The Role of Heritage Tourism and its Implications for Urban Regeneration in Old Doha, Qatar.

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Abstract: Doha, the capital of Qatar is the largest city, with over 80% of the nation's population residing in Doha. It is also the administrative and economic centre of the country with a population of more than 2,900,000 persons in May 2021. Prior to 1950, Doha was a small fishing and pearling village stretching 5kms along the sea. Within six decades, it grew rapidly to become a main hub in the Gulf for mega sports competitions, international conferences and exhibition events. The Qatari rich cultural heritage is now being recognized as a valuable resource for sustainable development. This paper focused on the role of cultural heritage tourism and its implications for urban regeneration in the context of Qatar with a particular focus on old Doha. Therefore, in order to use heritage wisely, it was necessary to position cultural heritage tourism as an essential element of sustainable development. The research methodology was based on the case study approach. A thorough investigation of Souk Waqif as an important tourist destination for the local and global tourists was carried out. This analysis evaluated the experience and identified the weaknesses that needed to be reinforced. Moreover, the paper concluded with some recommendations for regenerating old Doha.

Keywords: historic cities; urban regeneration; resilience; cultural heritage tourism; identity, sustainability.

1. Introduction

Historic urban centres and districts echo the 'spirit' of a culture and remind people of their past. They express the collective attitudes and the common patterns of life, and as such, they are a source of identity and inspiration. What exactly distinguishes a historic district from other parts in the city are qualities linked to age, rarity, character, memory, sense of pride, a source of identity and authenticity. Historic centres present the past inheritance of buildings, quarters, streets and squares that resonate with memory and cultural traditions. The human scale of their buildings and urban elements reflect long chapters of history and events. The main historic landmarks in the city, such as ancient mosques, forts, palaces and souks are usually found in these central areas and form the main links with the past.

The main heritage landmarks in a historic centre provide reassuring reference points especially for the local inhabitants. They strengthen the cultural identity of the historic city, by reinforcing the relationship of people with them and thus creating a sense of place. Unlike museums - where the past is displayed but not touched - historic districts are places where life is bustling. Therefore, these old cores need a holistic approach to regenerate and revive them within the present city. Historic districts are the symbiosis of a complex system of forces; economic, cultural, and environmental. A well-conserved historic district provides many advantages for its citizens; it is intimate, human in scale and often rich in diverse activities. Compared with some recently planned cities, it can be extremely convenient for housing, commercial, entertainment activities and tourism.

In Qatar and since the 1950s the initial goal of the local government was to erase images of under-development and poverty. To do this, it embarked on large-scale re-development projects to catch up

with the modernized world. In order to meet the increasing need for housing, education, health and shopping areas, large areas had to be prepared for these purposes. In Doha, the bulldozer cleared away several old districts, including significant heritage landmarks. These historic areas and buildings were replaced by concrete, steel and glass tower blocks, which are often alien to the local context.

Figure 1. Map of Qatar, showing the location of Doha on the eastern coast.

Most of the historic districts in Doha that escaped the ravages of demolition during the 1950s until early 1980s, suffer from neglect, lack of maintenance and deterioration. These surviving heritage areas are victims of crumbling infrastructure and real estate speculation. Economic decline and the original inhabitants' exodus from the historic cores, has led to further destruction and dilapidation. In addition, housing decay, decline of commercial activities, lack of appropriate city planning, changes in consumer tastes have worsened the situation to the level of transforming these historic centres into "urban slums". The task of bringing these historic areas back to life, through sustainable regeneration needs to be addressed urgently in order to prevent more cultural amnesia.

Case studies are important for providing knowledge about real-world examples that are critical, representative, revolutionary, unique or longitudinal and exemplify certain patterns and issues. This study adopts an exploratory case study approach to discover the key tourism challenges in the city of Doha. This paper takes advantage of a variety of data sources, including publicly available relevant documents, websites, promotional materials, business conference presentation reviews, field observations and follow-up communication by phone and email.

