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PLANNING FOR CULTURAL TOURISM: THE JOINED UP APPROACH

ABSTRACT

Many cities around the globe are now considering tourism facilities and their remarkable revenues in order to become competitive in the global economy. In many of these cities a great emphasis is given to the cultural tourism as it plays an important role in the establishment of creative and knowledge-base of cities. The literature points out the importance of local community support in cultural tourism. In such context, the use of new approach and technologies in tourism planning in order to increase the community participation and competitiveness of cities’ cultural assets gains a great significance. This paper advocates a new planning approach for tourism planning, particularly for cultural tourism, to increase the competitiveness of cities. As part of this new approach, the paper introduces the joined up planning approach integrated with a collaborative decision support system: ‘the community-oriented decision support system’. This collaborative planning support system is an effective and efficient tool for cultural tourism planning, which provides a platform for local communities’ participation in the development decision process.

KEYWORDS

Cultural tourism; Tourism planning; Joined up planning approach; Community-oriented decision support system.

INTRODUCTION

Technological advances and social changes are among the characteristics of the 21st century cities. In this new era, the knowledge era, the scale and speed of urban transformation have created new political, economical, and social realities that have fundamentally changed the role of cities. Due to globalisation and the knowledge economy, urban centres are now linked electronically, by various information and communication technologies, with hundreds of other urban centres and millions of citizens both within their geographical confines and around the world. In this knowledge era, cities that become productive and efficient are rapidly turning into centres of surging economic activity, and cities that grow inefficient and unable to compete are shrinking quickly. In order to become competitive in the global knowledge economy, cities also need to consider tourism facilities and their remarkable income as the global compression of time and space and the increase in a reflexive global consciousness has clearly been integral to the expansion of international tourism (Durmaş et al. 2008a).

Tourism exists as a powerful economic force in the support of local communities and global markets. At present, tourism activities comprise one of the world’s largest industries, and the world’s largest service sector industry with over three trillion dollars in revenues produced (Durmaş et al. 2008b). Tourism is implicated in identifying issues through a process of differentiation. The differentiations that are performed in the global space of tourism are vital to the formation and deployment of local identities. Tourism is a contemporary export industry, whereas traditional export industries move goods to the consumer, but tourism brings the consumer to the place. It realises this by producing the local assets for export. On the one hand, some types of tourism, such as large amusement parks, are largely independent from the culture of the places on which they are located (Gimblett 1996). On the other hand, other types focusing on cultural values and assets are strongly predicated on the presence of the locality, and only a successful tourism planning can preserve and market the uniqueness of these places (Mason 2008; Ivanovic 2009).

Tourism planning is widely viewed as a way of maximising the benefits of tourism in a locality and mitigating problems that might
occur as a result of development. It is also a continuous process, which seeks to optimise the potential contribution of tourism to human welfare and environmental quality (Yigitcanlar et al. 2008). Tourism is an economic sector that is sensitive to changes in politics and economy or even in fashion (Durmaz et al. 2008b). Therefore, planning policies need to be evaluated considering both exogenous changes and endogenous dynamics. The preparation of a plan monitoring system allowing periodic review and revision of the tourism development plans is an essential requirement of a sound tourism planning process (Pearce 2000). This is mainly because of places with carefully planned development are likely to experience a high rate of success in terms of tourist satisfaction level, economical benefits, and minimal negative impacts on the local social, economic, and physical environments. During the course of time tourism planning significantly evolved from a narrowly focused form of physical planning and unsighted promotion to a more balanced form of planning that recognises the need for greater environmental sustainability, conservation of cultural assets and community involvement (Timothy 1999; Becken and Hay 2007). Tourism development plans vary in scope, scale and approach, as a result a significant body of literature on the methodology of tourism planning has been developed over the past few decades (Sandiford and Ap 1998; Pearce 2000). The recent literature demonstrates the necessity of sustainability and increased collaboration in the tourism planning process (Hall 2008). It also highlights the impacts of tourism on ecology and community development (Keogh 1990; Jamal and Getz 1995; Sautter and Leisen 1999). Additionally, rapidly advancing information and communication technologies are also utilised for tourism planning to benefit from their accuracy, visualisation, analysis, data handling and sharing capabilities (Harrison and Winterbottom 1999; McAdam 1999).

