

ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Art and culture have the power to engage people and communities and, more broadly, to transform society and the economy. When art and culture are transformed into consumer amenities, they act as key players in attracting both residents and tourists to locations and play a role in branding those places (Currid, 2009; Scott, 2005). Part of tourism also requires that people are attracted to destinations. Attractive, amenity-rich destinations with well-established infrastructure and facilities will provide unique experiences for visitors and thus can be part of the overall cultivation of a tourism destination. A tourism destination should be capable of attracting and hosting visitors by providing “setting” for unique experiences (Edwards, Griffin, Hayllar, 2008). As artistic and cultural amenities can contribute to creating such “experiences,” these amenities can initiate tourism development by promoting the authentic, place-specific attributes of a particular locale. Within this context, art and culture have a large potential to transform places into tourism destinations. Currid (2009) explains that artistic and cultural amenities have a two-fold role: being highly influential when people make their destination choices; and cultivating an authentic environment where art and culture are produced and consumed. Since the role of artistic and cultural amenities is crucial in people’s destination choices, these amenities provide possibilities for locales to become potential tourism destinations. Also, such authenticity and place-specificity can help establish a regional brand that is simultaneous and accumulative with the regional tourism development.

This research examines various types of tourism destination development primarily driven by art and cultural amenities. The case studies are analyzed by identifying essential criteria for each pattern of development. Through the analysis of these different case studies, three distinct patterns of development emerge: (a) Institution-led, (b) Policy-led, and (c) Festival-led development. Below this typology is outlined:

Institution-led development is where tourism destination development is initiated by constructing a cultural attraction as a landmark that provides authenticity to the place. As the institution gets popular, community arts initiatives will follow and generate the landmark-related local industry. The regional branding process will be closely linked with the branding process of the main attraction, which in this category is the constructed cultural institution. The place’s regional brand can be formed and strengthened by how the institution aims to be marketed. Three cases following such a development pattern are Bilbao, Spain, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Naoshima, Japan. In all cases, art museums are chosen to enable the cities to become popular tourism destinations. However, they face different challenges and utilize diverse strategies to mitigate such concerns.

Policy-led development involves government intervention to boost the community arts initiative. This pattern of development requires governments to correctly understand the

community needs if there is voluntary community participation. The regional brand can be built and strengthened by how community members comply with the proposed policy. Cases with such a pattern of development are Melbourne, Australia, New York City, the United States (U.S.), and on a federal level, the United Kingdom (UK) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in the U.S. The cases of Melbourne and NYC show the city government boosting local regional tourism growth which brought branding processes driven by art and culture. Nonetheless, their development levels show differences from a single-policy initiative of Melbourne to versatile organizational efforts of NYC. Similar to NYC, but on a national level, the UK actively utilized different organizations and policies to promote the consistent strategy of cultural tourism development. On a national-level in the U.S., efforts to establish artistically-driven places have been undertaken by the NEA through the ArtPlace and Our Town initiatives. These integrated policy efforts will further empower regional development, encouraging particular locales to establish themselves as cultural tourism destinations.

Lastly, Festival-led development occurs when a tourism destination is developed by having an art and culture-related festival. Festivals can bring a new authenticity to the place and create a brand for the region. The festival itself can be an attraction for visitors and participators while bringing large impacts to the local community. Similarly with the institution-led development, the regional brand will be closely linked with the brand of the festival. Cases of the Festival-led development pattern are Basel, Switzerland, New Orleans, U.S. and Edinburgh, Scotland. These cities are all popular for their ingenious festivals – Art Basel, Mardi Gras and Edinburgh Festival Fringe. These festivals are world-renowned and have their own distinct characters and cultural productions, which promote their locations for tourism along with providing entertainment and culture. Yet they have some differences in how they came up with and managed the brand of festivals. Basel chose art to be its representative feature although the city did not have any specific linkage to arts. New Orleans utilized its own heritage of Carnival and Jazz to be themes of festivals which further strengthened the city brand. Edinburgh chose “festival” itself to be the branding feature of the city by hosting multiple festivals.

Based on the research and analysis of these selected cases, the research paper aims to understand how art and cultural amenities can catalyze tourism destination development and the regional branding process by creating an environment for unique and place-specific experiences. The above typology of destination development suggests that there are particular conditions that encourage the success of cultural tourism development initiatives: 1) active interaction and communication among various sectors to pursue a unified city brand and image; 2) a thorough self-diagnosis of possessed resources and strengths in utilizing them; and 3) a political environment that makes such initiatives feasible. These findings suggest possible trajectories for developers to follow in their tourism planning processes as they apply to different environments.

References

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