a workshop of Flamenco at Sevilla)? We think that if creative tourism opposes the massification of cultural tourism, before creative tourism massified itself, we should consider what a local product or a local memory is when presented to tourists. Otherwise, tourists will not have a clear identification of what a regional/local profile is, but only that of a national profile.

Creative tourism came up as a neologism that represents a new segment of the cultural tourism. This kind of postmodern (or transmodern) tourism is important to preserve the immaterial and material heritage and to safeguard the culture and the traditional practices in urban and, especially, in rural territories. In the time where the globalization system homogenizes the clothes, behaviors, foods, practices, and everything we can image, the creative tourism comes up to transfer the global visitors to local practices. The current system normalizes all the traditional processes and develops on a large scale, which allows one to eat Thai food in almost all cities of Europe, and because of which China produces the traditional crafts of all parts of the world. But, is that what the modern tourist really want?

Nowadays, the postmodern visitor or the creative tourist wants to live like a local and experiment the practices and process exclusives that do not reproduce in wherever. Creative tourism is an important system to develop and empower the communities. The rural areas are the most promising places to develop the creativity, because they allow the visitors to have a contact with the narratives, processes, and products that cannot be accessed elsewhere, but only in that specific place and community.

Creative Tourism Networks/Platforms in Rural and Urban Territories

The term *network* is recognized as being a complex concept, being notorious for a growing interest in networks and partnerships. There are a set of diverse types of networks. It may include network membership, connections between members, type of exchange or attraction, function or network function, or a geographical distribution network. In addition, they can be described as informal, semiformal, or formal (Shaw & Conway, 2000). Halme (2001) adds that networks can vary by their configuration. This was stated by Smith-Ring (1999), who recognized that there is crucial collaboration between companies, government bodies or organizations, individuals, or other entities that are connected in different ways (Morrison et al., 2004).

Is there already a creative network in creative tourism that can help territories become “visible”? Yes, in 2010, the CTN was created in Barcelona, by the Foundation for Culture and Society (FUSIC), which also developed the platform, early in 2005, named *Barcelona Turismo Criativo* (CTN, 2018).

The main objective of the international network is to promote creative tourism, making their members' destinations known, designing synergies between cities and regions that have the potential to receive this type of tourist who seeks human and artistic experiences. The most common examples of creative activities and artistic experiences are painting and photography, creative skills that can be developed in creative tourism initiatives. Gastronomy and cooking courses, painting courses, and sculpture are also current creative activities (Hung et al., 2016).

Besides the Creative Tourism Network that focuses on small cities or rural areas, metropolis and metropolitan regions of innovation and economic development such as URMA (Urban–Rural Partnerships in Metropolitan Areas) have become an important theme in European development in recent years. In the past years, the question is how to interrelate them with the neighboring rural areas. It is noted that interactions between urban and rural territories are common due to flows of people, provision of leisure activities, or food production. It is necessary to define, develop, and test other fields of urban–rural partnerships and to extend the territorial dimension of cooperation.

A series of workshops and conferences, along with three pilot implementations in urban–rural partnerships in Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, will allow the exchange of experiences and the possibility to identify good practices. In short, URMA creates a new impetus for a decentralized concept of cohesion, enriches the European discussion on large-scale urban–rural partnerships and serves as a laboratory and testing platform for innovations in supraregional cooperation (URMA, 2018a). URMA was launched during the previous project “Supra-Regional Partnership of Northern Germany/Hamburg Metropolitan Region,” integrated into the German federal government’s “Demonstration Projects of Spatial Planning” program. It is linked to the RURBAN (Sustainable Urban Development Rural Partnership) action (approved by the European Parliament in 2010 and managed by the European Commission; URMA, 2018a).

URMA considers different types of partnerships in urban–rural areas. It includes large metropolitan areas, surrounded by rural areas, but these rural areas gain importance if they are integrated within a network of other metropolitan areas. In addition, URMA integrates sectors of the city that are smaller than rural areas. The geographic expansion can create new insights and experiences being beneficial for the partner regions (URMA, 2018a).

URMA has nine partner regions: Tuscany Region (Italy); Lombardy Region (Italy); Pleven Regional Administration (Bulgaria); Institute of Urban Development Krakow (Poland); Westpomeranian Voivodeship (Poland); HafenCity University Hamburg (Germany); State Ministry of Urban Development and Environment, Free and Hanseatic City Hamburg (Germany); Municipality of Borne (The Netherlands); and Municipality of Enschede (The Netherlands; URMA, 2018b). Tuscany Region also belongs to the Creative Tourism Network.

Models of Approaches to the Relationship Between Creativity and Territorial Development

In the current literature, there are many approaches that explore the relationship between creativity and development. These approaches can be systematized into two different ones: (a) the creative industries approach and (b) the creative class approach (Selada et al., 2011). The first approach focuses on cluster literature that can be dated to Alfred Marshall's (1919) seminal work, which focused on industrial districts, in the late 19th century. It was followed by the research of some relevant authors such as Becattini (1990) and Porter (1998). This model focuses on creative industries as generators of innovation and territorial development, emphasizing the role of companies and systems of companies, and was developed by Allen J. Scott (2001, 2007) in the context of the cities' cultural economy. On the contrary, the creative class approach is, for other authors (e.g., Chapain & De Propris, 2009; Trip & Romein, 2010), concerned with the concept of "creative" class and highly qualified people, detaching the contributions of Glaeser et al. (2001), Florida (2002), and Clark (2004).

