

Sustainable Tourism as enhancer for Branding Gjirokastra

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Creative Tourism and Tourism for All as enhancer of Cultural Tourism in achieving sustainable development of the region.

As reviewed in the literature of branding cities and regions, cultural and natural heritage, the build environment, hallmark events, and famous personalities with the uniqueness of the place, are seen as potential tools in branding. However, in places and cities where the local economy, environment, and social development lacks in supporting the bases for creating a brand, sustainable tourism in this research is seen as an introductory tool in fostering furthermore the branded image of a city or region in Albania. Although sustainable tourism is a very wide subject affecting many areas of implementation, also based on the outcomes of the SWOT analysis and questionnaires, the research focused on Branding Gjirokastra focused on the Sustainable tourism categories of a) fostering Cultural Tourism through the use of Cultural Routes; b) Creative tourism; c) Accessible tourism for all. These categories of sustainable tourism are seen as part of the branding methodology that should be applied in cases like Gjirokastra which, differently from other destinations in Albania and the Western Balkans, points to a more selective tourism approach.

Based on the literature review on branding, research focuses primarily on highlighting case studies of well-known attractions

of bigger European cities, known as destinations for attracting mass tourism categories. All of the branding examples belong to economically, politically and socially well-developed countries facing and hosting mass tourism, such as the case of Barcelona, Venice etc. So, in terms of the expected result for the case of Gjirokastra, the branding strategies reviewed in accordance with the above-mentioned sustainable tourism trends approach a more selective tourism trend. Hence, the Built Environment¹ (Keying Lynch), Hallmark event (OCED), and Famous personalities (Asworth), and inhabitants, are certainly the "Genius Loci"² of every place, city or town. However, in terms of branding, each region, city or town, specific requirements are needed. Thus, fundamentals of branding literature for destination, region, and cities were taken in consideration to create the bases of what branding for destination, places, cities stand for, however specific methodologies in achieving branding were illustrated by the above case studies.

In the case of Albania, and Gjirokastra in particular, which is not a case of mass tourism, rather than striving to attract tourism in accordance with the actual possibilities of building the tourism sector, selective tourism is seen as the appropriate solution, through the implementation of cultural routes, creative tourism, and tourism for all. Selective tourism is based on the concept of fostering regional

¹ / In the book "Image of the City", Kevin Lynch notes that individuals perceive a city predominantly based on a set of built objects.

² / "Genius Loci" usually refers to a location's distinctive atmosphere, or a "spirit of place". John Urry

development by making possible that the touristic product focuses on smaller groups, which diversifies the touristic product from the other ones and shapes the overall outcome of the product related to the place. Thus, selective tourism disperses the application of tourist demand by ensuring sustainable regional development where the local community benefits from an increasingly diversified demand. In accordance with the branding methodologies for regions, cities etc., selective tourism, in contrast to the mass tourism, is defined as a shift towards sustainable approaches to the tourism sector, which takes into consideration the social and natural values of the local communities of a place, thus allowing its host and guests to create from both parties a positive and memorable experience.

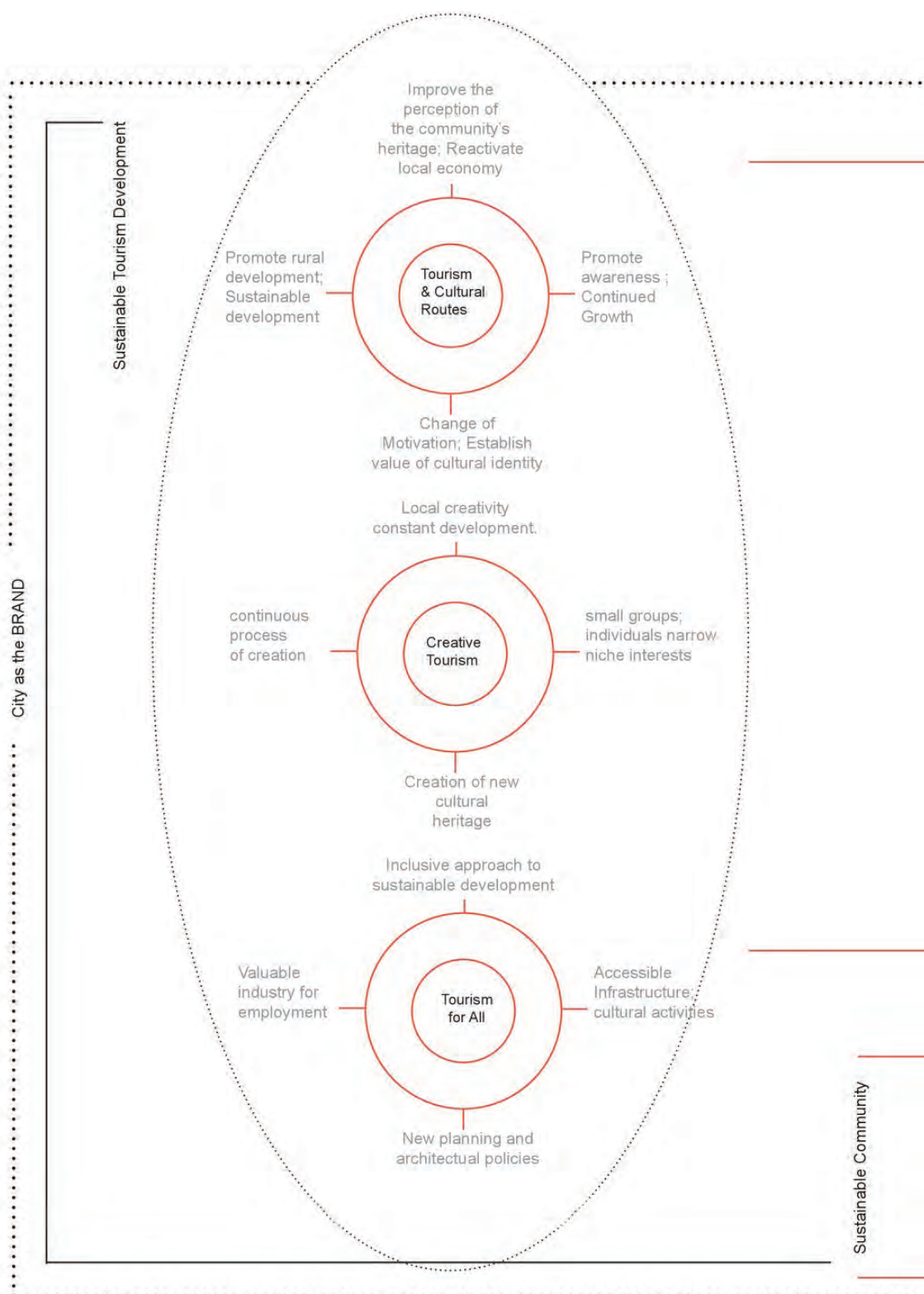
Cultural routes, creative tourism, and tourism for all are seen as complementary parts of forming a unifying image of what sustainable tourism should be for the county of Gjirokastra. The strategy of how each of these tourism trends complements each other (Fig.1) will be based on the cultural routes as the main driving force of the touristic product with the two other components (creative tourism, and tourism for all) as complementary ingredients to potentially achieve sustainable tourism.

Potential cultural routes based on their theme.

