

REMEMBRANCE TOURISM: CONDITIONS TO MAKE IT A REAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR LOCAL TOURISM

Dr. Fabio Cotifava Ph.D Independent researcher

f.cotifava@gmail.com

Abstract

In last few years, thematic tourism has shown a very interesting growth and it seems don't be affected by economic crisis. Remembrance tourism represents a very important part of thematic tourism and, in some countries, it's characterized by high public investment. France is one of these countries, according to what is stated by Marco Rangi of the Ministry of Foreign affairs and International Development: "*The rapid development of remembrance tourism has led the French government to release significant financial resources in collaboration with local governments, with a view to restoring existing sites and museums. By 2018, the French Ministry for Veterans and Remembrance will thus spend an additional €40 million to renovate military cemeteries and the tombs of soldiers who fell for France*". Usually, all European countries have the basic conditions for the development of remembrance tourism, but it needs specific knowledge/aspects both in planning of the tourist offer/product and during the trip. Historical, cultural relations between the destination and the potential foreign country/tourist is a good way to improve the emotional quality, which represents the essence of making tourism, but, at the same time, it needs a very high level of cooperation between public and private subjects. According to the writer's idea, it's very difficult to fulfil the needs, without a project based on a strong cooperation between all involved subjects and its success, especially from the economic standpoint, depends on some factors and variables which must be taken into account by local tourism planning. This text aims to give a method to reach the cited conditions, through a specific methodology, that is called "diagram of the circles" applied to the Mariovo area (where several battles were fought during the WW1), near the city of Bitola (Republic of Macedonia).

Key words: Tourism of Remembrance, Thematic Tourism, Diagram of the circles, Bitola/Mariovo, First World War

Introduction

In last few years, a growing number of tour operator offer thematic package: the event-theme become the reason of the trip and the choice of the destination related to it. Visit a tourist destination connected to a specific interest, e.g. to the culture of the place looking for an authentic and original offer, is a new constantly growing approach, and official data show that thematic tourism seems doesn't be affected by economic crisis: Italy, 2012-2014, religious tourism + 20%, cultural tourism +3,8%, food and wine tourism + 12%. Some specific data of tourism of remembrance are the following:

- 2010, 6,2 million tourists visited the French military ossuaries, 45% of them were foreign;
- every year, 20 million tourists visited the French fortifications, battlefields, memorials and museums of military history (*Remembrance Tourism in France n. 14 May 2014 -Report Ministry of Foreign affairs and International Development*);
- 2014, more than 1 million tourists visited the military historical events in northern Italy;
- 2014, 3,5 million tourists visited the Italian battlefields, memorials and this trend is aspected to be growing in the future (*Archivio Marcadoc "Turismo, informazione e cultura della Provincia di Treviso" – WW1 as a tourist offer, by Renato Malan*).

Interest in military history was also proven by BBC, when it aired some programs on American civil wars, more than 30.000 British demanded brochures of the American Battlefields. It's universally accepted by most stakeholders that competitiveness of European tourism industry is linked to its long term sustainability, as the quality of tourist destination depends on a considerable extent from their natural and cultural environment and their integration into the local community. Sustainable tourism

is also a factor in the choice of destination for an increasing segment of world tourist population. For this reason, UE and other public institutions support the development of sustainable transnational thematic tourism, like thematic cultural itineraries between different countries, bike paths, eco-tourism, historical tourism, etc. Concerning tourism of remembrance, two projects related to the WW1 in my studied area, are the following:

- IPA Cross-Border Programme CCI Number 2007CB16IPO007, between the municipalities of Dojran (MK) and Kyustendil (BG)
 - transformation of the old Turkish school in Star Dojran into a WW1 Museum, Renovation, protection of military objects (Dojran); Reconstruction of some military bunkers near the residence of General Zhekov, Chief of the Bulgarian Army during the WW1 (Kyustendil); Research, collection and production of material related to WW1, etc. (*website www. 07-13.ipa-cbc-007.eu*)
- ALDA (European Association for Local Democracy) Every year it organizes the International Summer School with the support of “Cooperation Normandy – Macedonia”
 - Readings on the WW1: social history, archeology, cultural heritage, ethnology, culture; visit of the tranches located in Novaci, Dojran and Prespa; meetings with some decision-makers and local population and discussions on local heritage, etc. (*Website of Normadie/Macedonie*).