In relation to the "creative industries approach," Scott's (2001, 2007) writings primarily apply to large cities and metropolises, as they have larger labor markets, solid agglomeration economies, and larger networks. Small-sized cities can play a role in the creative economy through a product differentiation strategy, and emphasis on niche markets (Van Heur, 2010b). The creative class approach also focuses on metropolitan regions as they are characterized by great cultural diversity, entertainment, and other urban characteristics, and are the hubs for creative people and highly qualified human capital. The creative capital model of Richard Florida (2002), which corresponds to one of the most common creative class approaches, should be given special attention. This theory is based on three dimensions: talent, tolerance, and technology (3T) and is often referred to as an approach focused on individuals.

Indeed, the creative class is attracted to places where exist critical mass, density of population, diversity, and tolerance, that is, the characteristics of large cities. The creative capital model enhances the competitive disadvantages of small-sized cities (Bell & Jayne, 2009). At the top of the creative city rankings, and according to Lewis and Donald (2009), there is still a dichotomy between "big and creative" and "small and disadvantaged" cities (Selada et al., 2011).

The application of creativity-based models focused on urban territories to small-sized cities induces a false representation of their creative potential. McGranahan and Wojan (2007a) have succeeded in proving that an urban approach underestimates rural creative potential by implementing the Florida model and reforming it in U.S. rural territories. Different authors state that application to small-sized regions of the same approaches and of measuring techniques used with urban areas may not be successful (Gülümser et al., 2010; Van Heur, 2010a). These techniques should consider the specific characteristics of smaller territories, for example, territorial capital, quality of life, and natural and cultural resources.

In the perspective of Van Heur (2010a), small-sized cities are considered irrelevant in the movement of creative economy and geography/location. They cannot apply the concepts and models adopted by larger cities and metropolises.

In addition to valuable research and creative economy policies for large urban territories, some authors give relevance to the relationship between small-sized cities and creative economy, using quantitative and qualitative approaches, and to the increase of some small successful creative communities (Beynon et al., 2015; Denis-Jacob, 2011; Duxbury & Campbell, 2009; Markusen, 2006; Mcgranahan et al., 2010; Mcgranahan & Wojan, 2007a, 2007b; Munoz, 2010; Nuur & Laestadius, 2009; Petrov, 2007; Waitt & Gibson, 2009; Wojan et al., 2007). In addition, the study on the value of creativity in small-sized cities and rural areas is also being considered as an introduction to concepts such as “creative field” or “creative rural economy” (Bell & Jayne, 2010; Lorenzini, 2011).

Small-sized cities have a relevant role to play in a creative economy and can benefit from the competition for creative class participation (people), even if not in the same way as large urban centers (Petrov, 2007). Small cities tend to lack many of those particular benefits associated with large cities: concentration of skilled workers; different groups of economic activity that facilitate the exchange of innovation among sectors and an industrial base of diverse knowledge, as well as a critical mass of local consumers. Also, due to this limited agglomeration of benefits, small cities find it more difficult to tap into global economic networks, are simply less visible in the world, and easily overlooked in the ranking of creativity. Although they can deal with this invisibility by developing economic strategies, this often implies subjecting themselves to a meta-narrative of innovation, globalization, and individualism—which are precisely the qualities most associated with metropolises—and because their self-image is different, they underestimate those qualities, and encourage social cohesion and community orientation instead (Van Heur, 2010a).

According to the United Nations (2010), creative activities are those that generate material products and intangible intellectual or artistic services with creative content, economic value, and market objectives.

For any creative activity carried out in rural areas, local potential impact increases in case it is included in a network, that is, if there is a greater concentration of companies and these are interrelated, from specialized suppliers, to industries and institutions associated with creative activities (Porter, 1998). We can bring together the concept of clustering and the approach of creativity through the definition of clusters of creativity, in order to generate knowledge and growth (Bathelt et al., 2004), and create a very positive local development, capital improvements, and reaffirmation of local identity (Florida et al., 2012; Jaeger & Mykletun, 2013; McGranahan & Wojan, 2007a).

According to several authors (e.g., Almås et al., 2008; Borch & Førde, 2010; Ward & Brown, 2009; Woods, 2005, 2011), urban changes in rural development can also be observed. In other words, the urban narrative is concerned primarily with the industrial rearrangement of the postindustrial city while the

rural narrative focuses more on the agricultural restructuring due to the changing agricultural economy (Fløysand & Jakobsen, 2007; Marsden, 1999), and consumption-oriented production-based culture in rural life (Lysgård & Cruickshank, 2013). Culture-led strategies have been focused less on rural policy research, although cultural heritage, tourism, cultural industries, and creativity are developing strategies for development at small-sized cities and rural areas (Bell & Jayne, 2010; Lysgård, 2016).

Bell and Jayne (2010) argued that, in the urban context, volume and variety in the cultural sector and in other industries and services, as well as in the number of citizens, are fundamental criteria for the development of creative activities. These issues also need to be explored in a rural context, not in terms of variety and volume, but rather in terms of the relationships between people, places, and creativity that are characteristic of the rural context. Until now, academic research has focused on the role of culture in development policies, mainly in cultural festivals and symbolic arts and crafts, and cultural and creative economies for rural development. It is worth mentioning that the literature review has emphasized the conditions and impacts of the cultural and creative industries in small-cities and rural areas as a strategic local industrial alternative (Gibson, 2010).