The second classification of cultural routes

in accordance with UNWED is based on two main groups: Cultural routes³ joined around one main theme and cultural routes joined around several themes, which are linked, however, to the main route as the essential theme. So, the first classification under the main theme can focus on the natural and historical heritage located near the main points of the route, or cultural itineraries based on one theme, (architecture, music, art) (UNVWTO, 2015). a) Cultural Routes. In the case of Gjirokastra, branding the county and the city of Gjirokastra through cultural route is seen as the main driving force of creating sustainable tourism. The implementation of cultural routes would reactivate the local economy, promote and foster rural development, improve the perception of the heritage by the community, and sustain continued growth. All of the cultural routes proposed for the county of Gjirokastra are based on historical and cultural facts, also involving famous personalities as part of the branding methodology. Thus, the main cultural routes proposed for the county of Gjirokastra take into account the city of Gjirokastra and the surrounding villages with potential points of interest. The main themes identified were based on the a) Historical route, b) Cultural routes, and c) Naturalist routes. Additional themes were also identified for each main theme of the cultural routes. In the case of the historical route (Fig. 2 - Fig. 2.1), additional themes were based on the a) religious route; b) archeological route; and c) Ali Pashe

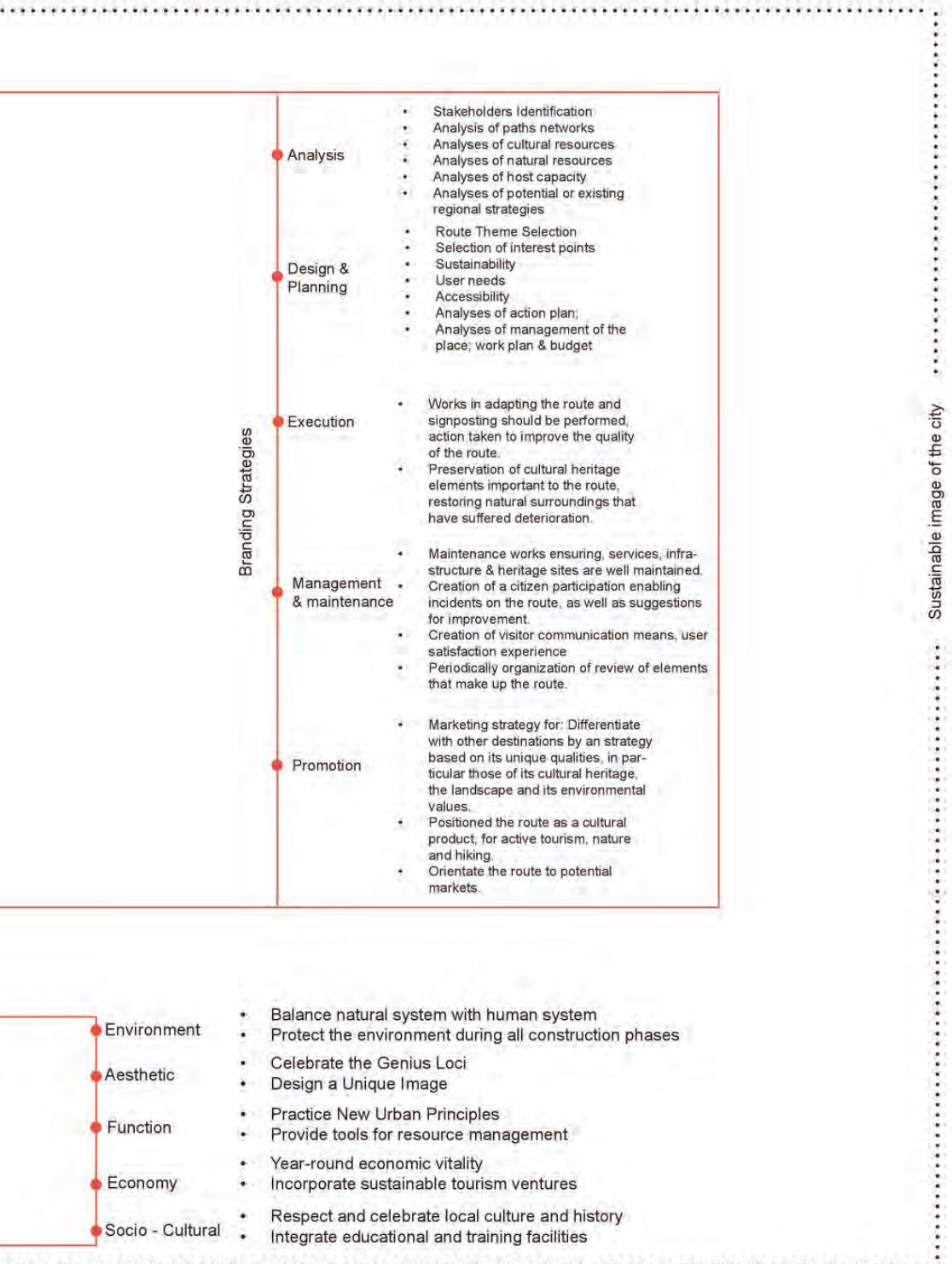
³ / a cultural, educational, archeological; or naturalistic heritage and tourism cooperation project aiming at the development and promotion of an itinerary or a series.



Tepelena Route. The county of Gjirokastra is historically rich, full of medieval castles and unexplored Byzantine Churches, Tekkes, ruins of an ancient aqueduct, and different archeological sites. In the case of the Cultural Routes (Fig. 3 - Fig. 3.1), additional themes were developed based on a) Lord Byron route; b) Edward Lear route; c) Culinary route, d) Artistic route, and e) Architectural Route. This takes into account the local and international poetry and literature as inspiration from the landscape. A set of cultural practices found in the city of Gjirokastra and in the

region villages also fall under the category of the cultural: Traditional celebrations, which are also influenced by the Greek minority of this county, National fairs and folkloric concerts, Ottoman architecture, Agrotourism and the traditional dishes of the area. The Naturalistic Routes (Fig. 4 - Fig.4.1) highlight the potential of the natural heritage of the county of Gjirokastra, which is rich in natural parks, free flowing rivers, mountain landscape, canyons and waterfalls. Sustainable tourism is seen as a beneficiary of the preservation of not only the natural

Fig. 1 / Conceptual Scheme of Sustainable Tourism Development as a Branding Methodology.
Source / the author.



heritage but also the historical and cultural one. The additional categories highlighted for the Naturalistic routes consist of the a) Scenic route; b) Blue route; c) Cycling Route.

Creative Tourism

Regarding the concept of 'creative tourism', a conceptual scheme was obtained by highlighting the five principles (Paths, Nodes, Landmark, Edge, Districts) of Kevin

Lynch's theory based on his empirical research of the built environment of how individuals perceive a city. Nevertheless, OECD (2005) and Ashworth (2009) base their theory of "Touristic Gaze"⁴ with regard to hallmark events, and famous personalities. Thus, the concept of the built environment, famous personalities, and hallmark events were taken as bases for developing acupuncture points in the county for the future development of

⁴ / "Tourist Gaze" a theory developed by John Urry, based on the concept why people are attracted in pursuing visual experiences of other places that people regularly do not experience in their everyday life.

Historical Routes



Fig. 2 / Main Map identification of Historical Route emphasizing subcultural routes focused on Religion; Archeological; Historical Personalities. Source / the author.