Theme and strengths

According to thematic tourism, the trip is connected to the destination in which the event/theme has its seat. It has different characters, hence there are different categories of tourism offers: religious tourism, adventure tourism, cultural tourism, industrial tourism, tourism of remembrance or memory, etc. Potential visitors depend on nature and characters of the theme, which in turn is related to:

- **a specific group of people** (e.g. music fan, archaeology lovers, etc., the theme is proposed both on domestic and foreign tourist market, it's not focused on specific countries);
- **citizens in a specific area/country**, thanks to cultural relations, historical events and/or historical period, some famous person, etc., it's able to make a direct relation between the destination and people, or groups of them, belonging a specific area. E.g., the first category includes, the “Rose Valley festival”, the “Marriage of Galicnik” (MK), the so called “Trump Festival” (SBR) etc. which are visited by tourists from all over the world. While, they belong to the second category: the “Via Egnatia” and the “Roman Emperors” which make relations between Italian history and Macedonia and Serbia, the book “The marriage of the Seven Gypsies” by the Dutch writer Doolaard creates a relation between the Dutch and the Ohrid lake, the battle of Dardanelli during the WW1 which makes a relation between the town of Canakkale in Turkey and the New Zealanders/Australians.

These relations are an important way to increase the visibility of the tourist destination and the number of visitors. The commemoration of Anzac day, during which more than 10.000 foreign visitors descend on the town of Canakkale (it's not a destination characterized by a great tourist potential), is a very interesting example of how the study of local strengths and weakness is one of the main steps for the development of local tourist plan in order to exploit the firsts and restrains the seconds (*Website of Australian Government Department of Veteran's Affairs – ANZAC day*).

Concerning the tourists, strengths can be:

- **Generic strengths** = universally valid-appreciated, e.g. natural beauties, air clear, cultural-historical heritage, etc.

- **Specific strengths** = appreciated-related to particular group of persons. They are often the main connection between the tourist destination and a specific area-country. The assumptions of these strengths are manifold and even language and ethnical matters must make/develop these relations. The similarity between the Romanian and the Italian languages helped the discovery of Romania by Italian tourist market and Romania has been the first Eastern Europe country visited by the Italians.

While generic strengths characterize a large part of tourist destinations, the specific ones are a peculiarity-exclusivity that leads a further important advantage for the destination. Specific strengths are often the best way to enter a foreign tourist market and, in the short term, the specific groups who visited the destination, will become the best promotion tool for the destination.

These relations can be the right starting points for local tourist strategy, but, due to its characters/complexities, tourism of remembrance, in order to reach long term economic sustainability, must be developed taking into account some conditions and/or assumptions.

Characters and complexities of tourism of remembrance

In addition to the classic problems of tourism, tourism of remembrance is characterized by specific complexities due to the background against which tourist operator must work. In nutshell:

- the trip involves isolated places hard to get to;
- there are little evidences, especially in plain, the old has been torn down to make way for the new;
- current situation is very different from than historical;
- young people are not attracted by history;
- few couriers and tourist guides well trained.

Logistic

The first group of conditions, most of them have a great impact on future costs, is related to the choice of the project. Sometime, with the passage of time, costs and complexities remain higher than revenues and this often happens despite the growing number of visitors: survival of the destination depends on public support. For this reason, the control of the costs, which are connected to the initial investment and the subsequent running of the activity, is the basic condition to reach good results: wrong choices concerning the use of the resources and investments as well as the management of complexities, will lead to sure failure. According to this statement, the evaluation of the project of tourism of remembrance must be focused on the following aspects:

Investments and costs	
Easiness in development	
Low	
investments	implement paths, rebuild structures, event organization
maintenance costs	structures and buildings, tourist paths
running costs	labor, services, energy, material goods
natural impact	
High-good	
accessibility	roads, parking, signage, connections
tourist facilities	hotels, restaurants, local guides and info, locals speaking foreign languages
general services	medical services, car services, shops

Table 1

Tourist/historical situation

Tourist impact	
High-good	
preservation	construction, remains, present and past situation
context	landscape, climate and seasonality, famous destinations in the area
originality	events

Table 2

Potential market and support

Involvement	
High-good	
potential visitors	countries, categories
values	morals, educational, patriotic
other countries	UE funds, international cooperation

Table 3

Indirect support

Related - promoted	
High-good	
media	TV drama, films-documentaries, famous persons, books, website
history, culture	Traditions, language, events, historical persons, economy-law (e.g. specific agreements)

Table 4

These tables show the skill of the tourist destination in having some specific strengths in terms of low costs and high revenues. The last two tables need an explanation. A project based on various countries (e.g. the remembrance of a battle fought by various armies), or high moral values (e.g. freedom, peace, social cohesion), or which can be supported by international funding etc., will have higher chances of success, because it involves numerous potential parties from public and private sector and/or a large number of potential tourist foreign markets. Sometime strengths coming from the relation between a tourist destination and a country as well as the notoriety of the destination among tourists depends on petty reasons and some destination gets famous abroad thanks to media, books, famous person, etc. From the economic standpoint, these strengths mean lower costs in promotion and advertising and they are very important advantage for the destination.

Professionalism (the concept of pathos)

Tour operator well know that tourist guides pay a central role in their tours, and this role is even more important in tourism of remembrance. Battlefields, military areas have often been torn down to make way to new buildings, firms, gardens etc., and historical remains are very poor. In this background, the professionalism/skill of the guide is the only way to get tourists excited giving them those strong emotions, which more than ever are the reason of the trip. For example, a tourist guide well trained in history is not enough to make a successful tourist offer. Tourism of remembrance needs guides who are able to put strong passion into the narrative of the event, and study of historic-military books is the first step to reach these skills. Specific professionalism, skills and, in author's opinion, especially "pathos/passion", of local tourist guides are the second condition for the development of tourism of remembrance. In addition to this, tourist guide's work must be helped by specific tools, like movies, virtual historic reenactment and what now offered by "virtual reality".

Psychological (the concept of mission)

Pilgrimage is a form of practice of faith that takes place at various levels in the sanctuaries, monasteries and convents. Instead, religious tourism should be understood into economic and social

activity to organize and promote religious tourists, it has not a theological-pastoral identity as a particular type of traveler (Costa 1998). Hence, religious tourist is different from the pilgrim primarily for the reasons of the trip, but for both of us there is a clear relation between trip and faith. Similarly, tourism of remembrance must be based on the relation between trip and mission. The journey plays a social-moral duty and a large part of the emotion comes from the conviction of doing something of great moral value. Especially during times of economic crisis, when neighbor is unemployed, when future is uncertain, when spending money for a trip is almost embarrassment, a trip characterized by high moral profile, sense of duty, can be decisive to ensure success to tourist destination. The commemoration of Anzac day in Turkish town of Canakkale is a good example how “mission” is the key of success of the destination. Usually, people celebrate victories and forget defeats, while, in case of Canakkale, thousands New Zealanders and Australians descend on this town every year, to celebrate the highest defeat of their army during the WW1. Duty to honor the soldiers who lost their life for their country, to remember their compatriots, maybe grandparents, uncles, who fought in Turkey 100 years ago, becomes the mission of the travel and this outweighs the tragic outcome of the battle. Hence, the third assumption of tourism of remembrance is the attitude of the project to generate the feeling that the travel is a mission.

What to do?