The shift away from marginality (in spatial terms) and proximity affect the economic sustainability of creative industries in small-sized cities and rural areas (K. Andersen et al., 2010; Conradson & Pawson, 2009; Gibson et al., 2010; Mayes, 2010). Other studies (Borch & Førde, 2010; Fløysand & Jakobsen, 2007; Harvey et al., 2012; Markusen, 2007; Markusen & Gadwa, 2010; Therkildsen et al., 2009; Waitt & Gibson, 2013) highlight the commercialization of small-sized cities and rural places and the additional argument about the attractiveness and competitiveness of rural areas, tourist destinations, and entrepreneurial hotspots.

The cultural policies for rural places and small-sized cities are now increasingly based on heritage, tradition, community practices, and social capital, taking into consideration the ideals of participation, mobilization, and social coherence. Critically, the attractiveness, competitiveness, and marketing do not seem to be enough to “lure” people. Creative industries based on large-city–led culture should focus more on the development of a cultural policy logic that raises questions about social coherence, democracy, identity, and community building. In order to understand small towns and cities’ current cultural policy it is not enough just to detect how local policies are influenced by the flow of international discourses of cultural leaderships and strategies, guided by metropolitan urban areas (Lysgård, 2016).

METHOD

To achieve the objectives underlined in the present study, we worked, between March 2017 and March 2018, with three levels of primary data and qualitative analysis. It was the first time that such worldwide analysis was done:

1. Research on Google (web) was done between March and August 2017 using the following keywords: “creative tourism initiatives,” “creative activities,” “creative cities,” “best practices in creative tourism,” and “rural and urban creative tourism” (Remoaldo et al., 2020). With the help of the certification of institutions/platforms by the CTN, 24 institutions were identified and declared to be developing creative activities. We used this network as nowadays it is used to find indication in the web of many creative activities which in fact are not. The expression “creative activities” along with “creative tourism” is being used indiscriminately without respecting the real aim of creative tourism. This network helped us confirm if the creative activities developed by the institutions are certified by the main network concerned with creative tourism.

As it was relevant to analyze the type of activities and some practices and initiatives carried out by these institutions on rural and urban territories, a database of 20 items was created. The main items analyzed were the institutions implementing the initiatives, year, and place of implementation of activities and type of initiatives, site used to diffuse the initiatives, and type of partners chosen.

2. A deeper examination on the websites’ information on the institutions was made (from September to December 2017). Some of the data analyzed were the type of professionals involved in the activities, the language used in the activities, and the type of activity performed.
3. In addition to these data, semistructured interviews with the managers of international institutions were conducted (mainly by Skype and from July 2017 to April 2018). The interviews were composed of 17 questions. In the present article, these interviews will be used to complement the analysis on the same items.

Considering the first and second levels of research it was, therefore, necessary to recall the difference between concepts such as urban territories and rural territories. One of the first authors to worry about the concept of rural space was Cloke (1977). According to this author, rurality is defined through variables related to population density, accessibility to facilities, commuting, and distance to urban centers (Beynon et al., 2015).

However, since the 1990s, there have been several methodologies for defining rural and urban spaces (e.g., Eurostat, 2010; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1994, 2013; World Bank, 2013) which can help us analyze territories belonging to different countries. For the present study, we used the EUROSTAT methodology (Eurostat, 2018), because most of the creative tourism initiatives considered in this article are located in Europe and are also certified by the State Members, and respectively, by each National Statistical Institute.

Nevertheless, the major geographic scale used was Level 3 (subregion level), which did not fit our research, as it focused on municipality level, because it is

the predominant scale of intervention of institutions. That was why we needed to use the national typology (when possible) certified by the National Statistical Institute or by a similar institution (Table 1).

As it is highlighted in Table 1, 13 out of 24 institutions/platforms organize creative initiatives in urban destinations, but in 10 of the cases there is a mixed investment either in urban or rural destinations. In order to analyze and compare the activity data per rural/urban typologies, we use the following quadripartite classification:

Urban area: All activities occur in urban areas

Rural area: All activities occur in rural areas

Predominantly urban area: Most activities occur in urban areas

Predominantly rural area: Most activities occur in rural areas

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Institutions/Platforms That Are Involved in Creative Tourism: Rural and Urban Analysis

The comparative study between the institutions with rural and urban characteristics arises from one of the gaps identified in a previous work (Remoaldo et al., 2019) concerning the need to verify in greater detail the data collected in institutions worldwide.

A total of 174 activities of creative tourism were identified (Supplementary Material; available online) and developed during 2017 and were analyzed on the following dimensions (10 out of 20 items on the database): (a) number of institutions per rural/urban typology, (b) number of activities carried out by the institutions, (c) location of institutions, (d) number of institutions per country, (e) approach of activities developed by each institution, (f) type of activities carried out, (g) the language used by the institutions, (h) price of activities, (i) periodicity of activities, and (j) type of participants in the activities carried out by the institutions. We chose these items for analysis because they allowed us to characterize and analyze the activities developed by the institutions and the differences between urban and rural areas.