Historical Routes

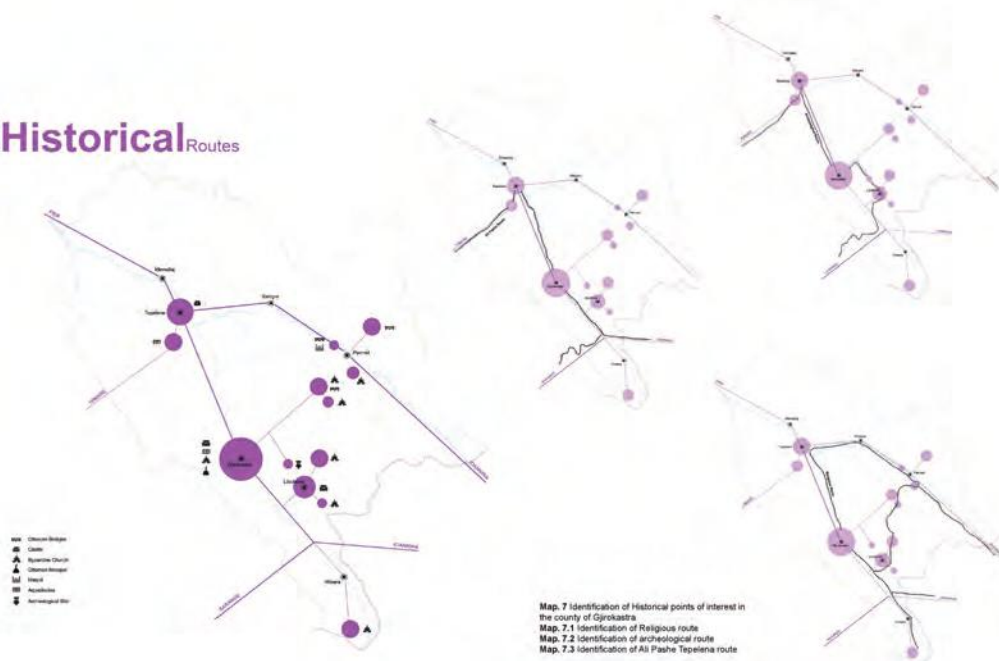


Fig. 2.1 / "Identification of Cultural Route points in the City of Gjirokastra based on the Historic Route main theme". Source / the author.

creative tourism. During the time frame of this research many visits have been conducted in the city of Gjirokastra and county, where current analyses of touristic destinations have been developed. Based on site visits in the area and their analysis, the potential of various forms of cultural activities supports the concept of creative tourism. However, most forms of cultural activities are not framed and coordinated as creative tourism and are not included in a platform of the planning organization and tourism policy.

The rural communities embody rich cultural practices, traditional customs, and folklore, which are transmitted from generation to generation, symbolizing a strong local identity. Most of the villages are currently inhabited with only 20- 40% of their capacity (Albania. Government of Albania. PAP/RACSOGREAH Consortium, 2005). Due to migration and emmigration of the younger generation, most of the elderlies reside and live from remittance from the younger generation working abroad. Most of the families that have

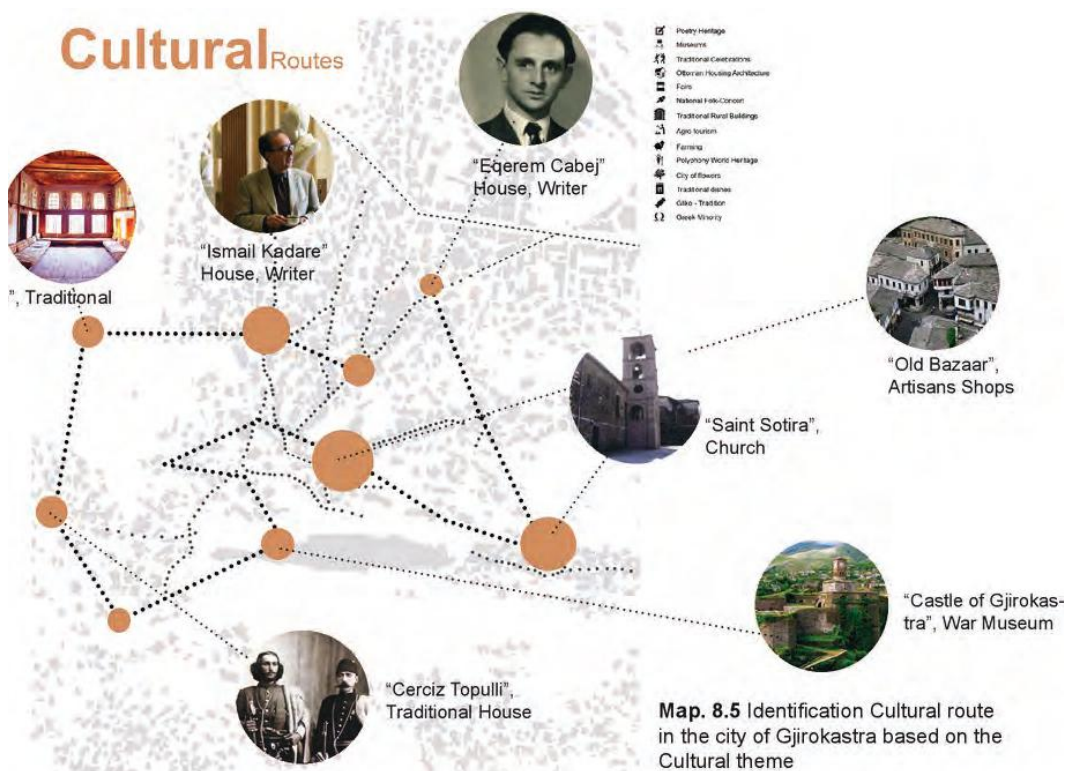


Fig. 3 / "Main Map identification of Cultural Route emphasizing subcultural routes focused on famous personalities; Artistic; Literature; Architectural; Culinary". Source / the author.