2. Historic Cities and Sustainability

What is sustainable development? The 1987 report "Our Common Future" from the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) set forth the most widely used definition of the concept: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The Brundland Commission lists food, water, clothes, shelter, work, energy and hygiene as examples of what is termed 'basic needs' [1]. Sustainability is a key aspect of local development and planning discourse. Recent interest in the sustainability of historic cities reveals a more complex picture than that of a development process. Rather, what is being witnessed is the rise of development agendas related to the desire for local policy makers to make historic cities look different from each other. This will enhance their uniqueness and distinctiveness that can be used as a catalyst for the pursuit of economic growth through tourism, trade and other activities.

Reduce; reuse and recycle are the '3Rs' of non-renewable cultural heritage resources and form an essential part of the meeting point between conservation and sustainability. The sustainability discourse argues that historic urban centers should not just be perceived in terms of nostalgia, history and architectural dimensions only. The rationale for an appropriate conservation approach is to link the historic district and center into its environmental capital with a relation to other parts of the city as a whole. This does not mean that people should stop building new but try to re-orientate the building industry towards activities such as maintenance, reuse, adaptation and upgrading of the existing fabric. This should be undertaken within the principles that govern a sustainable city and holistic urban management approach [2].

There is a growing belief that most of the historic cities in the Arab world are facing multiple pressures. Competing demands for land use, introduction of new economic activities, and marketing of heritage resources place an important burden on the local heritage players. The latter strive to find appropriate ways to manage these surviving old cores. During recent years, new policy mechanisms have emerged to reconcile the conflicting demands of conservation and development by applying sustainable development policies to prevent further cultural amnesia [3]. Historic cities have unique characteristics that can guarantee their sustainability. On one hand this implies that development in these historic cores should be limited, while on the other hand the issue of maintaining local economic vitality is essential. Most of heritage players recognize that such places cannot reproduce themselves without some kind of intervention. These are meant to regulate and manage the physical and social fabric upon which their local identity and economic success is predicated [4].

Sustainable development can be seen today as a powerful motivation for urban regeneration. Basically, it would consist of a process of urban development based on the constant reuse of existing built resources, associated with a low input of energy for adaptation to new requirements conceived in society. It is also viewed as a process founded in the local culture, in an equitable distribution of urban services, the use of democratic principles of management, and the revival of traditional social values and practices. Urban regeneration is a phenomenon which has great significance, not only because a symbiotic functional usage in historic buildings steps up the maintenance of the structure and as such delays its decay, but also because the resultant monitoring prevents cases of vandalism and scavenging of material heritage as is seen in buildings that are deserted and disused. The importance of integrating economic and cultural activity in historical areas cannot be overemphasized.

For a historic city to be sustainable, it must allow adjustment as circumstances change. This will enable historic centres to stay alive and not become fossilized "museums". In this way there is no choice, and according to Dix "when talking about true conservation, it is the wise use of the resources of our environment, respecting but not copying the past: incorporating new and old to the best advantage" [5]. Historic urban centres represent a great economic, social and cultural investment that it would be unwise for the community to waste. In old cities and centers, history and heritage have become the dynamic assets that combine the local and the global. They establish the local specificity and distinctiveness so attractive to a global tourist market. This local-global dimension of exchange contributes to explain why the local heritage players seek a competitive advantage over similarly historic areas. Cities that demonstrate through promotion and marketing their historical richness are more appealing to those with capital seeking attractive locations, especially for visitors and tourists [6].

3. Cultural Heritage Tourism in the Arab World

The term 'sustainable tourism' usually denotes the application of the more general concept of sustainable development to tourism as a specific economic sector. Emergence of the sustainable development concept has focused attention on the need to safeguard tourist attractions from the negative impacts of tourism. Resource-based attractions such as heritage sites in particular, require the development of efficient management systems and planning processes. There is a growing global consensus that tourism development in any region must stand upon three main pillars to remain sustainable: economic, environmental and community considerations. Arguably, to achieve such

sustainable tourism development, tourism should be approached as part of the development framework of each state and must be related to other economic and social activities, whilst also benefiting local citizens, safeguarding the natural and cultural environment and satisfying political objectives. This goal requires highly sophisticated planning approaches as a key factor in implementing sustainability [7].