Considering the institutions studied, the majority are located in urban areas (a total of 13 institutions), and only one is located and organizes creative activities exclusively in a rural area. The urban context appears to be the largest one if we are to consider seven more institutions which develop activities in predominantly urban areas (a total of 20), compared with only four that, in general, are more concerned with rural areas (one in rural area + three in predominantly rural areas; Supplemental Figure S1; available online).

The predominance of the urban context is confirmed with 48.3% of the total activities compared with 0.6% of the activities developed exclusively in rural areas. The first percentage goes up to 81.1% when considering also the predominantly urban areas, and to 19.0% if one takes into consideration the predominantly rural areas (Supplemental Figure S2; available online).

Table 1
Source Used for Rural–Urban Typology

Institution name	Country	Name of creative tourism initiatives per rural–urban typology
Census Bureau	USA	Urban area—City of Santa Fe; Creativity Workshop
Central Statistics Office	Ireland	Urban area—Creativity Workshop
Creative Tourism Network	Spain	Predominantly urban area—Creative Tourism Network
Czech Statistical Office	Czech Republic	Urban area—Creativity Workshop
Department of Statistics Singapore	Singapore	Urban area—Creativity Workshop
Fundación BBVA	Spain	Urban area—Ibiza creative; Creativa Barcelona; Visit Empordanet; Lucena; Creativity Workshop
INEA Istituto Nazionale di Economia Agraria	Italy	Predominantly urban area—Creative Tourism Tuscany
IBGE	Brazil	Urban area—Creativity Workshop
Iceland Statistics	Iceland	Urban area—Porto Alegre Creative Tourism
Instituto Nacional de Estadística	Guatemala	Urban area—Creativity Workshop
L’Institut National de la Statistique – INSTAT	Madagascar	Predominantly urban area—Guatemala Creative Tourism
L’Observatoire des Territoires	France	Predominantly rural area—Madagascar Explorer
National Statistical Office Thailand	Thailand	Urban area—Biot; Louvre Lens; Créative Paris
Office for National Statistics	England	Predominantly urban area—Creative Tourism Thailand
Piano Strategico Nazionale per lo Sviluppo Rurale	Italy	Urban area—Dance Holidays
Statistics Belgium	Belgium	Predominantly rural area—Easy Frascati
Statistics Bureau	Japan	Urban area—Studia in Italy
Statistics Canada	Canada	Predominantly urban area—Le Pays des Vallées
Statistik Austria	Austria	Predominantly urban area—Airserve (Japan)
TIPAU 2014 from Instituto Nacional de Estatística	Portugal	Urban area—Saint-Jean-Port-Joli—Village creative
		Predominantly rural area—Creative Tourism Austria
		Predominantly urban area—Loulé Criativo
		Rural area—Cerdeira Village Art & Craft
		Urban area—Creativity Workshop

Source: Authors’ own elaboration.

This confirms what has already been highlighted by several authors (e.g., Lewis & Donald, 2009; Scott, 2001, 2007; Van Heur, 2010b) which is that there is a greater concentration of institutions and activities in urban areas than in rural areas since cities attract more qualified human capital (creative class), and cultural and creative industries, thus, allowing for the development of creative projects and activities.

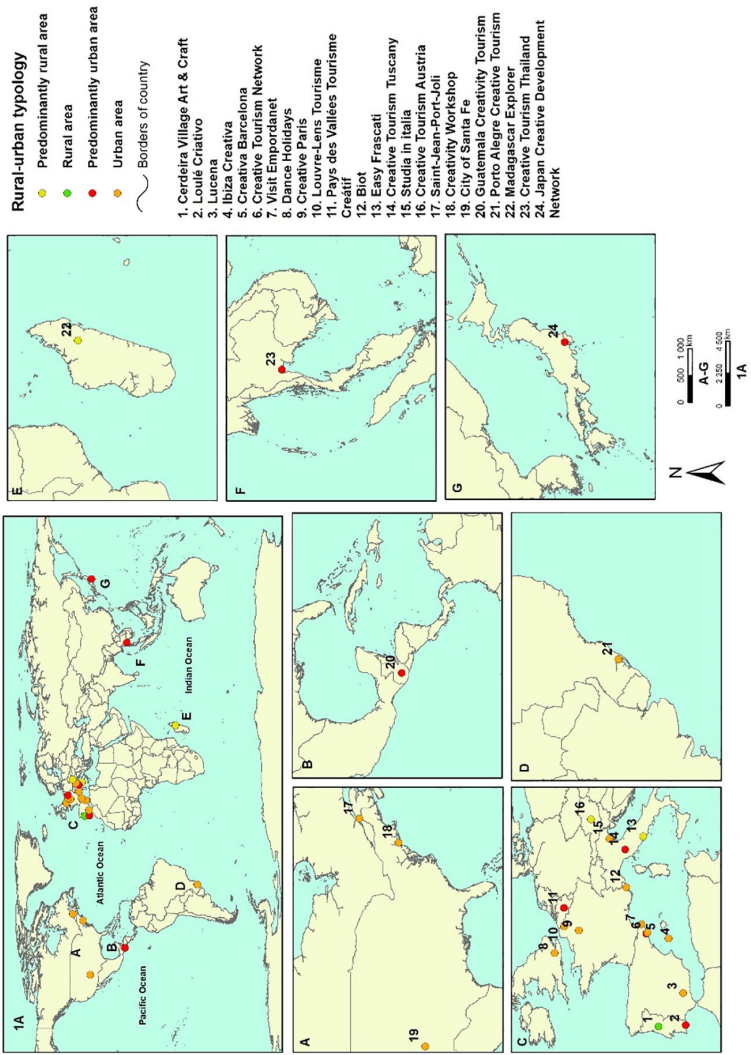
As far as the American continent and Asia are concerned, the institutions/platforms operate mainly in urban areas (Figure 1). Madagascar has also a mixed system but acts predominantly in rural areas. Europe maintains a variety of actions in rural and urban spaces (with highest incidence of action in urban spaces), and, at a global level, it is the one with the highest registration in rural areas. When analyzing the European space in greater detail, Portugal (Central region) seems to be the only country whose activities are located in just rural areas (Figure 1).