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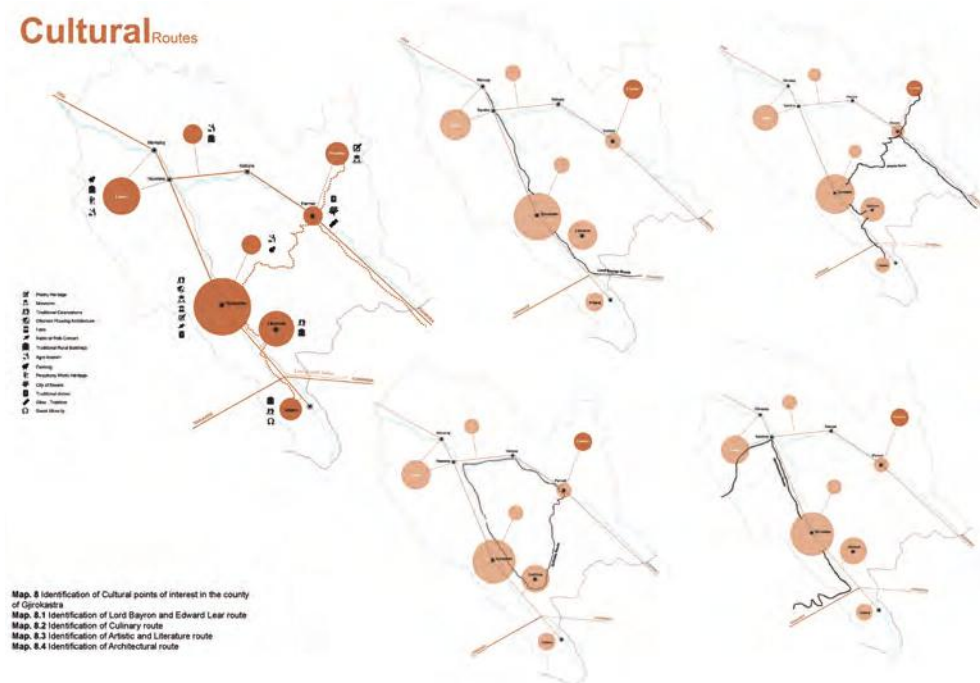
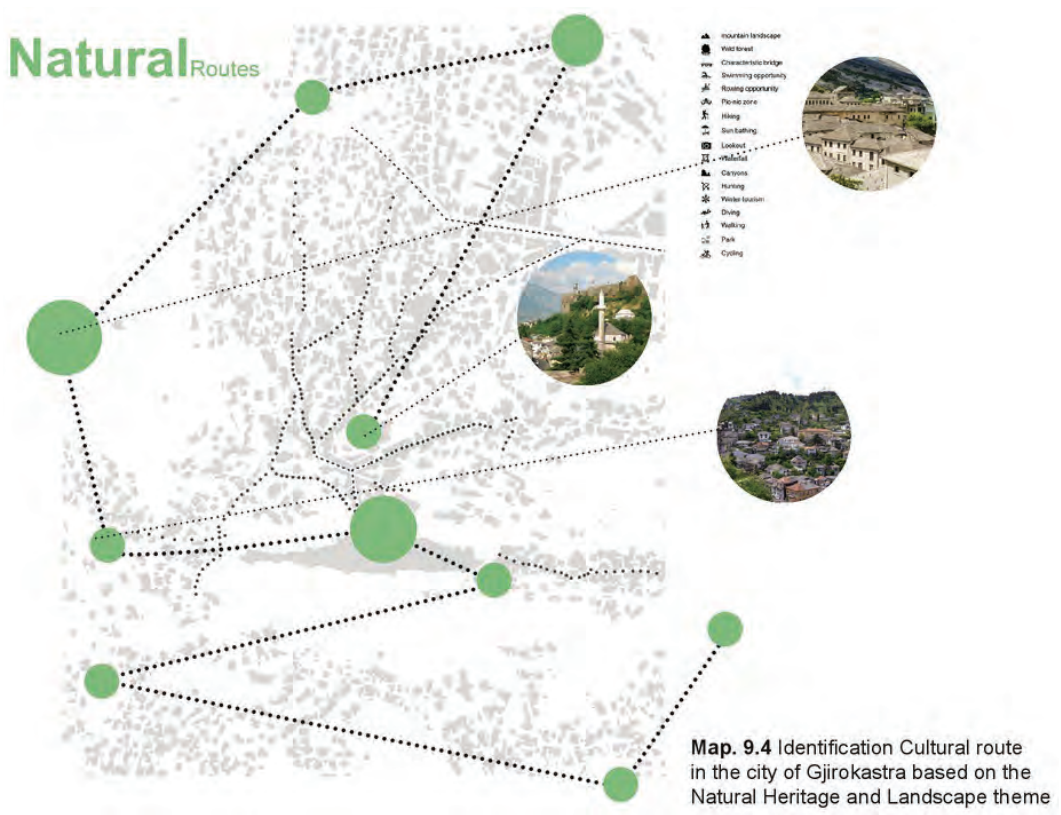


Fig. 3.1 / "Identification of Cultural Route points in the City of Gjirokastra based on the Cultural Route main theme". Source / the author.

emigrated tend to return during the summer season, also encouraged by many Orthodox religious festivals and village festivals. The county of Gjirokastra and the city, with its potential in cultural, historic and natural heritage should aim to develop creative tourism in order to foster economic and social benefits. This can trigger and encourage branding of cultural heritage and destinations and

local community products, thus attracting not only national and international tourists with specific interest in creative tourism⁵, but also future investments for sustainable development and management. These investments will serve as a powerful network in bringing people and new ideas as well as fostering cultural, business and educational relations. Apart from the acupuncture points highlighted in Fig. 5, a

⁵ / "tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken"



Map. 9.4 Identification Cultural route in the city of Gjirokastra based on the Natural Heritage and Landscape theme

Fig. 4 / Main Map identification of Naturalistic Route emphasizing subcultural routes focused on famous Scenic; Blue free flowing river; Cycling. Source / the author.



Map. 9 Identification of Natural points of interest in the county of Gjirokastra
Map. 9.1 Identification of Scenic route
Map. 9.2 Identification of Blue route
Map. 9.3 Identification of Cycling route

Fig. 4. 1 / Identification of Cultural Route points in the City of Gjirokastra based on the Natural Heritage and Landscape main theme. Source / the author.

strategic calendar of creative tourism was developed in accordance with the cultural route themes highlighted in Fig. 6, thus aiming in ex-tending the summer season phenomenon into a yearly calendar of activities for the area. Amongst the proposed activities and events that should be fostered by creative tourism, are those of a) Arts and crafts traditions.

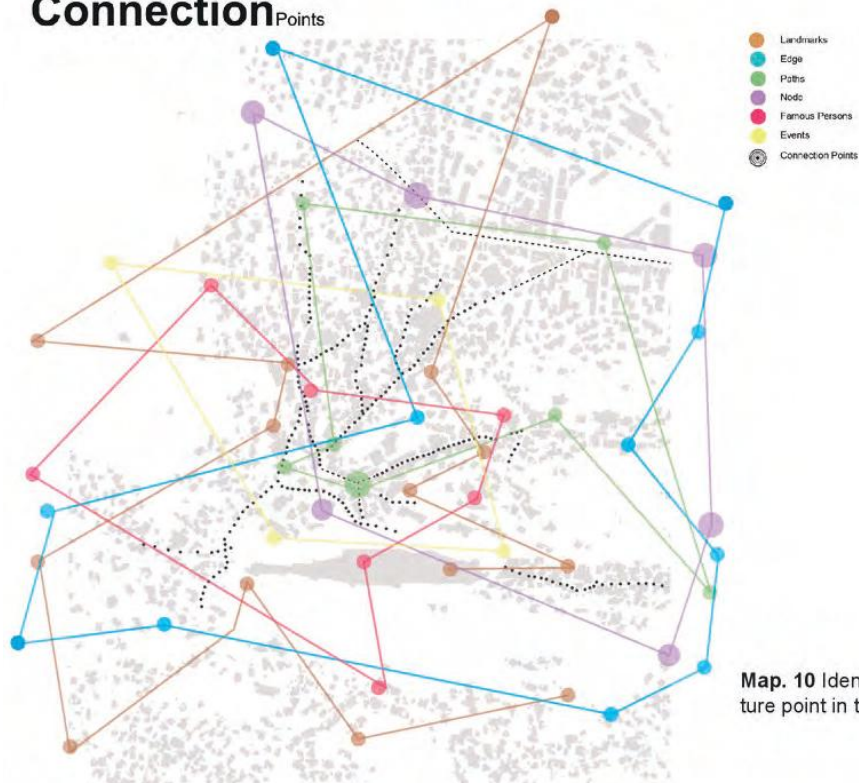
b) Literature events; c) History, culture and architecture of the region; d) Gastronomy and agricultural events; e) National fairs and folkloric events; f) Religious events. g) cultural activities related to the cultural route themes.

Tourism for All

"Tourism for All"⁶ in the county of

⁶ / "Tourism for All" aims in creating accessible and barrier-free tourism. This means ensuring tourist destinations, products and services are accessible to all people, regardless of their physical limitations, disabilities or age. It aims to allow tourism destinations to be enjoyed equally by everyone.