In order to augment competitiveness of cities through cultural tourism, this study proposes the employment of a joined-up and community-based planning approach into tourism planning mechanism. A new ‘community-oriented decision support system’ is presented in this paper as a model for successive tourism planning and development. This model also incorporates sustainable development and community building principles into the tourism planning process and helps cities’ competitiveness in the global tourism market by supporting the preservation of their cultural and natural assets, uniqueness and identity, and assist them in shaping their future.

**Sustainable and Community Oriented Tourism Planning**

Social, cultural, environmental and organisational aspects of tourism have received relatively less attention than economic concerns in planning. Governments, which request for technical assistance invariably, have an underlying agenda of maximising economic benefits (McKercher and Du Cros 2002). The socio-cultural and environmental implications are often overlooked despite the integral role of the physical environment and the social setting to tourism marketing. In the early 1990s popularity of sustainable urban development has increased in virtually all areas concerning economic activity, social development and the environment (Teriman et al. 2009). Travel and tourism are not immune to this trend. Internationally, the Hague Declaration on Tourism and the GLOBE’90 Action Strategy for Sustainable Tourism are among many others that have set out general criteria seen as necessary to attain this new paradigm of sustainable development. To achieve sustainability, the tourism industry must go much further than the somewhat fashionable greening and conservation of tourism products: partnership, integration, community involvement, and environmental stewardship are the new orders of the day (Godfrey 1998). Recently, environmental and socio-cultural considerations are examined more seriously, and the link between tourism and sustainable urban development has received growing endorsement (McKercher and Du Cros 2002; Ivanovic 2009). The tourism industry, particularly cultural tourism, has entered a new phase of sensibility, with many tolerances in principal or even active supportiveness of the sustainable development (Becken and Hay 2007).

Sustainable tourism is about natural and cultural asset management, where development and activity guarantees the integrity of the resources on which the industry is based on, while maintaining economic viability. Its long-term goal is to enable a comprehensive development process; where products draw from, and add to, the quality of local resources, based on a sound understanding of market demand and motivations; where tourism development takes place...
within the context of all socio-economic development, with tourism options considered alongside other land-use development options; and where the local population is involved in planning and management decisions, with costs and benefits fairly distributed among tourism businesses, promoters and the host community (Godfrey 1998). Sustainable tourism is thus not an end in itself, nor a unique or isolated procedure, but rather an independent function of a wider and permanent socio-economic development process. Sustainable tourism could also be a major source of revenue for self-financing of natural areas and growing interest in nature-based or eco-tourism as well as cultural tourism all over the world (Weaver 2002). It is a major means of self-financing of cultural and natural sources and protected areas. Particularly in terms of cultural tourism, sustainable development contributes to the conservation of archaeological, ethnographical or current socio-cultural assets of a locality or society (McKercher and Du Cros 2002; Hall 2008).

In many parts the world, residents of tourism destinations have little, if any, voice in the developmental process of the tourism functions, as a result they cannot do much in preventing unpleasant consequences. Therefore, tourism industry is often criticised for its imposed planning decisions on the local population from outside groups or planning bodies. It is commonly accepted that tourism activities’ impacts are most apparent at the level of the destination community; researchers have started to emphasise the need to decentralise tourism planning and to integrate it into broader community-oriented development objectives (Timothy 1999). Moreover, greater levels of public participation in tourism development have been heralded by many planning specialists (Inskeep 1991; Timothy 1999).

