

Urban Tourism and City Development: Notes for an Integrated Policy Agenda

Nicola Bellini, Frank M. Go, and Cecilia Pasquinelli

Abstract This chapter draws conclusions by stressing that, through the wide coverage of different perspectives, this book describes the ‘burst’ of the city tourism concept, showing the several and relatively uncontrollable—and thus difficult to manage—nuances of tourism(s) in the urban context. In particular, the chapter discusses what tourism research is supposed to suggest to policymakers. It distinguishes three plausible scenarios in which the weight of urban tourism in development strategies may vary, i.e. marginal tourism, dominant tourism and surrogate tourism, and articulates them by emphasising different features and variations in how synergies between city tourism and urban development take place.

Keywords Urban development • Policy • Tourism development • Tourism planning

The frontiers of the city tourism debate depict a travel domain that is qualitatively—as well as quantitatively—widening and intersecting with the urban fabric, i.e. with the physical, cultural, social, political, productive and symbolic infrastructure characterising urban agglomerations. Through wide coverage of different perspectives—theoretical, empirical and methodological—this book describes the ‘burst’ of the city tourism concept, showing the several and relatively uncontrollable—and thus hardly manageable—nuances of tourism(s) in the urban context. From a research—and, even more, policy-making—perspective, this corresponds to an intricate weave where it is not only hard to orient actions but also sharply to distinguish the intertwined organisational, geographical, ethical and regulatory

N. Bellini (✉)

La Rochelle Tourism Management Institute, Groupe Sup de Co La Rochelle, La Rochelle, France

e-mail: bellinin@esc-larochelle.fr

F.M. Go

Erasmus University, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

e-mail: fgo@rsm.nl

C. Pasquinelli

GSSI Social Sciences, Gran Sasso Science Institute, L’Aquila, Italy

e-mail: cecilia.pasquinelli@gssi.infn.it

borders so as to understand the tensions and establish the critical mass necessary for pursuit of the goals which are “representative of all interests concerned” (Orbasli 2000, p. 99). Sustainability, inclusion, accessibility through transports and information technologies, participation in urban decision-making and city representation, as well as participation in the local labour market are all important for both tourism and city development. The chapters in this book show and discuss an array of issues that make integrating tourism into the urban agenda a complex undertaking. In particular, established top-down legislative frameworks with their formal rules and regulations, in which the urban authorities function, stand in stark contrast with the more informal kinds of decision-making that drive the conduct of entrepreneurs. This context complicates the significant linkage of public sector initiatives with private sector resources. In the meantime, scholars have shied away from fitting their own research into broader intellectual patterns evolving in transdisciplinary networks to co-create unexpected pathways and analytical and normative perspectives beyond tourism and urban studies attached to theories of modernity. Hence controversies in the three arenas of urban policy-making, urban tourism development, and social science research lack agreed-upon rules for debate. The discontinuity of values, norms and practices may explain why a consistent approach to integrating tourism development into the urban agenda has not yet become a political priority. However, mechanisms of hybridisation, integration, cross-fertilisation of local and tourism ‘cultures’ are evident in the practices of urban consumption, as well as in the processes of urban space production, as various chapters highlight in arguing for a necessary integration of tourism development and urban planning.

This book also stresses the relation between tourism performance and urban liveability, which has to be established as a frame wherein tensions and potential trade-offs, on the one hand, and potential synergies on the other, may converge on an emergent strategy.

In sum, this book raises a number of issues that urban policy makers can no longer neglect. Here, however, a deep contradiction emerges. Tourism has become an integral part of any strategy concerning local economic development in a variety of situations, most frequently in rural areas but also, of course, in urban settings. Yet, in parallel with the implicit consensus within scholarly networks on the negligibility of tourism in the process of urban and economic development, tourism research has to date had only a limited impact on actual strategies for urban development.

As said, this book intends to contribute not just to the scholarly debate, but also to policy practice. It therefore also provides interpretative frameworks that may work as an analytical ground for policy-making. This orientation was explicit in the call for papers launched at the Gran Sasso Science Institute for the L’Aquila workshop in 2015, as mentioned in the introduction to this book, and in the selection of the contributions both to the workshop itself and to this publication. This orientation is also in tune with the distinctive character of tourism research and the important role played in it by the production of “mode 2 knowledge”, leading to contextualised, problem-solving results (Tribe 1997). Consequently, in this short

concluding chapter the intention is to present and systematise (and partially add to) some of the items for the integrated policy agenda suggested by the authors who have contributed to this book.