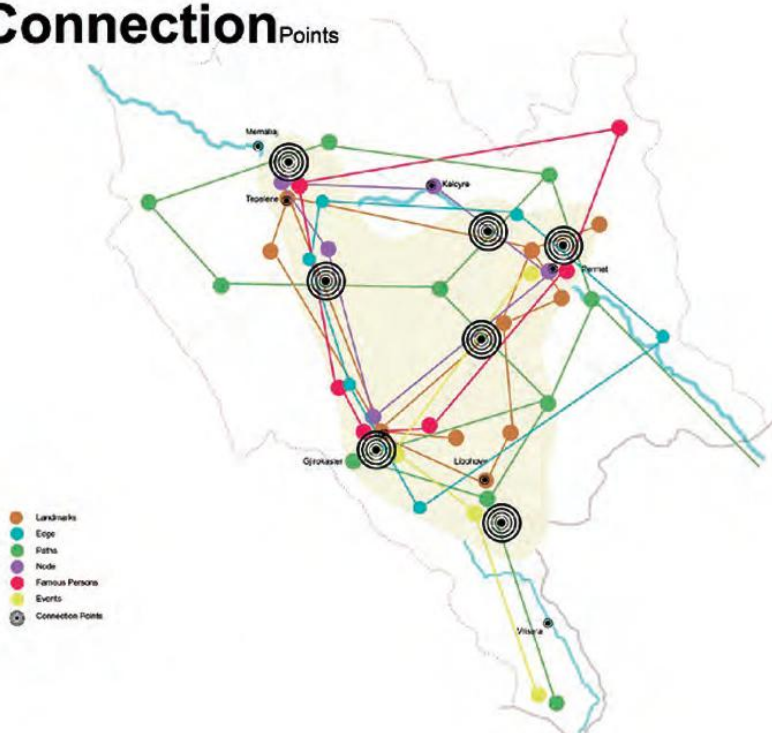
ConnectionPoints



Map. 10 Identification of acupuncture point in the city of Gjirokastra

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ConnectionPoints



*Fig. 5 / Identification of Acupuncture Points throughout the county of Gjirokastra.
Source / the author.*

Gjirokastra should focus on:

- Increasing competitiveness in tourism destinations by developing tourism products which take in consideration services and their accessibility.
- Incorporating accessibility, in naturally developing sustainable tourism policies and strategies.
- Regions and destinations should further develop forward-thinking tourism policies and practical measures, taking into account the heterogeneity of human

conditions.

- Destination managers but even governmental entities trying to develop new sustainable tourism products should take into consideration socially inclusive policies, which have to be applied, with the use and implementation of new technologies related to information of the place or service, (UNWTO, 2016). Nevertheless, environmental and social barriers should be treated by developing guidelines as applicable not only for the city

but for the surrounding areas as well. As stated by the "World Health Organization" (2015), 15% of world population lives with a disability" (WHO, 2015), and with many ongoing trends in the World and Albania, populations will face a rapid ageing, where the number of persons experiencing obstacles will only rise (WHO. 2015). In Gjirokastra, the number of ageing people and those with disabilities is high, accompanied by a population decline of 43%. In this research project, tourism for all is seen as part cultural routes. The following principles should be used as guidelines into achieving tourism for all concepts. The following guidelines are relevant to other places and destinations in the Albanian territory. Beneficiaries of the "Tourism for All" are:

- Persons with disabilities
- Elderly People
- Local residents of a certain destination
- Foreigners
- Other (Persons with injuries; people accompanying persons with disabilities; Children; people with temporary disability etc).

Hence, the first point of how tourism for all should be developed relates to the destination management approaches. Governmental Entities should develop and implement strategies concerning accessible tourism strategy laying out a key set of guidelines on the necessity of accessibility in the tourism sector, identify the services related to it, and point out if there is a need for changes. Nevertheless, the concept of accessibility should be provided with the necessary accessible facilities, infrastructure and transport in the designated destination. The second step in developing Tourism for all in the county of Gjirokastra has to do with the preparation of the adequate information on the touristic product and its advertising, which also relates to the information-booking process.

A unified set of international symbols of the accessibility or other promotional materials related to accessible services need to be included in a common strategy of developing tourism not only in Gjirokastra but in the entire nation. This will enhance the concept of accessibility in support services as part of a complete tourism product in order to facilitate the appropriate booking procedures (Website for the County of Gjirokastra). On the other hand, prior information of the level of accessibility of the site or other components of the built environment still do not exist in Albania, which means that it needs to be implemented. The urban

and architectural environments are also important in developing tourism for all. Basic means of communication should be fostered such as sign language and braille texts or alternative technological infrastructure in order to make all visitors be part of the place. Special parking spaces should be built and become available to all people suffering from a disability. This approach should be implemented in the entire county and city of Gjirokastra. Vertical and horizontal movement should be provided in order to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to move with the greatest possible independence. If possible, tourism service providers should offer appropriate infrastructure and services for visitors with disabilities. Another important element of tourism for all is the implementation of the modes of transport. Here, the National Tourism Agencies and directories in accordance with municipalities should provide means of transport for people with disabilities, special private or public vehicles. By implementing cultural routes as the main catalysator of promoting a place and destination, creative tourism should host people with dis-abilities, without the need for assistance. Entities responsible for carrying out and promoting cultural activities (museums, cultural heritage sites, natural heritage sites, religious sites) in every region should develop new means of including people with disabilities in their daily cultural activities. Other tourism activities and events should be taken into consideration measures that enable people with disabilities to have equal right of participation. All the assigned entities should ensure that people with disabilities have the same right to access the recreational and tourism facilities – the cultural routes, museums, and natural environments in the particular case of Gjirokastra. The highlighting the main categories and themes of the cultural routes, identifying the acupuncture points of developing creative tourism hubs based on the built environment, the famous personalities, the hallmark events, and the specific ideas of how to foster tourism for all are given in the diagrams below. Two diagrams in (Fig. 7; Fig. 8) show the potentials of the identification of the cultural route theme, and the actual perceived path and its distribution. For each of the cultural routes, creative tourism acupuncture points are highlighted, which suggest the most adaptable period of time to be visited and the potential events and activities which could take part in accordance with the cultural route theme. As far as the application of tourism for

all acupuncture points, specific proposals are put forward within time period. To further validate the concept of sustainable tourism in this region, two main categories of target groups were identified: the local residents and visitors (Family, Group; Individuals), the foreign tourists (Family Group, Individuals), with a commonality consisting of persons of disabilities, elderly people, and others (Persons with injuries, people accompanying persons with disabilities, children, and people with temporary disability).

All of the suggested requirements for each cultural route and potential project development are based on creative tourism, where people with disabilities are taken into account first. The main benefits of merging cultural routes with creative tourism of tourism for all enhances the possibility of developing sustainable decision-making at local and national scale by raising cultural heritage accessibility. This approach increases the capacities to manage and preserve cultural heritage and the environmental landscape in the regions. Employment is also taken into consideration with culture-related employment opportunities, by developing artist and artisan incubators related to cultural heritage of the region and Gjirokastra. Stakeholders like the Ministry of Economy and Tourism, together with the Ministry of Urban Development, Education and Sciences could be actively engaged. However, the Municipalities of Gjirokastra, Permet, Tepelena are seen as key facilitators for future development. The Institute of Cultural Monuments, National Tourism Agency and the University of Gjirokastra are involved too. The development of sustainable tourism in accordance with the specific trends taken into account will foster and encourage the involvement of private organization and business.

Concluding Remarks

The cultural routes, creative tourism and tourism for all are branding strategies in creating a sustainable tourism in Gjirokastra. Sych strategies are seen as potential tools in enhancing Gjirokastra as a tourist destination and revitalizing its economic and demographic aspects. Branding is associated primarily with economic value. Yet, through sustainable tourism, branding also holds symbolic value, since it constitutes a strategy to provide places, cities, towns, with image and cultural meaning. Thus, the integration of the three pillars of sustainable tourism suggested in this work, indicates the

need for individuality and emotional connection with the environment in the contexts of globalization, thus giving cities and regions depth, originality, and a distinctive character. The Image of the city' is an important factor in persuading native people to return to their city, and the tourists with different means to visit the city. However, authorities should be more than responsible in giving proper consideration to a strong brand that will trigger the urban development of the city and the strengthening of its identity.