In recent years, there has been a shift in tourism planning moving away from formal and rigid methods towards more flexible, iterative processes for creating and implementing strategies. It is argued that these continuous processes are more responsive to changing circumstances and should involve ongoing monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptation. Increasing emphasis is also being placed on tourism planning involving the multiple stakeholders affected by tourism, including residents, public authorities and business interests, so that they may collaborate to develop a shared vision for tourism (Ritchie 1993; Jamal and Getz 1997; Yuksel and Bramwell 1999). Continuous tourism planning process can allow for the involvement of stakeholders in the formulation, implementation and adaptation of decisions. Continuing community involvement means that planning can respond on an ongoing basis to stakeholder views on tourism issues, proposals in plans, and on plan implementation. Typical stakeholders in a tourism planning process are presented in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Stakeholders in tourism planning process (derived from Sautter and Leisen 1999)](image)

There are many different and effective techniques for achieving host community involvement in tourism planning, including drop-in centres, nominal group technique sessions, citizen surveys, focus groups, citizen task forces, consensus-building meetings. Community involvement generally refers to empowering local residents in determining their own goals for the development, and consulting with locals in determining their needs and concerns from tourism. Sound and sustainable tourism planning also includes involvement of stakeholders, interest groups and the public in decision-making. Increasing income, employment, and education opportunities for locals are effective incentives to get community members involved in the cultural tourism planning and development processes.

Most characteristics of community-oriented tourism planning are derived from trans-active and advocacy planning traditions, wherein weak interest groups are defended and local residents are given more control over the social processes that govern their welfare and also preservation of the cultural assets without jeopardising or totally gentrifying the local community (Richards 2006). This approach has
received remarkable attention in the literature in response to the obvious shortcomings of the traditional economical emphasis on tourism development. Community-oriented tourism planning recognises that social, cultural and environmental considerations need to be included in planning decisions and that tourism should serve both for tourists and the local residents. Host communities, as their right, should have a voice in shaping their futures and extended involvement of the host community is obligatory for maximising socio-economic benefits of tourism for these communities. Community has a right to demand for active participation in the setting of the tourism agenda and community priorities for tourism development and management cannot be ignored in the planning process. Community-oriented tourism planning requires finding ways of creating more workable partnerships between the tourism industry and host communities as well as developing facilities both for host and guest. A sample framework for community-oriented tourism planning process is presented in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. Community-oriented tourism planning process (derived from King and McVey 2000)](image)

Host community involvement, in the form of shared decision-making, has an important role to play in sustainable tourism planning and management (Weaver 2005). Such involvement offers a potential to improve decision-making, enhance communication and understanding among participants, promote interagency collaboration, and drive the collection and application of information in accordance with the interests and values of participants. Even in cases that a common consensus is not achieved, these approaches offer potential to lay a foundation of trust and understanding which may help future conflicts involving tourism stakeholders and other interest groups be handled more effectively (Williams and Penrose 1998). Therefore, organisation of the negotiation process has key importance in a successful tourism planning. An example of such negotiation organisation process flowchart is illustrated in Figure 3.

![Figure 3. Negotiation organisation in tourism planning (derived from Williams and Penrose 1998)](image)

THE JOINED UP PLANNING APPROACH

Decision-making and planning in tourism development are becoming increasingly complex tasks, since organisations and communities have to come to terms with the competing economic, social and environmental demands of sustainable development (Weaver 2005).
Planners and decision-makers have to consider new approaches for achieving harmony between development, community and environment. The traditional tourism planning process focuses on ‘top-down’ processes where planners, typically work for national, state or local governments, create development and conservation plans. This classical top-down decision-making practice is proved to be not successful achieving aforementioned harmony, mainly because it neglects local communities’ views during the decision-making process (Williams and Stimson 2001).

The formalisation of ‘bottom-up’ community involvement in projects has been driven by past failings of ‘top-down’ approaches. The more contemporary bottom-up planning methods were being pioneered in urban communities particularly in the UK and USA from the late 1960s. These ranged from advocacy planning, in which professional planners acted as advocates for a particular community, bargaining with city authorities on the community’s behalf and interpreting technical language to formation of neighbourhood corporations where participants directly managed state grants to plan their own development programs. However, there remain important gaps in the tourism development via bottom-up planning approach as the coordination of bottom-up planning in large cities poses an enormous challenge (Van Leeuwen and Timmermans 2004).

To avoid disadvantages of both top-down and bottom-up approaches in 1990s the ‘joined-up’ planning approach, which is the integration of top-down and bottom-up approaches, is developed (Gallent 2006). Joined-up approach provides a more connected relationship between technical experts/decision-makers and the community (Inam 2005). Especially in the current information age joined-up approach heavily relies on technology tools and platforms in achieving a consensus and sustainable development (Yigitcanlar and Saygin 2008).