Since the first Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, sustainability has become a central issue in tourism development policies throughout the world. It has become the organizing framework for tourism planning and research [8]. In tourism planning there are two key issues. The first emphasizes that tourism has environmental implications, both positive and negative, and that they can be controlled through the systematic implementation of planning and monitoring techniques. The second implies that the social impacts of tourism also need to be mastered, in order to avoid destroying the social fabric and values of traditional societies [9]. Sustainable tourism must meet the needs of both the tourist and host community, without diminishing opportunities for the future. Sustainable tourism also implies optimum use of resources and maximization of benefits to conservation and local communities. There are certain preconditions for achieving a sustainable approach to tourism planning. These are co-operation, industry co-ordination, strategic planning and commitment to sustainable objectives.

Arguably, policy acceptance of the principles of sustainable tourism development is only the first step [10]. The next and most significant step is the demonstration of commitment through action rather than words, by establishing an appropriate framework for planning and management, which takes into account the spatial, political and temporal parameters of the implementation process [11]. [12] suggests that the most effective level at which to implement strategies for sustainable tourism development planning is the local, because it is at this level that the problems are most apparent and policies are likely to receive most political support.

Under the umbrella of sustainable tourism, the concept of 'cultural heritage tourism' integrates 'culture', 'heritage' and 'tourism'. ATLAS outlines two definitions for 'cultural heritage tourism'; first "All movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence". Secondly; "the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs" [13]. Cultural heritage tourism is about the exploration and enjoyment of cultures as forms of tourism. Cultural heritage tourism is a much larger concept than an interest about palaces, forts and mosques might imply. Its resources expand to include historical geography, archaeology, literature and environmental management. Essentially, cultural and landscape tourism is about what a geographer would term *place*, the understanding of places as they really are and about *heritage*, things used as tourism *place-products*, 'which are literally or metaphorically passed on from one generation to another [14].

Tourism resources may be classified in two types; primary and secondary elements. Primary assets are those, which attract people and consist of museums, art galleries, sports facilities, historic districts, buildings, landscapes and special events. Secondary elements enhance these attractions or assist in the process of attracting tourists through shopping centers, hotels, and transport and tourism agencies. Once the primary and secondary tourism resources are defined; the factors, which play a role in the development of a cultural heritage tourist opportunity spectrum, are:

- "Accessibility to and within the destination area;
- The possibility of choosing from a wide range of activities and meeting a diversity of preferences;
- The combination of activities within a specific time-space budget;
- The spatial arrangement of interesting places (networks, trails);
- The functional synergy between urban facilities;
- Interaction between activities" [15].
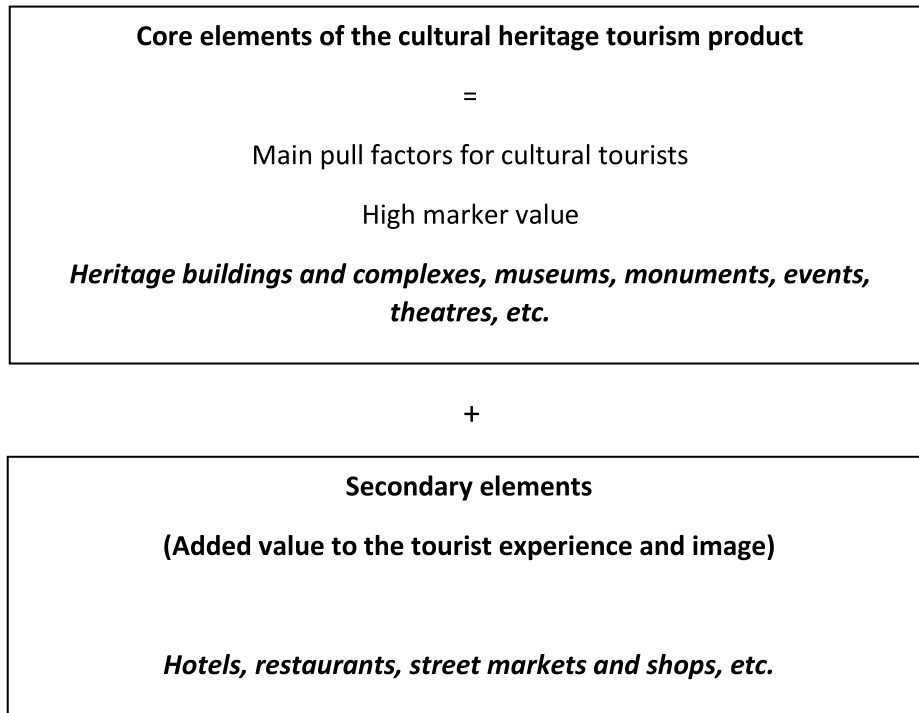
Cultural Heritage Tourist Opportunity Spectrum

