

Green Tourism Synergies with Cultural and Creative Industries

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Green tourism is part of the global effort to create a more sustainable living environment, taking into account the needs of both the industry, the tourists and the local communities. A number of studies have been published on sustainable and/or green tourism discussing problems of “carrying capacity, control of tourism development, and the relevance of the term to mass or conventional tourism”.

cultural and creative industries (CCIs)

sustainability messages

green tourism

1. Cultural and Creative Industries: History and Terminology

Arts and culture are an essential part of people's everyday lives, as they are related to important aesthetic human creations, almost all human interactions and practices on a daily basis, as well as meaning-making practices in specific spatiotemporal contexts. Parallel to scientific endeavors, art is believed to be a means of presenting the truth for mankind, the essence of humanity and the world beyond it. Stemming from tradition and aiming at innovation, culture is considered extremely significant in regard to personal choices and/or social collectivities, the formation of life values and everyday practices.

The term “cultural industry” was introduced in the book *“The Dialectics of Enlightenment”* by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, the main agents of the Frankfurt School, a group of researchers associated with the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany. Influenced by Marxist theory, Adorno and Horkheimer talk about the alienation of the individual in the framework of commercialized economy, stemming from mechanized and standardized work. This automatized work routine is extended to one's free time, encouraging the individual to find pleasure in the products of the culture industry. The Frankfurt School emphasized the organization of cultural goods' production in a mass manufacturing scale but also expressed disapproval of the commercialization of culture. For them, culture was, at the time, “packaged” by the media and offered to masses of passive consumers, just like any other commercial product of the mass society.

During the decades of 1970 and 1980, the easier and wider access to a variety of cultural goods and services, the mediated cultural experience and the so-called democratization of culture created new theoretical discussions and scientific debates. The Birmingham School for Cultural Studies, founded by Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall, questioned the notion of the mass and talked about groups of audiences formed on the basis of gender, age, interests, etc. The role of the receivers of the media messages became of outmost importance for the messages' final perception, and therefore, the notion of the “culture industry” was fundamentally disputed.

The notion “cultural industries”—in plural—was introduced, implying an extension, so as to include, in addition to the mass media, all of the organizations engaged in the production, distribution and promotion of goods and/or services and all of the activities that manage symbolic goods—goods whose primary value stems from their cultural value ^[1]. It is unquestionable, at this time, that there are many better ways to produce and communicate culture in the framework of the culture industries, which was actually one of the reasons for the multiplication of the term. The term “cultural industries” highlights the various forms of cultural production in contemporary settings and the big number of the differentiated functions of the various cultural sectors, as well as the recognition of the role of cultural industries as means of economic growth at the local and/or national level, a fact that connects them with cultural policy ^[2]. Under the term cultural industries, researchers therefore include all of the cultural organizations, profit or non-profit, which present or host cultural goods and/or services: museums, galleries, film industry, performing arts organizations, publications, audiovisual media and all of the cultural activities that can be said to include “industrial ways” in the production and distribution of their goods and/or services. Cultural industries include all human activities associated with identity formation, artistic creation and human creativity, activities that in the distant past were considered personal achievements were transformed into collective tasks and later on into institutional actions. The final product passes through various stages of production many times, with the use of technology, and is finally standardized, distributed to vast audiences, acquires doubtful quality and value and almost always aims at the biggest possible audience and the biggest possible income ^[3].

The notion of the cultural industries, according to Hesmondhalgh [2], is connected to a wide grid of approaches on culture, known as the political economy of culture. The media continue to play a crucial role for cultural industries in recent times, as the importance of the promotion and the communication strategies used, along with the actual creative process, remains of great value and power for the cultural industries. The cultural policy of the 1980s (starting at an international level from UNESCO) confirmed the interconnection of culture and economy, using culture not only as a field of local growth but also as a developing field in employment, such as human resources, and identity formation at a national level. After the Tofflerian “cultural explosion” [4] of the 1990s, a period when cultural organizations over-doubled, infrastructure expanded and a vast number of festivals and cultural institutions were created worldwide, it became clear that cultural industries are dynamic fields of an area’s economic growth and, in many cases, of a destination’s tourism development.