Geographic information system (GIS) is among the useful tools for the joined-up planning approach and the pursuit of this economic, socio-cultural and environmental harmony. GIS can be regarded as providing a toolbox of techniques and technologies of wide applicability for the achievement of sustainable and community-oriented tourism development (Yigitcanlar and Gudes 2008). Spatial or environmental data can be used to explore conflicts, examine impacts and assist decision-making. Impact assessment and simulation are increasingly important in tourism development, and GIS can play a role in auditing environmental conditions, examining the suitability of locations for proposed developments, identifying conflicting interests and modelling relationships (Bahiare and Elliott-White 1999). GIS applications may help in several routine tasks in tourism planning: Data access and routine work; Data integration and management; Resource inventory; Area designation and map overlays; Comparative land-use and impact analysis; The analysis of visual intrusion, and; Community involvement and participation.

GIS applications can also provide at least three different types of information. Tourism asset maps enable planners and stakeholders to analyse the resource set to identify what and how much is available and where they are (both natural and cultural assets) located. It helps planners and managers determine the capability of an area for the creation of new tourism products or services, and identifying locations suitable to tourists and tourism. Tourism use maps enable planners and stakeholders to analyse the resource set to evaluate land-use options and identify zones of conflict or complementarities, such as access points, water, wildlife habitats. Tourism capability maps enable planners and stakeholders to analyse the resource set to monitor tourist resources at risk due to management, planning decisions and other sectors (Bahiare and Elliott-White 1999). In addition, GIS offers considerable scope for sustainable tourism planning and development, whether this follows cultural tourism, eco-tourism or sustainable management paradigm. Lastly, the developments of GIS and associated technologies (i.e. GPS, remote sensing, and wireless technologies) are seen as the means of improving decision-making in tourism planning, by making information more accurate, accessible, meaningful and usable (Yigitcanlar 2006).

COMMUNITY ORIENTED DECISION SYSTEM

GIS applications in sustainable tourism planning are increasingly recognised and can be used to address some of the problems of cultural tourism. However, existing GIS applications need to be customised to be used as a tool for joined-up planning and new decision support models have to be developed. As part of this research a new
joined-up planning approached supported by a GIS-based decision support model is developed for successive tourism planning and increasing the competitiveness of tourist sites while considering host communities needs and sustainability. ‘Community-oriented GIS model’ (CoGIS) is developed as a mechanism to be used for undertaking all of the studies, identifying planning, sustainability and community goals, drawing up the planning guidelines and criteria and collecting data and storing them in the GIS environment. Moreover, the further steps of decision-making, collaboration, participation, negotiation and consensus building are being integrated in the system (Figure 4). Thus CoGIS is a powerful tool to enhance sustainability and citizen participation in tourism planning and development.

Figure 4. Community-oriented decision system (Yigitcanlar 2001)

CoGIS is a resilient system that it can be easily modified depending on the local needs, level of knowledge, environmental aspects, global market demands and economic situations. The basic process of CoGIS is represented in Figure 5. CoGIS simply follows community-oriented tourism planning process that the process of CoGIS begins with the establishment of a partnership agreement between community and the planning authority. A group of experts from an academic institution can act as a moderator team between these groups. The project continues in coordinated dual GIS Centres in the planning authority and host community organisation centres. With technical collaboration and community participation processes the data and information are shared between all groups. The early results, which are the local needs, pre-decisions and technical features are also compared and discussed in these GIS Centres. In the decision platform, community organisations and non-profit organisations have political powers for defending their local needs, environmental and other aspects. In addition, the decisions are published on electronic media as well as the local newspapers for the information and approval of the community (Yigitcanlar 2001). Following this submission, in case of that host community does not accept the decisions or plans, the negotiation organisation process starts over again until a consensus is set between groups and stakeholders in the tourism planning process (Yigitcanlar 2008).

Figure 5. Process of community-oriented decision system (Yigitcanlar 2001)

Common outcomes and products of CoGIS are tourism development plans, tourism resource maps, asset maps, tourism use maps and tourism capability maps in various details and scales. All these maps and plans are published via internet by benefiting from web-based
GIS technology. The system architecture of CoGIS mainly accommodates all of the relational infrastructures between planning authority, community GIS Centres and other external participators. These infrastructures enclose transparent, secure, fast and cooperative network configurations.