In the case of Gjirokastra, City Branding is seen as the process of distinction and diversification, where the potential local tourism organizations, cultural and arts facilities, and many other institutional or individual actors should join to develop images of the place. This will to attract potential consumers and investors to particular local areas, involving the component of place making (the process which makes a specific place more attractive) and city branding (the process of promoting a place). Thus the promotion of such places through Creative Tourism and Tourism for All as enhancers of Cultural Tourism can promote city branding, and reshape the city image. This will help develop the city's image and improve its economy.

Previously published research regarding "city branding" originates from the disciplines of "marketing" and "urban studies", following parallel directions rather than interdisciplinary paths. The close parallelism drawn between city branding and corporate branding has gained the attention of many scholars in terms of their complexity and range of stakeholders. Thus, the complexity of the 'city brands' is determined from their accountability in relation to the needs accompanying a wide spectrum of different target groups. One of the key challenges for branding cities revolves around the issue of developing a strong subcategory of the brand, coherent in relation to different areas of activity with different target audiences. Moreover, target audiences are as diverse as a city's residents, potential investors, tourists and stakeholders.

Moreover, with the growing demand for tourism, the tourism industry in many historic cities or places has been shifting towards mass tourism. Many issues have emerged with regard to the cultural heritage of the place and its image identity. On the other hand, experts agree that countries, regions and cities should shift towards sustainable tourism development and management practices, focusing in every category of tourism depending on

the types of destinations. Noted by many authors (Maffesoli, 1994; Matarosso & Landry, 1999; Timothy, 2011; Calvo et al., 2014 Richards, 2011; R. J.S Beeter, 2002), and organizations (UNWTO, 2016; UNESCO, 2011), principles of sustainability relate to different issues and aspects of touristic product development, hence trying to establish a balance between these dimensions and foster long-term sustainable products. As noted by UNEP and UNWTO, (2005). 'A Guide for Policy Makers', sustainable tourism should regard:

1) "optimal use of environmental resources prioritizing key elements in tourism development, helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity" 2) 'Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to intercultural understanding and tolerance' 3) 'Ensure long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities. and contributing to poverty alleviation" (UNEP & UNWTO. 2005)

However, in terms of the development towards sustainable tourism, it is required that participants of all proper stakeholders, along with the proper entities, have to arrange a wide spectrum of participation and consensus in building this capacity, by constantly monitoring its impacts and introducing the necessary measures. The 12 aims identified by UNEP and UNWTO, 2005, regarding sustainable tourism focus on:

ECONOMIC VIABILITY: To ensure the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises, so that they are able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term. **LOCAL PROSPERITY-** To maximize the contribution of tourism to the prosperity of the host destination, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally' **EMPLOYMENT QUALITY:** To strengthen the number and quality of local jobs created and supported by tourism, including the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways. **SOCIAL EQUITY:** To seek a wide-spread distribution of economic and social benefits from tourism throughout the recipient community, including improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor. **VISITOR FULFILMENT** to provide a safe, satisfying

and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways. **LOCAL CONTROL:** 'To engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of tourism in their area. in consultation with other stakeholders. **COMMUNITY WELLBEING:** 'To maintain and strengthen the quality of life in local communities, including social structures and access to resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation. **CULTURAL RICHNESS:** To respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of host communities. **PHYSICAL INTEGRITY** To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes, both urban and rural, and avoid the physical and visual degradation of the environment. **BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY:** To support the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife, and minimize damage to them. **RESOURCE EFFICIENCY:** To minimize the use of scarce and non-renewable resources in the development and operation of tourism facilities and services. **ENVIRONMENTAL PURITY-** To minimize the pollution of air water and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors' (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005)

Nevertheless, the European Commission in accordance with UNWTO foresee the need to develop a guidebook concerning the development of sustainable tourism, in terms of enhancing a common understanding and future commitment to Sustainable Tourism. Some of the new trends highlighted were focused on a) cultural routes as a product of cultural tourism; b) creative tourism; and c) tourism for all (UNWTO, 2012).

On the other hand, as in the case of the involvement of World Heritage sites in Tourism, UNESCO itself has recognized the need for a sustainable approach for planning and managing these sites in accordance with the sites' capacity, visitor needs and the local population's needs (UNESCO, 2016). The main mission of UNESCO is the increase of awareness, capacity and participation, creating a balance between conservation and visitor experience in:

- The principles of sustainable tourism should be in line with the World Heritage Convention
- Developing new strategies to protect and manage Cultural and natural heritage through new policies and frameworks in support of sustainable tourism.
- Engage different stakeholders in the

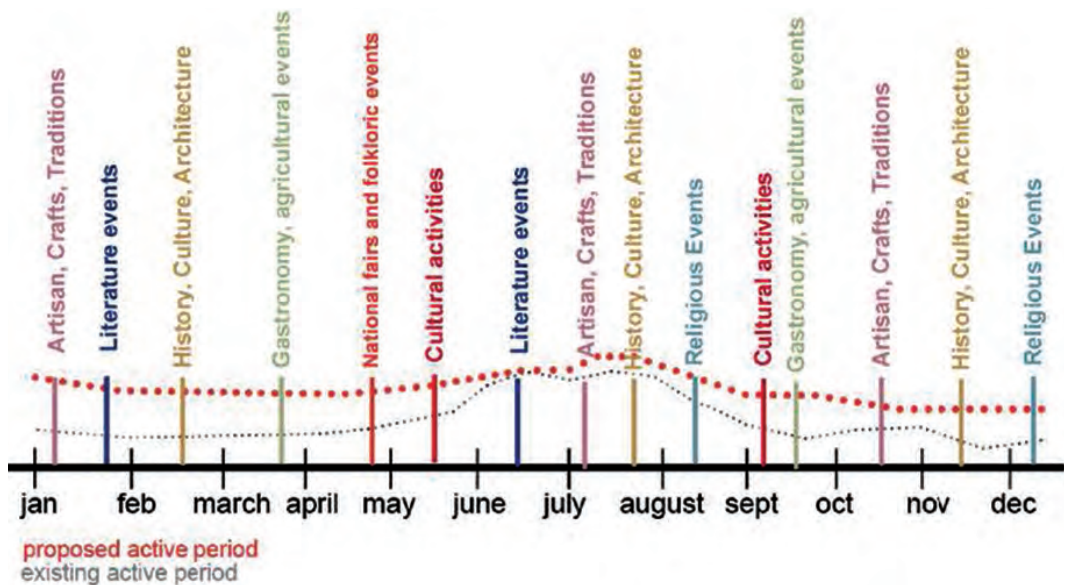


Fig. 6 / Identification of Creative Tourism resources and activities throughout the year.
Source / the author

planning process, involved with the development and management of the sustainable tourism with regards to certain destinations that are prone to heritage conservation and boosting local communities

- Based on the local needs and contexts, the stakeholders for World Heritage Sites should be provided with adaptable tools in order to manage the tourism product more efficiently.
- Understanding and appreciation of the World Heritage site should be promoted among stakeholders in order to obtain quality in tourism products and services, (UNESCO, 2016).

Thus, sustainable tourism should be applied in terms of new proactive trends, maintaining a satisfactory level both from the perspective of the resident and the tourist. Both parties should be furnished with a meaningful experience in order to raise the awareness of sustainability issues, enhance and foster best practices for tourism, and implement and adapt them to World Heritage sites.