The most contemporary term “creative industries” is even more expanded, so as to include all of the industries characterized by creativity as their raw material [5], where researchers notice “theoretical and practical convergence of the creative arts (individual talent) and the cultural industries (mass scale) in the framework of new media technologies and the new technology of knowledge for the new interactive people-consumers” [6]. Under the term “creative industries”, researchers can find the fashion, sports and video game industries, to name just a few. The categorization, however, is not stable, as the boundaries change in respect to the respective policy [7].

2. Cultural and Creative Industries as Communication Vehicles

For many researchers, the use of both sectors in one phrase (cultural and creative industries) “represents a qualitative augmented industry and a more inclusive concept of economy” [8]. Being production mechanisms themselves, CCIs have adopted sustainable methods in the whole procedure of a good/service creation—from an idea conception to its actual realization. For this research, CCIs will be studied as vehicles through which messages and/or good practices on sustainability are communicated to cultural audiences. Being digitally oriented by their nature, especially after the COVID-19 adventure [9], CCIs connect to various audiences and have developed various channels for such communication: from the cultural goods and/or services themselves to promotional actions, and from audiovisual content for various media to digital and edutainment applications, including creative interactive social media posts and professionally designed web sites.

Apart from their creative and innovative character, CCIs have many major advantages as communication mechanisms. Firstly, they cover wide areas of culture and creativity—from highbrow art to popular cinema and from hand-crafted traditional items to video games—and can therefore promote their products and/or services to wide audiences, covering a large range of ages, interests and financial and sociocultural characteristics. This is a crucial point that affects both local residents—the permanent CCIs’ audiences—and tourists alike, as they all will be able to choose a cultural production or service that fits their taste in their home or visited land. The digital presence that most CCIs have chosen to have help the satisfied cultural viewer and/or listener follow and interact with their creative processes, either before, during or after his/her actual visit in their physical premises. This digital interaction creates special bonds between audiences and the CCIs that people choose to follow, forms communities [10][11] and enhances the role of CCIs as communicators of various messages. Through the above-mentioned relationship building [12], CCIs are considered trustworthy ambassadors of authenticity and life values, and can therefore effectively promote and/or strengthen the ecological value of green tourism.

3. Synergies of the Cultural and Creative Industries with the Tourism Industry

The reasons for choosing to study CCIs as transmitters of messages on green tourism are many. First and foremost, the role of CCIs as both communicators and communication channels is evident throughout their history—the first and biggest cultural industry being the media—and it is a role that they have performed effectively at an international level. In addition, CCIs address their messages to big and extremely varied audiences, as they cover a wide range of interests. There are specific CCIs that can communicate—in an interactive and therefore successful way—with young audiences, such as the film and music industries, the fashion industry, the sports industry, the video game industry, the comics industry and many others. Editions, the media, museums and cultural organizations in general send messages to a wide variety of receivers in terms of age, social and financial status, gender, origins, etc. Most crucially, CCIs—carrying the value-shaping mechanisms of culture—are perceived as trustworthy communicators by a very big, international audience of diverse types. Lastly, CCIs are connected to tourism in various ways, and therefore, potential tourists are likely to search or even follow the digital accounts of the most known CCIs of their chosen destination and therefore receive their messages.

The synergies of CCI with the tourism industry are seen in many cases. Culture as a word, as well as some of its famous visual representations, mostly monuments and landmarks—especially the ones included in Barthes' "language of travel" [13]—have been widely seen on the tourism industry's media, such as postcards, tourist leaflets and posters, destinations' promotional videos, and national tourism organizations' websites and social media posts. The increasing convergence of tourism and culture [14] has been widely discussed between tourism stakeholders and the scientific community. Cultural resources have been repeatedly used by many content producers outside of the tourism industry, as well, from schoolbooks to animation films, movies and TV shows, video games and individuals who wish to describe their travel experience or show it to friends and family through their own snapshots either in frames in their living rooms or through posts on their social media accounts [15]. This is easily recognized because widely recycled cultural imagery is seen as a seal of the authenticity of a place. These repeatedly seen cultural resources function as discriminating factors of a destination and its assets, transferring its "charisma" [16] and highlighting its uniqueness to all potential audiences.

"One must take endless precautions in Paris not to see the Eiffel Tower", Barthes [13] says, as it is the most characteristic sign of Frenchness and therefore promoted in every corner of the city, in every souvenir shop, in every poster. Tourists that choose to visit Paris are prepared for this gaze [17]. They have seen the image of the Eiffel Tower in every schoolbook, in every media image whenever the context is of French nature. They have seen the words "Paris, France" near the Eiffel Tower in every tourist image, on postcards and leaflets, learning that the two are connected and inseparable [16].