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Core elements of the cultural heritage tourism product

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Main pull factors for cultural tourists

High marker value

Heritage buildings and complexes, museums, monuments, events, theatres, etc.

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Secondary elements

(Added value to the tourist experience and image)

Hotels, restaurants, street markets and shops, etc.

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Diagram 01. Adapted from Urban tourist opportunity spectrum: the concept [16].

The potential of heritage tourism in urban regeneration depends on the availability of built heritage resources, which can be commodified into tourist attractions, on the financial capacity of public and private institutions to do so and before all on the political will. Policies for urban regeneration are mainly inspired by the possibilities of reusing the cultural resources of historic districts. The central issue in this approach of developing tourism as a catalyst of urban regeneration and the ways heritage resources are being converted as tourist attractions. The main concern is to conserve the local cultural identity, while commodifying cultural heritage resources for tourism. Three main issues need to be considered while exploring heritage tourism for urban regeneration:

- Transformation of cultural heritage resources into tourism attractions;
- Consideration of cultural identity, sense of place, selection process and interpretation;
- Quality management; integration of tourism in the urban system, resource management and visitor management [17].

Recently, a new mode of development emerged in a way to reuse and develop historic cities and districts for tourism. To achieve this, there is a need to make funds available by developing heritage areas and buildings for tourism. Meanwhile and according to Orbasli "Tourism may become an important contributor to the economic realisation of a project, but there is the delicate balance between tourism being a support to conservation and tourism becoming a reason for conservation" [18]. While the former can be beneficial to conserve more historic sites, the latter may encourage the proliferation of inauthentic and fake heritage attractions. Many cultural sites are being compromised because local authorities are not aware of the value for conserving them. Developing historic areas for tourism and commerce requires the transformation of conservation from a political, cultural and social aspect to that of economic development. As Kuban points out: "Tourism is a twentieth century phenomenon. You cannot put it aside. One must accept it as a phenomenon that exists, good or not so good. Millions of people travel. One cannot stop them. They will come, so let them be used as a source of development" [19].

Adaptive reuse of existing heritage buildings; residential, workshops, or public amenities for tourism may attract a large number of tourists which can strain existing systems of sewage, water

and power services. The flow of visitors, if not well regulated can eventually disrupt local lifestyles. Moreover, there are cases where the tourists' tastes and habits have proved offensive to local population. In fear of such problems, the influx of tourists may not be welcomed by local residents and the facilities favoured by them may be different from those needed by the host community [20]. Therefore, there is a need to apply a cautious approach, which does not undermine the local inhabitants' needs when developing tourism in historic areas.

The responsible visitor may be aware of many nuances of management, function and interpretation and be able to take them into account in seeking what he or she came for. The mass-tourist, however, does not have the time, and often not the inclination, to react through discerning and judgmental filters (Boniface and Fowler, 2003). Large visitor numbers, poor interpretation and information, crowds, congestion and pollution, seem to be the main threats affecting the quality of both the tourist experience and resource preservation, resulting in a complex relationship between visitation and regeneration [22].

There is now a consensus that the way forward is to manage heritage sites to maximize the quality of the visitor experience, whilst minimizing the impact on the heritage resource. However, this is not simple and a number of issues come to the fore in terms of the approaches to heritage management and sustainability. Many of the debates relate to the dilemmas that confront heritage sites, particularly in terms of maintaining the sensitive balance between conservation, visitor management and community involvement. Other issues relate to the problems of funding and the extent to which the commercialization of heritage and museums compromise their core function [23].