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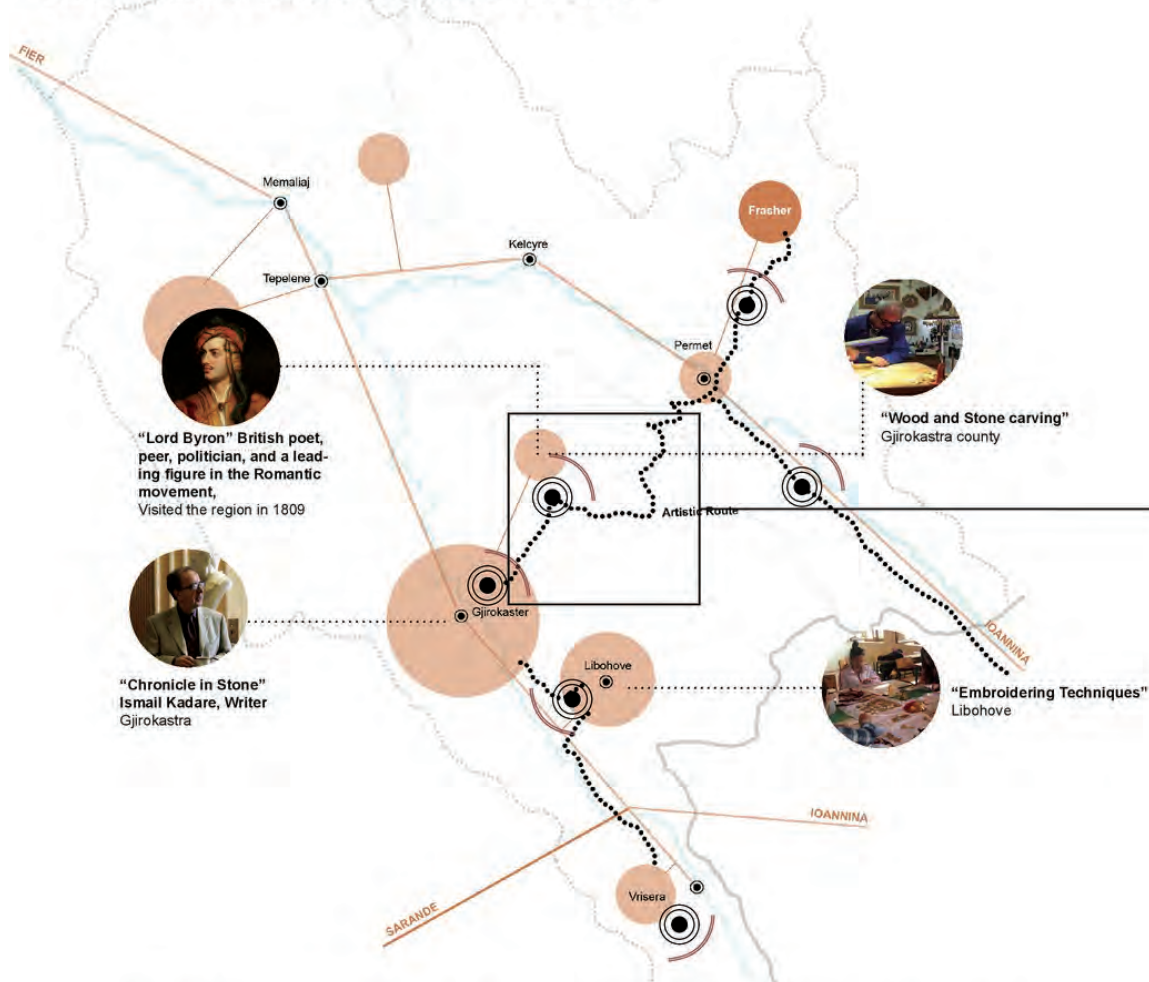
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Artistic and Literature Cultural Route



Map. 13 Representation of Artistic and Literature cultural route, creative tourism and tourism for all acupuncture point; Target Groups; Requirements; Potential Project development

Cultural Route Criteria	Based on				
	Design and Structure	Theme	Territory	Origin	Overnight Stay
Artistic and Literature Route	Archipelago of points	Historic; Art&Crafts; Literature	Regional	Historic	Several overnight stays

Type of Route: "Artistic and Literature"; is based on the artistic and literature heritage of the county, rich diverse and creative ways of valorising the folklore and traditions of the region. The design and Structure of the route should be based on Archipelago of point due to the diverse theme of the route. Due to the potential number of activities to be experienced the cultural route oversees several overnight stays.

Creative Tourism : If referring to the notion of creative tourism as an enhancer of the chosen cultural route, potential activities regarding this route could possibly be towards: 1. Artisans arts&crafts 2. Local Traditions of the villages involved in this route; 3. Review of the regions Literature; 4. Cultural Activities ;

Fig. 7 / "Representation of Artistic and Literature Cultural Route identified in the county of Gjirokastra, emphasizing creative tourism and tourism for all acupuncture points; target groups; requirements; potential project development". Source / the author.

Elements / Sources	Richards & Raymond 2000	Richards 2000	UNESCO 2006	Raymond 2007	Volic 2010	Rudan 2012
Active participation	X	X	X	X		X
Activities connected to destination	X	X	X			X
Opportunity to develop creativity	X				X	X
Develop new skill/ learning	X	X	X			X
Meaningful contact to hosts and guest		X	X	X		
Arts / Crafts / Heritage			X			X
Self-development		X				
Revenue for Communities		X				
Sustainable				X		
Individual Creation of experience					X	
Nature						X

most of the events taking part in this route could potentially be thought the entire ear

Acupuncture points: The acupuncture point highlighted in the Map.13 can be potential solutions towards small SME regarding Art - Crafts and Heritage, Culinary, Literature of the region.

Referring at Table. 12 “Key elements of creative tourism based on definition in academic literature”, the benefits that this pillar of creating sustainability in Gjirokastras County could potentially enhance:

Active Participation and meaningful contact between the host and guest

Activities connected to the destination

Develop new skills and learning of the History, Culture, Arts and Crafts; Literature of the region.

Enhancing SME of local arts-crafts and heritage

All of the above listed elements of creative tourism directly and indirectly impact in the:

Self Development of tourist (local or foreign)

Create revenue for the hosting communities

Build up the concept of sustainability for the host and for the visitor economically; socially; and environmentally

Create individual experience towards selective tourism rather than the concept of mass tourism

Serve as a model to be followed in developing further more the image of the brand place/city/region impacting the territory and sustainability of Gjirokastra county in relation to its local products.