The number of institutions dedicated to creative tourism is still low and involves a small number of countries. This happens because most of them, even if they have initiated their activities between 1988 and 2015, were created only in the last few years. Even if the current concentration of creative tourism program is most clearly located in Europe ($n = 16$), the first creative tourism networks appeared in Madagascar (Madagascar Explorer), the United States of America (Santa Fe), and Japan (Japan Creative Development Network; Supplemental Figure S3; available online). The first two emerged 30 years ago followed by Japan. Southern Europe countries are more active in terms of developing creative tourism activities. One could even ask: Is it because they have more saturated tourism markets, and therefore, need to develop new products and try to attract new audiences? Also, is it because southern Europe has a rich heritage (tangible and intangible) and creative tourism flows as an evolution of cultural tourism? Perhaps this is in line with a more dynamic approach (with co-creation) in what concerns the interaction with tourists.

What about the contribution of each country to the development of creative tourism? Spain has got the largest number of institutions working in urban areas, having registered four institutions, followed by France with three institutions, and the United States with two (Supplemental Figure S3; available online). These findings can be explained by the fact that these three countries present several important urban centers which contribute to the creative tourism industry (e.g., New York, Paris, and Barcelona), each one of them with a large concentration of the creative class resulting from a rich cultural diversity, services, entertainment, infrastructures, and qualified human capital (Van Heur, 2010b).

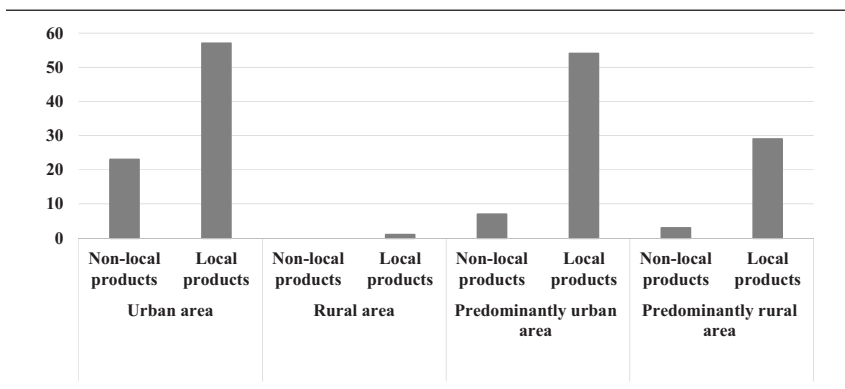
In 90% of the activities, tourists were invited to co-create in line with the more genuine concept of creative tourism. For the rest of the initiatives, they were mere observers. Also, something which was not made clear on the websites and other social networks of each institution was the profile of the organizers/lecturers of the activity and the type of relationship between them and the tourists. Some of the narratives taken from the interviews made with the people in

Figure 1
Location of Creative Tourism Institutions per Urban/Rural Area Typology



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Figure 2
Local and Nonlocal Products Used in the Activities Developed by Creative Tourism Institutions per Urban/Rural Typology



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

charge of the 12 institutions, and who answered positively to our request, are transcribed below:

Also, it is essential to emphasize the interest of visitors in knowing and participating in the process of crafts, which will increase the self-esteem of craftsmen. What we sell are authentic products. You can only see, make and buy this type of product if you visit the destination. This is important for tourists because they feel creative and also get to know the local culture and craftsmanship a little better. (Visit Empordanet, Spain)

(. . .) The best practices we offer are suited to the internationally expected concept. To work on the question of the artist network itself and how they should act together with tourists. What we were unable to do was to consolidate this relationship because we must act as artists, businessmen, teachers and trainers. The most valuable thing we took from it was the contact between the trainer/artist and the target public. What did not work so well in our project was the fact that artists could not tell what their role was within the network of artists and partners of the project and, thus, they could not promote their work and learn from their own network of artists through exchanges of experience (. . .). (Creative Tourism of Porto Alegre, Brazil)

The majority of the institutions ($n = 19\%-79.1\%$) focus on local products either in urban or rural areas. They carry out initiatives that “speak” about the local culture and the local community and reveal a good attachment and involvement to the territory where they act (Figure 2). Nevertheless, only 52% of the activities had information on periodicity. Moreover, only 31% included the

activities' dates. These results highlight a deficit of creative tourism communication with the institutions analyzed.