In many historic cities, a 'local fatigue' may result when over-consuming local infrastructure, historic buildings versus a demand on land, growing social conflict between visitors and local inhabitants, as well as the environmental impact of tourism. These tensions between the demands for development and conservation in historic cities have raised the issue of introducing sustainable development policies to counter the consequences of diminishing resources. Such an interpretation implies that there are limits to growth that must not be breached within a historic city as stated by Jacobs: "A limit to the amount of development which an area can take over time, determined by its environmental characteristics… [And]…that if development exceeds a particular level, the loss of or damage to these features [environmental characteristics] will be unsustainable or otherwise unacceptable, and should therefore not be permitted" [24].

Trade patterns in historic towns are changing quickly; small workshops and crafts are being displaced because they are seen as too noisy and unsanitary to be left in the heart of cities, which prepare to welcome tourists. In many historic cities, local crafts and activities are being replaced by "souvenirs" and "coffee" shops because these kinds of shops generate more income. Therefore, a strict management of heritage tourism should be established in order to avoid any economic gentrification of the historic city and centre. Besides housing and other activities, heritage tourism can be a major catalyst of urban regeneration, for historic centres like old Doha. Over-emphasis on the tourist function creates pressures for new services and associated development, sometimes to the detriment of the local population and can lead to damage significant cultural assets. It is therefore important for the tourism capacity to be carefully managed and controlled in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, a strong management is needed to avoid the expansion of inauthentic structures, which can further erode the character of the historic centre that visitors have come from long distances to explore.

4. Souk Waqif; Urban Regeneration Led Tourism

Old Doha lies on area of 250 hectares; it is a combination of traditional districts going back to the period (1850-1950). These surviving historic districts, such as Souk Waqif, Msheireb and Al Asmakh keep some traces of the past and thus form important chapters in preserving the city's history and identity. While a law was instituted in May 1980 to conserve cultural and archaeological heritage, however comprehensive actions to conserve the past did not follow until the beginning of 2000. Following this, a number of single monuments started to be restored. Mohamed Bin Jassim Palace was the first historic building to be rehabilitated just after independence and during 1972-75 to

become the national museum of Qatar. However, the first large scale scheme action at the city level was the rehabilitation of Souk Waqif during the period 2004-2010.

Figure 2. Location of Souk Waqif in old Doha.

After long years of dilapidation and neglect, during the beginning of the 21st century Souk Waqif fell into disrepair and decay. Due to a lack of any rational actions, unsympathetic buildings of dense shops frontage intruded the souk. All these actions resulted in a hybrid environment of new and old structures that dramatically transformed the unique identity and character of the souk. Due to advanced dereliction, in 2000, the former Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa decided to launch an urgent rescue for the souk before it disappears. This political support was crucial later in launching urban regeneration projects in historic areas, following the Souk Waqif rehabilitation project.

Figure 3. Showing the main areas in the Souk.

Since most of the shops were privately owned, the government had to purchase these shops from their owners. According to Mohamed Ali Abdulla the Project Manager of the rehabilitation project, after a detailed survey it has been found that two thirds of the buildings were still in their original state [25]. This is very significant as these structures can play a major role in rebuilding the damaged character of the souk. In this context, the rehabilitation project aimed to realize the following objectives:

- "Reconstruct the lost image of historic Doha through the rehabilitation of its authentic Souk Waqif;
- Protect the area of the souk and its surroundings from real estate development;
- Create an open-air public area totally pedestrianized;
- Establish a vibrant souk with its original layout and goods" [26].

Figure 4. Views showing the Souk state before the beginning of restoration in 2004.

To retrieve the original character of the souk, a number of modern buildings were demolished and replaced by new structures inspired from the local Qatari architecture. This was implemented to create a physical continuity with the 1/3 remaining of original historic buildings. During the restoration process, traditional building materials were recycled and re-used, such as; coral stones for walls, *Danjal* and *Bamboo* for the roofs and teak wood for doors and windows. New features and services to upgrade and enhance the living environment were added, such as a better lighting system. Souk Waqif is both a traditional open-air public space and most importantly a car free area for tourists, merchants and residents alike.