So what is tourism research supposed to suggest to policymakers? Following the main hypothesis underlying this book (tourism can be integrated into the urban agenda), all its chapters converge in suggesting that important opportunities also lie on the prescriptive side of this hypothesis, i.e. integrating tourism policies into the wider framework of urban development policies and, at least in some respects, of urban planning as a whole. This does not imply reducing sensitivity to the negative impacts of tourism that generate anti-tourism feelings and movements and that can only be mitigated by corrective public policies (as in the case of Barcelona discussed by *Fava and Palau Rubio*) and residents’ resilient practices (like those in Prague analysed by *Dumbrovská*).

The rationale for integration can be understood in very pragmatic terms as the result of the many synergies that co-exist between tourism policies and urban development policies, as summarised in Table 1. In each case, achievement of the tourism policy objective is made possible by achievement of the more general urban policy objective. At the same time, the former contributes to the latter.

The weight of urban tourism in urban development strategies may of course vary, depending on the importance of tourism for a city’s economy.

Here we distinguish three plausible scenarios:

- (A) *Marginal tourism*: tourism may play only a marginal role in the economy of a city. This scenario is most likely to occur in large metropolitan areas, where tourism may be important in absolute terms but, both physically and economically, represents a relatively minor activity compared, e.g., to the financial or manufacturing sector: “their main economic rationale is not tourism” (Ashworth and Page 2011, p. 4). Yet in these cases, as discussed by *Čamprag* with reference to Frankfurt, tourism-led images may be aimed to soften the

Table 1 Synergies between urban development policies

Urban development policies	Urban tourism policies
Local competitiveness, employment, entrepreneurship	Tourism industry: entrepreneurship, human capital, subsidies, support services
Infrastructure/Traffic management	Accessibility for tourists
Quality of the environment	Sustainable tourism initiatives
Cultural economy	Tourism attractors
Urban regeneration	New design/preservation/renovation of tourist spaces
City reputation/positioning/relational assets	Branding, marketing, visibility in global networks, e-reputation
Technology/Smart City	Smart tourism/management of the flows of city users
Soft infrastructure	Values linked to tourism (hospitality, openness to different cultures etc.)
Crisis management	Post-disaster tourism

established negative image of a cold financial metropolis, enriching the diversity of attractive public spaces and creating new identification points.

- (B) *Dominant tourism*: tourism may be the main economic activity in the city (or at least one of the most important ones). This opposite scenario is typically applied by resort cities, historic cities and art cities, where—following *Rabbiosi* and *Giovanardi*—recombining old and emerging elements may set the path towards diversification and/or rejuvenation of the local tourism scene.
- (C) *Surrogate tourism*: tourism may be proposed and emerge as a sustainable option, i.e. a substitute for declining economic activities, which draws importantly on urban development policies, particularly urban regeneration. This alternative scenario leverages place-specific models based on cultural legacy (as discussed by *Della Lucia*, *Trunfio* and *Go* and by *Borseková*, *Vaňová* and *Vitálišová*) or on some significant niches (like sport tourism-led regeneration, discussed by *Wise* and *Perić*).

Table 2 articulates these three scenarios by emphasising different characters and variations on the way synergies between urban tourism and urban development take place.

Table 2 Variations in the role of tourism policies

Role of tourism in city development	(A) <i>marginal</i>	(B) <i>dominant</i>	(C) <i>surrogate</i>
<i>City attractions</i>	Mostly used by non-tourists	Mostly used by tourists	New attractions created for use by both tourists and non-tourists
<i>Main attitude towards heritage and tourism assets</i>	Possibly re-defining tourist usage and value	Preserving	Re-inventing
<i>Brand identity and Projected image; Authenticity</i>	The metropolitan life—possibly more ‘human’ and welcoming—authentic experience	The attractive, unique, extraordinary place—original authenticity	The changing, sustainable city—re-authentication; staged authenticity
<i>Features of urban tourism</i>	Urban travellers/repeated visits	Urban tourists/once-in-a-lifetime visit	Urban tourists
<i>City’s relational assets</i>	Widened	Confirmed	Substituted
<i>City’s soft infrastructure</i>	Confirmed; improved, made more sustainable (?)	Confirmed; sustainable? (anti-tourism)	Re-designed configurations; networks of interrelationships
<i>Contribution to local economy, employment and entrepreneurship</i>	Adding, diversifying	Tourist mono-culture?	Conversion of traditional local crafts and skills

The chapters in this book signal a number of perspectives that, in combination with issues and urban models, would enable tourism policy to contribute to a more dynamic and effective urban development policy.

First, the emergence of new consumption patterns in tourism has the potential to reduce conflicts and increase efficiency in the use of urban resources. This is linked, above all, to the growing role of ‘responsible’ attitudes in tourism, as in the case of the ‘enjoyable-to-all’ urban green discussed by *Mackiewicz* and *Konecka-Szydłowska*). In some respects, however, basic trends in the tourist market are also helping, e.g. consumption patterns based on the greater availability of time and money, such as senior travels (more evenly distributed throughout the year because seniors are not restricted by official calendar holidays) or luxury tourism (whenever this has an ‘experiential’ character).