Proportionally, however, the urban and predominantly urban areas have more expressive activities related to local products than rural areas/predominantly rural areas. This is due to the fact that rural areas do not have a large concentration of qualified human capital, networks of partnerships, and infrastructures, which leads to a difficulty in creating products with a link to culture and the local community (Selada et al., 2011; Van Heur, 2010b).

Bearing all these difficulties in mind, we have to evaluate the strategies creative tourism institutions should develop to solve these problems. It would be interesting to analyze whether its strategic orientation should be focused on local products and destinations as a way of promoting tourism. Considering that creative tourism is a strong activity for developing the attractiveness of regions, it is important to analyze the best way to achieve it. These institutions are a vehicle for the development of rural territories and the exploitation of local products as a cultural interest and the main reason for tourists to visit (Beynon et al., 2015; Lysgård, 2016; Markusen, 2006; Mcgranahan & Wojan, 2007a; Petrov, 2007).

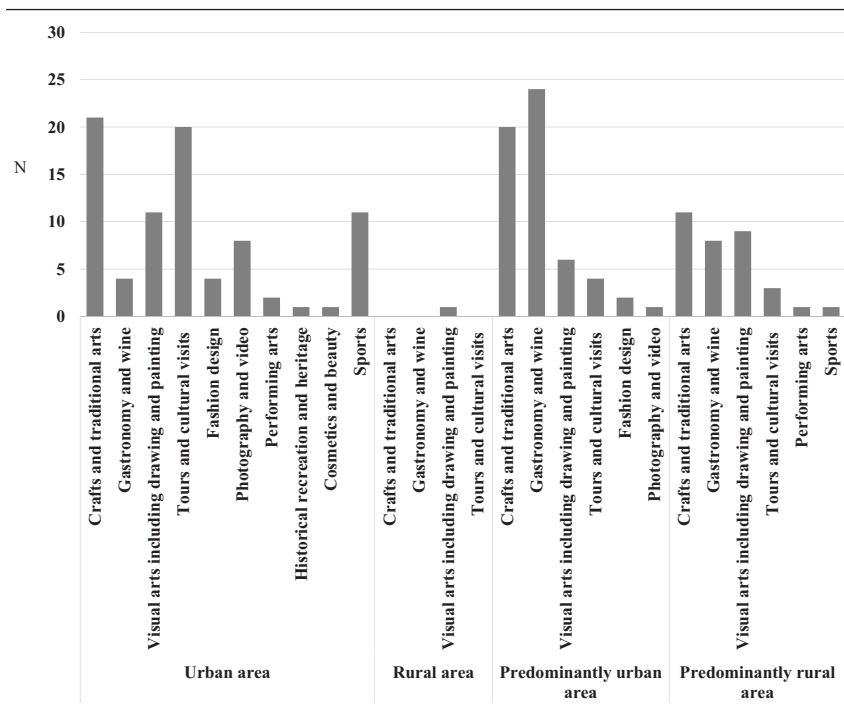
Depending on the type of activity, it is possible to identify which crafts, tours and cultural visits and visual arts, followed by sports and photography and video, are the most requested ones in urban areas, in parallel with their diversity. In fact, urban areas offer more diversified types of activities, but this diversity decreases in the case of institutions that act in rural areas. This fits the profile from the predominantly urban areas, even if gastronomy and wine attract a higher number of activities in these areas, and sports do not offer the same level of interest because related tours and cultural visits are less organized. The profile from rural areas and predominantly rural areas is less diversified but it is in line with the one we got from the other typologies (Figure 3).

Also, we found that there is a greater concentration of activities related to cooking (e.g., Massa-Madre: the chemistry of bread and other variations—Loulé Criativo, Home cooking in Kyoto—Japan Creative Development Network), visits to vineyards, and workshops on wines (e.g., Grape Harvest—Loulé Criativo, Wine Workshops: Gartenhotel & Weingut Pfeffel—Creative Tourism Austria), sculpture (e.g., sculpture workshop—Saint-Jean-Port-Joli—Village Créative and Creative Tourism Austria), painting (e.g., painting workshop—Porto Alegre Creative Tourism and Creative Tourism Tuscany), and handicrafts (e.g., basketry and pottery—Ibiza Creativa, handicraft workshops—Studia in Italy).

A more complete indication of the activities developed by all the institutions is presented in the Supplemental Appendix of the article (available online). Only the activities that are clearly identified in the websites were considered. Activities certified by Creative Tourism Network were considered as creative activities.

Of the 12 institutions from which the interviews were obtained, we noted that in five cases they focused on other activities related to new craft workshops, new

Figure 3
Type of Activity Developed by Each Institution per Urban/Rural Typology



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

workshops, and platforms for sharing ideas and experiences, and creating itineraries and innovative tourism products. But none of them were able to say for sure what kind of activities might be developed in the future. There could be two explanations for that. One is the fact that they are involved in a business and know that the process of imitation is frequent. The other one could be that they are not yet aware of the new products they ought to develop, even if they are certain that they have to change the offer. Some of the narratives are transcribed below:

We had a lot of workshops, but some of them had very few people registered. So we had to rethink new workshops and adapt to our target audience. (Porto Alegre Creative Tourism, Brazil)

The biggest challenge has been, and is still to this day, to let the clients know in depth the value of Italian craftsmanship. I think Studia in Italia was the first agency to offer this kind of workshops in Italy and for us it is an honor to be in close contact with Italian craftsmen and create new programs with them and share ideas.

