

CRUISE TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN PORT-CITY INTERFACE: NEW ERA OF THE WATERFRONT, WITH BENEFITS IN A SMART DESTINATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

The cruise tourism that is offered in the Mediterranean, after the conversion of its port cities, has direct implications (a) on the port, which mainly requires wharves and maritime stations, (the latter are not only installed to manage the transit of passengers. They are also intertwined with the creation of a new image of the city by implementing 'unique' buildings, as if they were new gates to the city), (b) on the waterfront, understood as a strategic area of port cities (Pavia, 2011), which drive the modernisation of historical downtowns as a new focal point for urban and maritime life, and (c) on the Mediterranean port city, which is one of the main cultural reasons for cruise passengers since, in many cases, their choice of cruise is based on the destinations offered in their itinerary.

This article is presented as a continuation of the studies of the waterfront where cruise tourism intervenes as the driving axis and important element in the reactivation of the parties –port, waterfront and city–. Therefore, the starting assumption is the study of a new era of the waterfront, in which cruise activities are integrated and combined with the activities of the maritime front, as well as with the historical downtown of the city, to develop an interconnected port-city network and vice versa.

2. METHODOLOGY

To demonstrate the hypothesis, the four stages of the waterfront shall firstly be exposed (Andrade Marques, 2012; Brownill, 2013). Secondly, a fifth stage will be proposed and evaluated as an evolution of the previous ones. It shall include cruise tourism, within the cruise-city interface, since it favours the demands of new maritime-terrestrial infrastructures

and shall analyse the historic downtown as an element that encourages a real connection with the port. Next, a case study shall be conducted, focusing on Mediterranean port cities, understanding cruise tourism as a factor that has not been part of the transformation of the waterfront-city interface, but rather as one more type of tourism that has influenced its reform, and understanding this industry as the main driving force for transformation. Finally, the development of a Smart Cruise Port in a Smart Destination is proposed as an alternative to improvements in the port-city relationship that would significantly improve the cruise-city interface.

3. A NEW STAGE IN THE WATERFRONT: CRUISE TOURISM AS WATERFRONT STIMULUS | HISTORICAL DOWNTOWN

3.1. Evolution of the waterfront: The four major stages

In the 1960s, the first regenerations of maritime fronts were based on the incorporation of tertiary facilities, tourism and leisure facilities, and the displacement of port activities, to transform them into the hub of the city (eg Baltimore's Port (Harborplace)).

In the second stage, which originated in the 1980s, there is a transfer of American experiences to Europe with new proposals characterised by the variety of uses and activities, including residential, so that waterfronts were given a functional purpose. An important example from this period is the London Docklands, in London (Brownill, 1993).

The third stage took place during the 1990s, when major international events brought about an urban regeneration of waterfronts, which became 'cultural epicentres' (Gospodini, 2006) of new projects. This is the case of Barcelona on the occasion of the Olympic Games that were held in 1992.

The last of the four stages, starting in 2000, focused on maintaining or restoring maritime activity - fishing, sports areas - as a distinctive symbol of the waterfront, combining it with the generation of citizen uses that keep the port in the city. This has been the approach used by Genoa, since it has maintained the activities of the ferries and cruises in the Old Port (Gastaldi and Camerin, 2014).

3.2. Waterfront Update

This new stage is presented as a further evolution of the waterfront where the elements from the previous stages - a multitude of uses, architectural pieces that add value and generate a new image of the city, where the character of the port is strengthened - join cruise tourism as the main element of this new phase since they have a spatial peculiarity that drives the restructuring of the urban space. In many cases, cruise tourism involves infrastructural improvements in both the port and the city that allow the revival of historical downtowns and stimulates territorial unity by prompting that port-city connection and vice versa.

In many port cities cruise tourism has had positive effects that greatly benefit not only cruise passengers but also the general public: construction of housing, refurbishment of buildings, provision of public spaces, positioning of points of cultural interest, improvement of the

image of the city and creation of employment. These effects bring with them an improvement in urban regeneration and economic development for the benefit of the local population.

In addition, this type of tourism promotes the waterfront as a regulated exchange space and provides social, economic and infrastructural elements with a positive connection between the natural space of the water and the built-up urban area.

Cruise tourism, which promotes and develops a new entry point to the city, where the flow of passengers (sea-land) is the opposite of the traditional flow of citizens (land-sea), causes a change of attitude in the port-city relationship. It is therefore necessary to make port development go hand in hand with the development of the urban area, studying, analysing and discussing all the existing components so that they present a common objective of coexistence of both realities, although separately, and so they can coexist as variable elements in space and time.

In this sense, the various authorities have to favour the succession of elements from ships to the city within an integrated system of physical connection (continuous flow of people), functional connection (mix of environmentally integrated uses) or social connection (preservation of existing elements) (Andrade et al., 2012).