In addition to the usual suggestions for all forms of tourism, tourism of remembrance needs specific actions in planning a new sustainable project. According to the concept shown above, these specific actions belong to the following fields:

- Research and study (*RS*), search for the historic relations between the destination and other countries/areas
- Strategy (*S*), choice the project with earlier logistic characters
- Selection and training (*ST*), select and train local guides
- Support the guides (*SG*), make virtual and material tools for local guides (movies, virtual historic reenactment, manuals, tables/signs, etc.)
- People’s sensibility (*PS*), develop the sense of mission

These actions, which belong to research, strategy, promotion, training, shall be implemented in an integrated planning based on high partnership between public, at various levels, and private actors. Interesting suggestions about this cooperation come from the diagram of the circles (*Regional factors for sustainable tourism development (cases in Bulgaria, Macedonia and Serbia) Dr. Fabio Cotifava – 2014 - University Sv. Kliment Ohridski – Sofia*). According to this methodology three subjects have been considered: **EP** (public subjects in external area), **LP** (local public subject) and **P** (local and external private subjects):

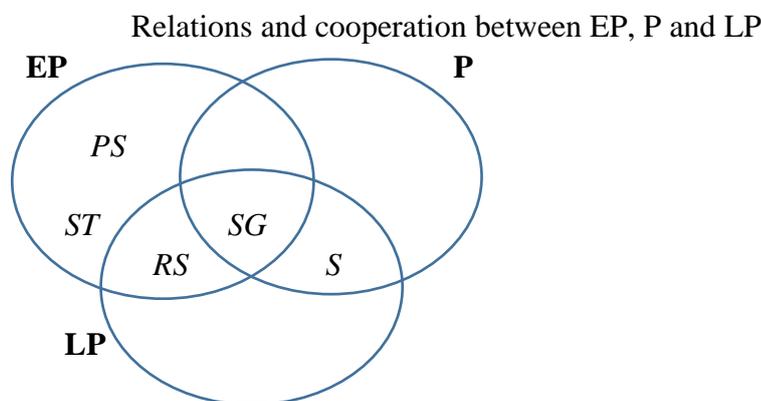


Fig. 1

The graphic gives this information:

- three subjects (EP, (LP), (P) are together only in production of support material to help local guides in their work;
- public subjects (EP) of national concern and/or located outside the area (universities, research centers, national museums, national institutions, etc.) play a basic role in projects;
- public subjects (EP), (LP) are the driver of projects.

Perhaps the idea is born at local level, maybe by a local history lover, by a local cultural association etc., but its development depends on outside: if this condition is not met the project will sure fall over the medium term.

The case of Bitola: the area of Mariovo/Novaci

During the WW1, after the defeat of Dardanelle (end of 1915), the British and French units have been transferred to Thessaloniky. The year after even Serbian army and one Italian division have been transferred to this area, in order to call off the attacks of the Bulgarian-German troops. These armies have been there for 3 years and this fact makes the areas around Monastir (current Bitola) one of the most important places and rich in military remains. For this reason the area of Mariovo/Novaci, 10 km east of Bitola, may be a good destination for the development of tourism of remembrance and to test the proposed method.

Research method

The primary data/information have been obtained through direct observations. Author's experience as tourist advisor for public and private subjects as well as writer of some tourist guides of Republic of Macedonia played a basic role in finding the data. Especially the data shown in tables 5, 6, 7 and 8 come from my researches related to the tourist guides of Macedonia Republic written of my own in 2010 and 2015, as well as the realization of my website about the Macedonian Front (2016-17): www.frontemacedone.com. Most information used in this paper have been obtained from the study and research of this area related to my past works. The secondary data/information come from websites, official records and publications. Obtained information was further analyzed in order to evaluate the earlier aspects through the following rating scales coded on Likert scale with 5-points: 1=very bad, 2=bad, 3=medium, 4=good, 5=very good. Author's idea is based on the study of the above aspects in order to assign to them their score correlate to the development of tourism of remembrance. Obtained results are included into the diagram of the circles, that shows the relation and cooperation between the three subjects potentially involved in this matter.