Tourism for All Requirements: Regarding Tourism for all model to develop along this cultural route some of the requirement needed as additive are focused on: Adaptable prior information of the route; Adaptable requirement of urban and architectural environments to be visited (not harming the integrity of the place); adaptable modes of transport; access to nature along the route, adaptable resources focusing on the theme of the route

Target Groups: Target group could be divided in Local residents/visitors and foreign visitors. Common indicator that this two target groups could have in common are as such Persons with disabilities

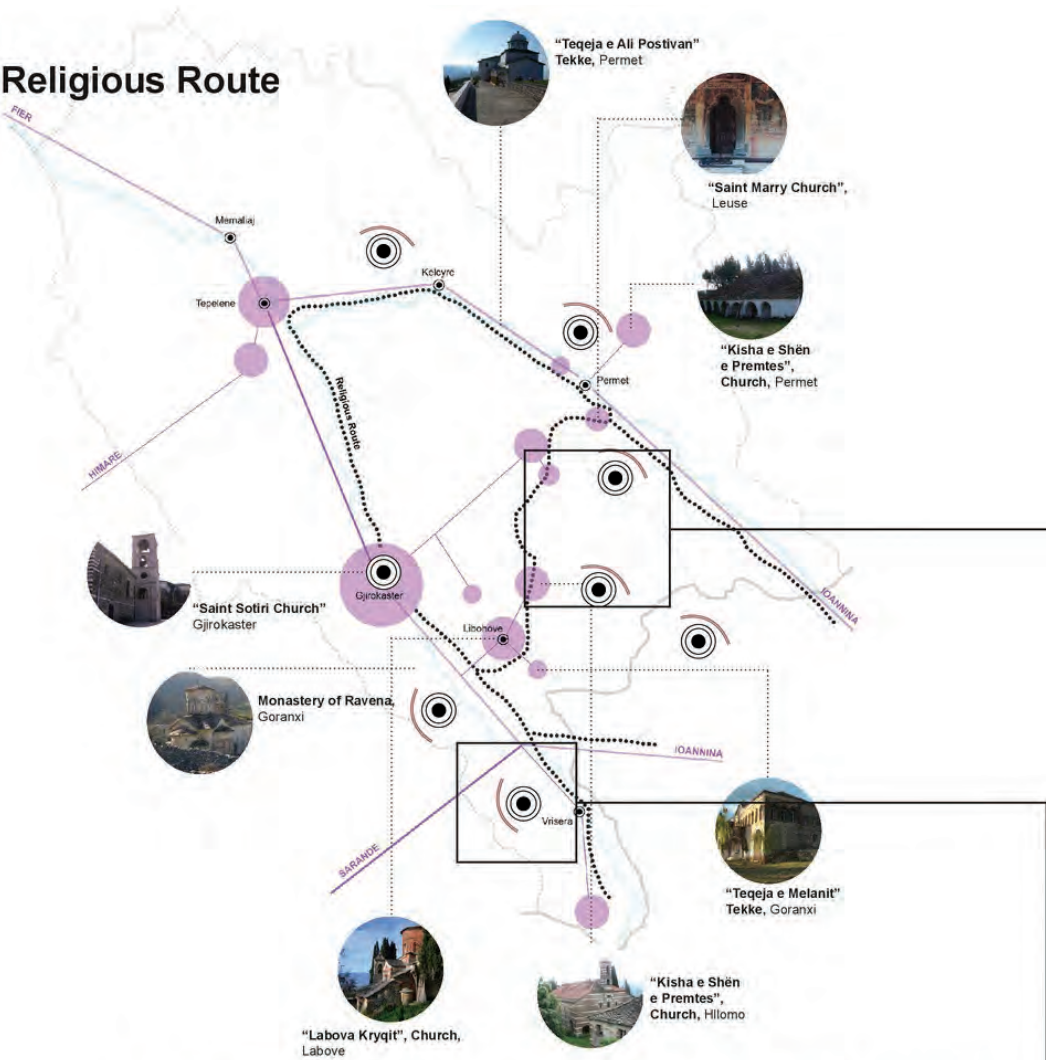
Elderly People; Other (Persons with injuries; people accompanying persons with disabilities; Children; people with temporary disability etc)

Activities: Some of the activities could be the same as visitors experiencing creative tourism means, or it can focus in trips for tourists and their families.

Project development: 1. Museum in a suitcase; 2. Potential audio guides explaining the methodology of artisans; 3. Touch and feel artisan object; 4. Braille texts for literature of the region; 5. Interpretation of literature for people with disabilities; 6. Accessibility to the sight through mobility modes and accessibility inside the site, 7. Signage and braille text; 6. Qualified tourist guides focusing in offering better services for a broader public; 8. Travel Online Project aiming to add information gap and informing people with a disability and their carriers, 9. Appropriate environmental lighting of the site and route.



Religious Route



Map. 14 Representation of Religious cultural route, creative tourism and tourism for all acupuncture point; Target Groups; Requirements; Potential Project development

Cultural Route Criteria	Design and Structure	Theme	Based on		
			Territory	Origin	Overnight Stay
Religious Cohesion	Archipelago of points	Historic; Religious	Regional	Historic	Several overnight stays

Type of Route: "Religious Cultural Route"; applied on the religious heritage of the county, rich in Byzantine Churches and Tekke's and Religious unity coexisting. The design and Structure of the route should be based on Archipelago of point due to the high number of religious sources in the county. Due to the high number of religious sources do the visited the cultural route oversees several overnight stays.

Creative Tourism : If referring to the notion of creative tourism as an enhancer of the chosen cultural route, potential activities regarding this route could possibly be towards: 1. History of each religious subject; 2. Culture of the villages involved in this route; 3. Architecture located in this route; 4. Related religious

Fig. 8 / "Religious Cultural Route identified in the county of Gjirokastra, emphasizing creative tourism and tourism for all acupuncture points; target groups; requirements; potential project development". Source / the author.

Elements / Sources	Richards & Raymond 2000	Richards 2000	UNESCO 2006	Raymond 2007	Volic 2010	Rudan 2012
Active participation	X	X	X	X		X
Activities connected to destination	X	X	X			X
Opportunity to develop creativity	X				X	X
Develop new skill/ learning	X	X	X			X
Meaningful contact to hosts and guest		X	X	X		
Arts / Crafts / Heritage			X			X
Self -development		X				
Revenue for Communities		X				
Sustainable				X		
Individual Creation of experience					X	
Nature						X

events taking part in the villages during Feb - March; Augoust; Oct-Nov

Acupuncture points: The acupuncture point highlighted in the Map.14 can be potential solutions towards small SME regarding Art - Crafts and Heritage, and Culinary.

Referring at Table. 12 "Key elements of creative tourism based on definition in academic literature", the benefits that this pillar of creating sustainability in Gjirokastras County could potentially enhance:

Active Participation and meaningful contact between the host and guest

Activities connected to the destination

Develop new skills, learning of the History, Culture, Architecture and Religion of the area.

Enhancing SME of local arts-crafts and heritage

All of the above listed elements of creative tourism directly and indirectly impact in the:

Self Development of tourist (local or foreign)

Create revenue for the hosting communities

Build up the concept of sustainability for the host and for the visitor economically; socially; and environmentally

Create individual experience towards selective tourism rather than the concept of mass tourism

Serve as a model to be followed in developing further more the image of the brand place/city/region impacting the territory and sustainability of Gjirokastra county.

Tourism for All Requirements: Regarding Tourism for all model to develop along this cultural route some of the requirement needed as additive are focused on: Adaptable prior information of the route; Adaptable requirement of urban and architectural environments to be visited (not harming the integrity of the place); adaptable modes of transport; access to nature along the route.

Target Groups: Target group could be divided in Local residents/visitors and foreign visitors. Common indicator that this two target groups could have in common are as such Persons with disabilities

Elderly People; Other (Persons with injuries; people accompanying persons with disabilities; Children; people with temporary disability etc)

Activities: Some of the activities could be the same as visitors experiencing creative tourism means, or it can focus in sightseeing trips.

Project development: 1. Potential audio guides explaining the religious assets; 2. 3D printed models of the religious building and other assets; 3. Touch and feel the nature; 4. Accessibility to the sight through mobility modes and accessibility inside the site, 5. Signage and braille text; 6. Qualified tourist guides focusing in offering better services for a broader public; 7. Travel Online Project aiming to add information gap and informing people with a disability and their carriers, 8. Appropriate environmental lighting of the site and route.