Table 2
Language Used in Activities by Institutions and per Urban/Rural Typology

Language	Urban area	Rural area	Predominantly urban area	Predominantly rural area
Without information	4	0	1	0
Spanish (local language)	24	0	0	0
Portuguese (local language)	2	1	46	0
English (local language)	80	1	58	6
French	34	0	1	0
Italian (local language)	16	0	0	3
Japanese (local language)	0	0	3	0
Thai (local language)	4	0	0	0
Dutch (local language)	0	0	1	0
Austrian (local language)	0	0	0	26

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

We would like to create a new platform where our clients could share experiences because we strongly believe that creative tourism will grow in the near future. (Studia in Italia, Italy)

Regarding the languages used in the activities developed in the field of creative tourism, it is worth noting the difficulty in obtaining any information about them. Of the 174 activities, 145 activities present the information in English, 49 in Portuguese, 35 in French, 26 in Austrian, 24 in Spanish, 19 in Italian, four in Thai, three in Japanese and one in Dutch. There is also an increasingly frequent use of mother tongues and less use of English or French as internationally used languages (Table 2). Also, we conclude that there is a greater diversification of languages in the urban areas and predominantly urban areas (Table 2) due to the fact that these spaces present a great cultural diversity.

Concerning the prices of activities, there is not much information available, either on websites or other social networks, particularly, in rural or predominantly rural areas. Most of the activities were short (less than a day), allowing the registration fee not to be high.

It was clear that most of the partnerships created are local. This was also confirmed by the narratives from the interviews. Through those interviews, we came to know that there are three institutions whose activities do not include partnerships. The remaining institutions have partnerships with local artisans ($n = 2$), and local entrepreneurs and institutions ($n = 3$) or even with international institutions, and regional and public places ($n = 4$). Two out of the three that do not have partnerships have already been part of the Creative Tourism Network, but due to the economic crisis they have failed to pay the membership fees and were excluded:

Until 2016, we were on the Creative Tourism Network. But right now, we do not know if we will continue in the network because of the political and economic crisis. (Porto Alegre Creative Tourism, Brazil)

Easyfrascati was part of the Creative Tourism Network, which is wonderful. Unfortunately, I cannot spare the membership fee. Easyfrascati doesn't develop its own activities under its own "brand" but collects all local offers to be visible on one website. (Easyfrascati, Italy)

Partnerships are relevant and should be improved in the short/medium term, at least in the countries that have several creative tourism institutions.

Of the 174 activities, 142 do not present information on the amount to pay for the initiatives, 10 have the lowest values (€15 to €100), and nine the highest values (\geq €500). Of the 19 activities whose prices are known, eight have duration of 3½ hours. The greater diversity of prices in urban areas, reaching higher values for activities (€500 or more), followed by activities with values between €105 and €500 should also be noted. Those with the lowest prices are related to the development of activities like gastronomy, painting, sculpture, and crafts (between €15 and €100; Supplemental Figure S4; available online).

The lack of information on the prices of activities makes it difficult for the visitor to choose the activity and opt for a tourist destination and a touristic product. We confirmed that in the urban areas there is no information about the periodicity of the activities (61 activities – Supplemental Figure S5; available online). This fact about periodicity points once again to the scarcity of information provided by the institutions that organize creative tourism activities (Supplemental Figure S5; available online). According to the institutions that give an indication of the frequency of their activities, 30 activities occur daily and 33 twice a year.

While exploring the number of activities carried out by the institutions, we found out that the lack of information regarding the number of visitors is also a constant (Supplemental Figure S6; available online). From 174 activities, 100 (rural area, predominantly urban, and predominantly rural areas) do not present any information about the type of participants involved.

Of the 74 activities from which we were able to get some information, residents of predominantly urban areas are the ones who participate the most in creative tourism activities, which corresponds to 46 activities (Supplemental Figure S6; available online). Tourists participated in 28 activities (Supplemental Figure S6; available online) in urban and rural areas (16.1%, Supplemental Figure 7; available online).

In urban areas, the institutions do not present information about the activities carried out on a regular basis. In predominantly urban areas the type of participant is the resident, and in the predominantly rural areas, the tourists (Supplemental Figures S6 and S7; available online).

It is very important to identify the profile of the creative tourists and to find the reasons why their participation in these activities is still very small. It is necessary to identify the strategies to follow, so that in the future, participation in the activities is more. It is also necessary to identify the kind of activities tourists are interested in to develop creative tourism in a more sustainable way. And it is also important to ascertain whether these creative tourists are international or national ones.

Creative tourism institutions in urban and predominantly urban areas present more information on the activity to be undertaken and greater contact with the culture and local community compared with rural and predominantly rural areas (Supplemental Figure S8; available online). This is justified by the greater number of activities developed in urban spaces, creative industries, and qualified human capital, which help in the development and the dissemination of these activities.

In rural and urban spaces, institutions carry out initiatives that bring visitors closer to the community (Richards & Wilson, 2006; Richards, 2011) through learning and cocreation activities (Binkhorst, 2007; Richards & Raymond, 2000) engaging the residents (Remoaldo et al., 2019; Richards, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The present study tried to answer three questions and aimed to achieve the following three objectives: (a) to diagnose the creative tourism main practices and activities developed worldwide, with special regard to institutions certified by CTN; (b) to evaluate the differences between creative tourism practices and activities in rural and urban territories; (c) and to try to move forward with proposals for new creative tourism practices and activities.