Results of the analysis

Logistic

Aspects of the logistic field reached the following average level (the tables are shown in last page):

- Easiness in development 4
- Tourist impact 4
- Involvement 4
- Related – promoted 0,4

Studied area shows a good level of the logistic aspects: low investments and running costs, good tourist facilities, service and accessibility, as well as high tourist impact and involvement are a sure strength in development of tourism of remembrance related to the WW1. Instead, there is a lack of benefits from media, historical persons, similar language, etc. This means that the tourist theme of

this area is quite unknown to most people and national and foreign tourist operators. Reasonably, a very high effort in promotion is needed. (*Developing Mariovo as a Sustainable Tourism Destination*, Patrick C. Coughlin, PhD 2013).

Professionalism (the concept of pathos)

This is the first weakness and one obstacle for the development of tourism of remembrance in this area. Usually, during the visit to Bitola, most tourist guides never speak about the Macedonian Front and only a little space of local museum is dedicated to the WW1. Reasonable, local tourist guides as well as tourist operator don't know this story, they are not able to deal with this argument, they consider this matter without attractiveness. Up to now, the chief of local fire brigade is the only one who well know the area, the battlefields, the location of the bunkers, trenches etc. Except him, who doesn't speak foreign language and is not an expert in military matter, no other can drives tourists to the area. In this situation, it makes no sense to talk about "pathos".

Psychological (the concept of mission)

Regarding this point, the Municipality of Novaci and the Region of Normandy (France) are developing a project (Normandie/Macedonie), based on French funding, that aims to study and census the French military remains in Mariovo area. Every year in Mariovo area, some summer camps are arranged in order to raise young people's awareness to the French military contingent who fought here during the WW1. Furthermore, in France, they arrange school and public meetings, presentations etc. Although this project only involves two countries (instead, around Bitola seven different armies fought), it's a concrete action that's making young people interested in the history of their country: this is the first step to make a relation between the destination and the concept of mission.

According to the method of the diagram of the circles, the current situation of the area of Mariovo/Novaci can be shown as follow:

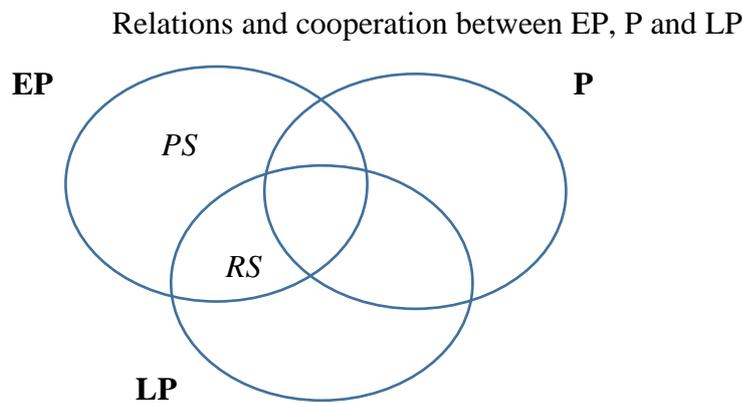


Fig. 2

Up to now, only the study of the area (RS) (between some Macedonian public institutions of Bitola and one French from Normandy) and a little project to raise awareness this theme in France (PS) (public subject from Normandy) have been done. Although the condition related to the logistic aspects are met (average 4 out of 5), no project or strategy, involving private local subjects, exists; the same regarding the training of local tourist guide in military history matter. According to author's opinion till the development of local tourism of remembrance depends on the current public partners (Municipality of Novaci and the Region of Normandy), due to the distance between them, not only in geographical terms, it will be difficult achieve positive results in long term. Speaking with some

locals, it emerged that these battlefields are only visited by some French tourist groups and few Bulgarian and Serbian individual tourists. In Italy this military front is practically unknown.