Many tourists worldwide have followed the cultural tourism trend during recent decades, travelled to places rich in cultural resources, visited the famous monuments and waited in queues in order to photograph themselves in front of them—chest out, wide smile, in the same posture as everyone else in front of them. Regarding the case study of this research, famous Greek archaeological sites such as the Acropolis or Knossos and Delphi, archaeological museums and/or any kind of ancient monument or object connected to the nation's history are seen as signs of Greekness [18], are cherished and valued as authentic and/or charismatic and are therefore highly visible on tourist products. Such cultural monuments have established a special bond with the tourism industry and their messages are often addressed to tourists.

The recent need for creativity in tourism, the new creative tourism trend, offers visitors the opportunity to come to terms with cultural and creative industries and develop their creative potential through active participation in local traditional activities, courses or experiences [19]. Experience-based tourism is an emerging market of the tourism industry. Activities that give visitors the opportunity to participate include, for example, wine tasting, courses in traditional dances or fishing and cooking, etc. Such activities are important for researchers' study, as through them, value is generated and innovation is encouraged. Furthermore, they are sustainable and mobile [20]. Their most important contribution to tourism development, however, is that they create the much-desired differentiation for a destination and connect visitors to local communities [21]. According to Booyens and Rogerson [22], the synergies between creative industries and tourism can help with tourism growth, and therefore, such synergies should be strengthened by developing creative networks and integrating creative tactics into the image of the destination. As the new generation of cultural tourism (UNESCO), creative tourism brings together cultural heritage, local traditions, the arts and creative industries in order to shape creative potentials for tourists. In this case, value stems from experiences and emotions [23], not tangible objects and visuality.

4. Green Tourism as a Life Value

Values are important elements of any sociocultural formation. They help people distinguish between right and wrong, good and just. They are connected to morality and are traditionally passed from generation to generation. In the era of technoculture, visual immersion and bodiless experiences, values can be passed on through mass and new media mediations. Life values are strongly connected to axiology, ethical theory and moral philosophy in ways that cannot be presented in the context of this paper. The author is mainly concerned with the classification of sustainability awareness and responsibility as something "good" and worthy of acquiring as a life motif and the role of CCI in shaping such classification. The promotion of green tourism could be placed under the more general sustainability awareness umbrella, as people that identify sustainability as one of their core values will probably try to find sustainable practices in all of their activities, including traveling. Bergin-Seers and Mair [24] distinguish emerging green tourists by their environmental behavior at home.

5. Sustainability in Cultural and Creative Industries

The reduction in the negative impact on the environment has been identified as one of the primary goals of almost every business and organization. CCI have followed this guideline, as they play an important role in the global economy [25]. As a

term, sustainability in CCIs refers to social and environmental principles, as well as financial and sustainability issues [8][26]. As stated in Kovaitė et al. [9] and according to EY: Building a Better Working World (2021) and UNESCO (2007), CCIs can create a social inclusive ecosystem and can also integrate technological innovation and cultural diversity. CCIs have been seen as able to lead the way toward transformative sustainability if they work together with other economic sectors [27], while UNESCO (2021) has highlighted the importance of creativity in every sector of sustainability and suggested investment in creativity for environmental protection [28]. According to Papadaki et al. [29], “Examples of good sustainability practices in the CCIs include cultural staff and equipment traveling with mass transportation, fuel-efficient, electric or very few vehicles, use of renewable energy resources during a film production, apply reuse and recycle mechanisms in all the stages of cultural production, use LED lighting in performances, reduce the use of paper and/or implement sustainable design on set and minimize the use of plastic. In addition, many famous actors or singers stand by organizations that care for the environment or create their own ecological initiatives and these actions encourage the participation of people in relevant activities, as such professions, due to their publicity, can create role-models”.

The creative industries are a fast-growing economic sector capable of enhancing sustainability in many ways [14]. It is important to examine the role of CCIs—and their protagonists and therefore representatives—as ambassadors of innovation, creative ideas and societal change, as well as their ability to influence sustainable development [30] as primary drivers that strive to meet societal needs [9]. CCIs are widely seen as cross-innovation leaders, while their ability to promote sustainability has been studied in previous research projects [14], underlying their importance as sources of cultural and commercial value.

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