The main results show that after almost 30 years of discussion, creativity continues to be a fancy word which has not reached a consensus yet, even if it is still seen as an important tool for growth and development of territories. This is also true in what concerns the touristic activity and the creative tourism concept.

Creative tourism activities that are being developed worldwide, part of them around three decades old, confirm the model and theories installed since at least the 1990s, which highlight the notion that urban contexts are more attractive and are more likely to develop a sustainable model in this segment. As far as those areas are concerned, one will have a better chance to find more qualified trainers for the activities as the number of residents and tourists in these places is greater.

Institutions develop activities mainly in urban/predominantly urban areas and most of the activities are developed in these kinds of territories.

Also, we can conclude that research on the subject has focused mainly on urban studies of industries and creative initiatives in global cities, capitals, and large metropolitan areas, leaving aside small cities and rural areas.

There is not a significant difference between the profile of activities in those areas and the rural/predominantly rural areas, even if they are more diversified in urban/predominantly urban areas.

The idea that a successful approach to creative tourism is connected not only to its own definition but also to the correct approach to a creative network in which the municipality and all entities and actors shall play a central role in the development of activities and creative experiences in smaller and medium-sized cities must be reinforced.

In addition, it should be noted that the concepts used on the analysis of the theories of large cities are reproduced in the same way for smaller ones, and cannot and should not be applied to the latter, let alone to the rural regions. These analyses lead to ignorance concerning the evaluation of the sociospatial dynamics of this phenomenon in small cities and rural areas.

The lack of information on the prices of activities, their periodicity and on participants and organizers/lecturers, strong elements in the decision making of potential creative tourists, makes us conclude that they operate mainly on a local and domestic market and that a more strategic kind of communication must be developed. Perhaps they could begin by creating partnerships, as in many countries there are already several institutions operating in creative tourism.

Although it was not possible to get information from most of the institutions, we ascertained that the residents of the municipality were the main participants in the activities. Once again, we should point out the fact that it is very important to identify the profile of the creative tourists and to find the reasons why their participation in these activities is still very small. The serious difficulties in getting an interview from the leaders of the institutions (some of them did not even provide a contact) lead us to think that they should be more open-minded about the market and that working together can be far more positive than working alone in such a globalized world. Communication channels between local and regional players need to improve; we should also try to strengthen the role of these agents through institutionalized partnerships with municipalities and official cultural and tourism associations.

Generally, rural areas are not part of the traditional tourist circuit. The urban areas tend to concentrate most of the arrivals and investments from massive tourism activity. Creative tourism emerges as an important strategy for sustainable local development for small towns and rural areas. Also, creative tourism can be used as an important tool for community empowerment and the enhancement and preservation of traditional crafts, which in the past were viewed pejoratively or linked to poverty (Khalid et al., 2019; Miettinen, 2005; Remoaldo et al., 2020). In addition, they help safeguard material and intangible heritage and provide more sustainable development based on rudimentary practices and lifestyles more sustainable and linked to circular economy principles.

Creative tourism can be considered a niche form of cultural tourism, but it has a lot of potential benefits for the intangible cultural heritage. One of its benefits is, for example, the fact that it can enhance local traditions and help tourist

engage with the locals, in a meaningful authentic way. Therefore, traditions that may be disappearing locally, but which may be of interest to other people worldwide can be helped to continue through creative tourism, through an organic process involving the interaction between tourists and the local community and contributing to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage for the further generations (Remoaldo et al., 2020).

The research contributes to a deeper knowledge of creative tourism as very scant information has been published about the practices of managers enrolled in this type of segment. The managers interviewed continue to develop a model that is related to the origins of creative tourism, that is, by using local trainers and focusing on cocreation. The emersion of tourists in the local culture continues also to be a central concern to them.

The results obtained had also practical implications, by helping the institutions develop a more structured network and be aware of their own difficulties that are similar to the other institutions. Only with the creation of more structured partnerships they can combat seasonality and offer a continuous offer during the year. The same for the more structured digital marketing they need to implement. Perhaps by forming a collaborative network and profiting of the using of the same services they can offer more economic sustainable services.

The present research has some limitations, even if it is the first time that it is done at international level. Part of the limitations derives from the absence of data from the institutions that offer creative tourism activities and the difficulty in revealing their practices.

In future investigations, it would be important to investigate how many of these creative activities are disseminated and promoted and through what kind of channels.


There is this firm idea that a timely promotion of these creative agendas is going to be hard.

An urgent analysis on the creative tourist profile is also needed, but it will only be achieved with the support of the institutions that organize creative tourism activities. What type of people are attracted to creative tourism experiences and why do they participate? Which are their main motivations and their profile? What kind of information sources do creative tourists use to find the experiences they participate in?

The new practices for the improvement of creative tourism initiatives will have to be based on a better planning of the activities, both regarding an adaptation to the tourist profile and the typology of the activities, the adjustment of costs, reorganization of agendas and the reinforcement of cooperative partnerships in the form of organization, promotion, monitoring, and evaluation.

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SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

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