Second, the emergence of the ‘urban traveller’ profile, as described by *Pasquinelli*, marks the evolution of tourists’ role:

- from mere consumers to co-producers of experiences, therefore potentially feeding educated; international-minded, ethically-oriented contributions back into the city;
- from enclave visitors to actors who infiltrate the urban ‘ordinary’ reality in order to package tourist experiences including also non-tourist spaces and activities.

In very practical terms (as suggested by *Gronau* with reference to public transportation) this means that the demand generated by tourists may (usefully) complement existing local demand instead of competing with it. Even disaster tourism (following the arguments by *Mugnano* and *Carnelli*) may exhibit complementarity in the joint and innovative redesign of a ‘new normality’.

Third, urban tourism may nourish a new breed of entrepreneurship often characterised by an original and/or advanced use of new technologies and which adopts innovative (if not alternative) business models, potentially rejuvenating the city’s entrepreneurial clusters. In fact, the well-known toolbox of policies supporting new high-tech entrepreneurship (including incubators, accelerators, venture capital, business angels, etc.) is also applicable to the tourism sector. The case of the *Welcome City Lab* in Paris, an incubator set up specifically as an innovation platform for start-up companies in urban tourism, could be the benchmark for a whole generation of such initiatives. But also (as suggested by *Khlat* and *Montargot*) the new complexity of the relations with the customer positively challenges the local labour market and education system to provide human resources of sufficient quantity and quality to companies.

Fourth, urban tourism may foster a culture of innovation:

- By experimenting and developing ‘smart city’ technologies in several situations and with remarkable impacts (as discussed by *Garau*) in the field of the cultural economy/cultural tourism;
- By making human progress in technology become itself an attraction, either organised in a museum (like the increasingly popular science and technology museums) or as a living laboratory—as in the connection among art, creativity

and manufacturing that *Lazzeretti*, *Capone* and *Casadei* discussed in the case of Florence in this book.

Full exploitation of the synergies between tourism policies and urban development requires not only recognition of the benefits (static and dynamic) of urban tourism but also consensus in decision-making in order to overcome the gaps and pitfalls that have hitherto impeded the effective implementation of urban tourism policies embedded within an urban agenda. Some appear more serious than others, although not necessarily more evident.

First, especially (but not only) political leaders may perceive tourism as an easy option and a quick fix, underestimating the financial investments, human capital availability, knowledge and relational assets necessary to make tourism strategies viable and durable. Both the advocates and opponents of tourism development may refer to visions that are outdated, lacking serious investigation into the linkages with other sectors and industries (possibly under the resilient influence of industrialist paradigms) and into the actual impact of tourist activities (as suggested by the reading of the role of events in the chapters by *Caroli* and *Valentino* and by *Ferrucci*, *Sarti*, *Splendiani* and *Cordente Rodríguez*). Overall, as emphasised by both *Lanquar* and *Andersson*, urban tourism requires a renewed effort to measure phenomena and monitor the impact of policies, thereby escaping from the trap of the simplified (either positive or negative) representations that so easily acquire visibility and crystallise in the political discourse.

Second, mandates may be unclear, and stakeholders may therefore be unable to identify potential and actual conflicts in the use of urban resources so as to define ways to deal with them. As *Uğur* explains: tourism policies must be inclusive and participatory, and they must collaboratively involve local communities in the tourism development process as well as in place branding. They can thus, as argued by *Kavaratzis*, reduce conflicts between internal perspectives and outward-looking ones by enriching the process with a plurality of inputs.

But is the political process really involving tourists or does it simply rely on the stereotypical attractiveness criteria suggested by territorial marketing (i.e. what the insiders think that the outsiders want)? Beyond the rhetoric of tourists as ‘temporary residents’, is there room for something more, for instance some kind of ‘citizenship’ giving voice to tourists directly and creating enabling conditions for them as co-producers (and not just consumers!) to help in shaping and legitimising local narratives. Already in the case of Venice (discussed by *Minoia*) the stabilisation of a cosmopolitan presence has given rise to a powerful constituency, whose role, however, is not balanced by a weakened and a local population that has often been displaced. Are there alternative and more balanced forms of raising awareness among tourists about the potentially positive role that they may play in urban governance? One possibility might consist in the ‘new communicative space’ created by social media and outlined by *Sevin* with reference to place branding. In other words, the new urban tourism seems to require not just updated and integrated *policies*, but a more radical re-thinking of urban *polities*. This is, in our opinion, the challenge that lies ahead for both research and policy practice:

disassembling the experiential ghettos of traditional city tourism, perhaps relinquishing some of our sense of protective ownership of the urban fabric and identity, and accepting tourism as a constituent element of tomorrow's cities.

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