Planning authority GIS centre has an organisation that employs a GIS champion, group facilitators, tourism planners, urban planners, legislative advisors, utilities planners, decision-makers, finance planners, tour operators, environmental planners, socio-economic planners, architects and other experts. These technical and decision groups work in a collaborative manner by using CoGIS in centralised or distributed modes with the educative directions of the GIS champion and group facilitators. Meanwhile, different actors also pursue above-mentioned procedure in the community GIS centre. The actors in the community GIS centre are stakeholders, representatives of major interest groups – residents, local business, competitors, activist groups and local tourism organisations and individuals (Figure 6). These participants occupy with the CoGIS mechanism through the educative directions of the GIS champion and group facilitators. Participants join the decision-making process throughout the centralised or distributed stages (Yigitcanlar 2001).

Since most tourism planning problems have spatial or geographical characteristics and tend to be increasingly multi-dimensional and complex, CoGIS applications have been of benefit. For example, adaptation of CoGIS into tourism planning helps in: Planning new tourism facilities sensitive to the cultural requirements of local people; Protecting the visual integrity of historic sites and places in order to minimise the impact of tourist facilities; Destination dynamics; people-carrying capacities; Tourism impact analyses; Reaching decisions related to environmental impact assessments or audits; Production of environmental statements; Integrated asset (e.g. cultural and natural) management approach, and; Estimation of spatial variation in climatic change. It is likely that projects could be more accurately managed using the techniques and tools found in a GIS environment. CoGIS offers powerful tools for providing information to support decision-making in sustainable tourism planning and management, and promotes integrated management of resources based on sensitivity and the needs of host communities and visitors. CoGIS helps in constructing a healthier relationship between guests and hosts and shows respect to the environment. Therefore, it can be used as an efficient tool for increasing competitiveness of tourism destinations in the global tourism market, including cultural tourism.

CONCLUSION

Along with the recent technological advances, social changes and globalisation, tourism incomes of the world cities have become a noticeable amount that might be able to cover a large portion of the development and management expenses of these cities. Therefore, increasing the competitiveness of tourism destinations has become an important issue for cities to augment their share in the international tourism market. In augmenting competitiveness of cities tourism planning and particularly collaborative decision-making approaches plays an important role. For that reason central and local administrators and tourism planners should take into account of new concepts, paradigms and technologies in tourism planning practice that some are discussed in this paper (i.e. joined-up planning approach, sustainable urban development, host community involvement, GIS and internet).
Adaptation of community-oriented decision support systems such as CoGIS into cultural tourism planning has numerous technical and social benefits and contributions to tourism planning and development. These benefits and contributions include: Predicting and examining the possible short and long-term outcomes; Empowering the tourism planning process; Involving ethical issues more than most of the other technology implementations; Supplying equal access to data and information for the users over the internet; Promoting public and private efforts; Improving the capacity to make appropriate use of the analytical tools and data sets in tourism planning; Increasing emphasis on the role of host communities in creation and evaluation of the tourism development plans; Accommodating an equitable representation of diverse views, preserving contradiction, inconsistencies; Promoting citizen participation in host community decision-making; Endeavouring to encourage and empower community-based organisations; Attempting for helping communities maintain a healthy balance of tourism growth; Aiding in conserving cultural identity and enhancing citizen consciousness, and; Helping in bridging the gap between technology and social sciences.

As a concluding remark it can be said that it is very important that all community groups, local administrations and planning agencies should make every effort to possess recent information technologies into the tourism planning process. They should also possess an understanding of its power and limitations so that they can view it from a critical perspective. Adaptation of new joined-up model decision-support systems like CoGIS into cultural tourism planning is a new effective consideration that shows communities, planning agencies and local governments strategic and advocacy way of shaping their future. Additionally, it should not be forgotten that the success of tourism planning with a community-oriented system depends, apart from being well designed and willingness, on the appropriate quartet of technology, culture, economics and politics.

REFERENCES