Conclusions

History is a basic aspect for tourism and it's an important factor-chance for the development of all tourism destinations. Among the researchers, Dean Mc Cannel (1976) "Tourism is not attributable to a single aggregate of business is also the ideological merge between history, nature and tradition, which has the power to reshape the needs of culture and nature". However, when remembrance is the main aspect of the journey, the successful project is more based on intangibles aspects than on local tourism facilities. Search of historical, cultural connections between the destination and the potential foreign country, is a good way to improve the emotional quality, which represents the essence of making tourism. Especially when the trip is lived by tourist as a "mission" it becomes an experience that they take home to share. Bitola and its surrounding have some assumptions to make tourism of remembrance a real, sustainable opportunity for local economy. However, according to author's opinion, the successful project needs the involvement of more EP (external public subjects) both foreign and especially Macedonian as well as private (P). In nutshell, to address the weakness and limits shown in this analysis, it's necessary to focus the cooperation between **EP**, **LP** and **P** on:

- census and mapping all local remains of the WW1;
- virtual support for tourist guides and web site (battles reenactment, photos collection, etc.);
- specific training for local tourist guides;
- network of public and private web site on the Macedonian Front;
- promotion plan (conferences, advertising, tourist fairs, info-press tours, etc.);
- tourist agreements with foreign tour operators;
- private and public initiative (books, movies, documentaries, etc.) to raise visibility to this military front.

Bitola, Mariovo-Novaci area, Tables of logistic aspects

Investments and costs

Easiness in development			
Low			
investments	Implements paths	Several interesting places are easily reached through some walking trails a few hundred meters long. Only signage and very cheap works are needed.	5
	Rebuild structures	Most bunkers and dugouts are in good conditions, hence only the cleaning of some of them and the rebuild of some part of the trenches are needed.	5
maintenance costs	Structures buildings Tourist paths	Cleaning of the bunkers, dugouts and trenches, and take off the shrubs	5
running costs	Labor	Periodic inspection	5
	Services	Specific tourist promotion and advertising	3
	Energy	None	5
	Material goods	Cleaning and maintenance supplies	5
natural impact	Walking trails		5
High-good			
accessibility	Roads	Good paved road and proximity to a big city	5
	Parking	Parking for bus and cars	4
	Signage	Adequate road signage	4
	Connections	Connected to Skopje by train and near to Ohrid airport	4
tourist facilities	Hotels	Good/wide choice in Bitola	5
	Restaurants	Good/wide choice in Bitola	5

	Tourist guides	In Bitola, but not trained in military history	3	
	Tourist info	In Bitola, but not expert of the old military areas	3	
	Foreign languages	In Bitola	4	
general services	Medical care	In Bitola (Macedonian standard)	3	
	Service car	In Bitola, but not for all type of cars	4	
	Shops	In Bitola	4	
			Average	4,0

Table 5 (*Guida alla Macedonia, Dr. Fabio Cotifava – 2010-15*)

Tourist/historic situation

Tourist impact				
High-good				
preservation	Constructions	Good conditions of the bunkers, dug-outs, trenches	5	
	Remains	Several interesting sites in a restrict space	4	
	Present/historical situation	Most context not changed over time	5	
context	Landscape	Landscape penalized by REK (thermal power plant)	2	
	Climate/seasonality	Good summer weather, tourist seasons April to October	4	
	Close destinations	Lake Ohrid, Pelister and Galicica National Parks	5	
originality	Events	Chance to organize historical events	3	
			Average	4,0

Table 6 (*Guida alla Macedonia, Dr. Fabio Cotifava – 2010-15*)

Potential market and support

Involvement				
High-good				
potential visitors	Countries	Italy, Germany, French, England, Bulgaria, Serbia, Russia	5	
	Categories	Travelers thematic, military history enthusiasts, schools, trekkers	4	
values	Morals	Human sacrifice, peace, friendly, common values, etc.	4	
	Educational	European history, etc.	4	
	Patriotic	Preserve the national identity	4	
other countries	UE and other funds	European funds and national supports	4	
	Inter. cooperation	Cooperation between public and private subjects	3	
			Average	4,0

Table 7 (*website www.frontemacedone.com Dr. Fabio Cotifava*)

Indirect support

Related - promoted				
High-good				
media	TV drama	None	0	
	Films	None	0	
	Documentaries	Few and old	0	
	Famous persons	None	0	
	Books	Few	1	
	Website	Several, but not linked to each other	3	
history, culture	Traditions language	None	0	
	Events	None	0	
	Historical persons	None	0	
	Economy-law	None	0	
			Average	0,4

Table 8

Reference

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