The success of a cruise port is due both to its strategic geographical location and to the availability of its places of interest (McCalla, 1998). Thus, Mediterranean port cities stand out as they present a good geographical location, a semi-enclosed and easy to navigate basin and the destinations themselves or their nearby points boast World Heritage sites, thus providing the greatest international guarantee of the quality of its heritage.

4. CASE STUDY. MEDITERRANEAN PORT CITIES

4.1. Cruise tourism is not a major factor of transformation

In cities like Venice or Barcelona, which are already tourist-oriented and able to satisfy the experience of the cruise tourist, cruise ships do not reactivate their historic downtowns. In fact, the global impact of cruise activity is greater in destinations that are touristic by nature (Chiappa and Abbate, 2013).

4.2. Cruise tourism as one more type of tourism that influences the transformation

In destinations such as Dubrovnik, which has a historic old town that is already touristic in itself, the arrival of cruise ships has benefited its investment in infrastructure. Similarly, in the Greek Islands, which attract millions of tourists for their natural landscapes and idyllic beaches, cruise tourism provides local economic benefits. However, their natural systems are more vulnerable in terms of the concentration of people, activities and infrastructures (Fernandes and Pinho, 2015).

4.3. Cruise tourism as the main reason for transformation

Cities such as Marseille, which changed its strategy of freight traffic with the arrival of tourist cruises, favouring the improvement of both port and city infrastructures by

refurbishing the existing coastline between the Old Port and the cruiser landing docks, Málaga, which began to renovate its sea front, and its historical downtown with it, with the incorporation of cruise tourism, the Turkish city of Kusadasi, which has also benefited from the cruise market as it is close to the ruins of Ephesus and all the transformations in the city are aimed at satisfying the needs of cruise passengers, or dependent ports such as Civitavecchia (Rome) or Piraeus (Athens), have undergone transformations to absorb part of the expense of the cruise tourists thanks to the cruises that disembark in these enclaves to visit the main city.

5. SMART DESTINATION AS AN ALTERNATIVE

After evaluating the possibilities of integration in the cruise-city relationships within this new stage of the waterfront, an alternative is proposed within the new urban design and mobility patterns: Smart Cities, Smart Ports or in this case, the Smart Cruise Ports (concept by the author), the latter being developed as part of the demand factor within the Smart Destinations (Agència Valenciana del Turisme, 2015). Unlike Smart Cities, Smart Destinations are mainly promoted by the tourism sector, in a search for improved competitiveness and a better tourist experience, so tourists are the target audience (SEGITTUR, 2015).

Smart Cruise Ports would use Smart Destinations as the main axis. They would be developed as an active platform used by cruise passengers that would benefit from their closeness to the city by enhancing physical integration through the application of intelligence.

Smart Cruise Ports, created as a flexible, social and sustainable space (a multiplicity of actors (businesses, citizens, tourists)) could be developed in two parts: first, a platform of the cruise port with its same functionalities that could be interconnected with the Smart Port platform and, secondly, a platform for the cruiser-city relationship, developed mainly for the *smart mobility* of cruise tourists, with technological applications such as audiovisual tours of heritage elements or alternative routes when crowds of people are detected.

The destination must propose solutions to the individual impact and favour the future of the city by developing projects that promote its heritage, its identity and accessibility, as well as the quality of life of its residents. Therefore, in this sense the development of a smart cruise port that addresses a strategic, sustainable and innovative vision would favour the needs of the destination.

6. CONCLUSIONS

We are immersed in the new era of the waterfront, where cruise tourism promotes the cruise-city interface, not only because it includes and boosts this new entry point to the destination, but also because mainly cruise tourists encourage spatial restructuring because they are part of all the elements of the interrelation.

As for the transformations brought about in the Mediterranean port city by the cruise market and in view of this new phase of the waterfront, the problems of Barcelona or Venice are seriously raised, stressing that the different actors are mainly focused on solving

the social impacts that are caused. In cases like Dubrovnik, where cruise ships often use their ports as a stopover, their strategies can be redesigned to become base ports by paying special attention to the cruiser-city relationship to generate a sustainable, functional and attractive connection. In the Greek Islands, attention is paid to environmental impacts, suggesting the limitation of the arrival of cruise ships.

The alternative of the Smart Cruise Port in a Smart Destination would propose resources that would greatly benefit the port-city relationship, since it would develop as the driving axis of the interface that facilitates the mobility of cruise tourists, their approach to the city, to cultural or territorial enclaves, customs or the idiosyncrasy of the place. Its implementation would be key in the development and characterisation of this fifth stage of the waterfront, by reducing the occasional impacts caused by cruise tourism.