The 3Rs (reduce, recycle and reuse) actions were implemented in the case of Souk Waqif. "Reduce" aimed to limit further destruction and demolition of historic buildings and districts, whereas "recycle" worked towards utilizing the traditional building materials found from previous demolitions in the souk and its immediate surroundings. Adaptive "Reuse" was implemented to give a new heart to the souk. As part of the rational actions, the souk was completely revived. In addition, a number of shops, restaurants, an art center and boutique hotels were opened. Restaurants and cafes are taking place along Al Khrais Street on the southern part of the souk, with a wide variety of indoor and outdoor siting, public and semi-public spaces; it is called Al Najada area. The intermediate area between Souk Al Etem (the oldest part of the souk) and the restaurants area is characterized by the handcrafts, souvenirs, shops, Souk Waqif Art Centre and the traditional *majlis* settings.

While new activities have been injected in the souk, the cultural dimension was not neglected, as some of the original functions have been preserved to a certain extent. For instance, great efforts have been made to sustain the traditional crafts; there are still shops selling traditional clothes, dates and spices. Moreover, a traditional café 'Gudwe" still attracts many elderly Qataris to chat and gather. To remember and live moments of the past, during each evening, a large *baraha* (plaza) hosts and welcomes a great number of women who sit to prepare traditional food for visitors to taste and try. While efforts to keep the original activities of the souk remain insufficient, new activities to boost tourism have been added. While this is important to keep the souk alive, an integration between the economic and cultural forces is more than necessary. To avoid any radical transformation of the souk through over marketing tangible and intangible heritage resources for tourism.

As part of the rational actions, recently, two major underground parkings, which accommodate around 3,000 cars, have been established. These two parkings aim to reduce the pressure caused by the lack of parking slots especially during weekends, holidays and special events. While the underground parking created a big relief for the daily users of the souk, its roof offered a unique Baraha (plaza) facing the corniche, for public gatherings and recreation. This creates an interesting opportunity to integrate between the head and heart, the parking issue was solved while the *baraha* allows social interaction and integration between the users of the souk, which increases a sense of place and belonging. Adding to trade and recreational facilities, Souk Waqif has become home for cultural activities found in the art galleries and workshops, accommodating several exhibitions and local concerts especially during special festivals.

Figure 5. Souk Waqif; the restaurants area provides a bustling life day and night.

5. Discussion

Rehabilitation of the Souk was successful in conserving most of the historic buildings (physical features) despite some issues of authenticity in the restoration process. However, more efforts are still needed to preserve the original heritage activities and functions of the souk. This experience is helping to give the city of Doha a meaning based on its past, and Souk Waqif has become a main historic landmark in the city and a meeting point between the local and global tourists. An integration between the economic and cultural actions has contributed greatly in injecting a new heart to Souk Waqif. While the souk was rehabilitated to generate funds, the revival of memory and an increasing feeling of a sense of place and pride started to be felt by the local community. People in Qatar feel that the souk represents a great part of their past; it has increased their pride and has become a significant element in creating a continuity with the city's past in a global environment.

One of the major drawbacks of the regeneration strategy in Souk Waqif is the absence of housing from the adaptive reuse program. However, a number of hotels have been established to attract many tourists. Souk Waqif is reinforcing its place as a major hub for shopping and entertainment, through a collection of nine boutique hotels in the market. These hotels are spread across the souk and were designed in a traditional Qatari architectural style. While tourism as an outcome of the rational actions is important, the original activities of the souk including housing should be re-introduced again. The reliance on one person in managing this very sensitive project was another major issue. Sustainable urban regeneration requires a multi-disciplinary work and thus cannot be conveyed to one person. To ensure a comprehensive, a multi-disciplinary team should include town planners; architects; structural engineers, roads and drainage, cost consultants; economists; landscape architects; urban designers; property managers; public health experts; transport managers; and, last but not least, dedicated administrators.

Cultural heritage tourism is an essential function of contemporary cities. A historic district is much more than merely a static physical structure or canvas of a place. It is also engaged with the perpetuation of social and cultural life. Thereby, it is continuously influenced by many internal and external forces. To start to fully understand the potential of historic cities for tourism, this study has demonstrated that we must approach this subject from a broader perspective. As medinas are in general part of much larger urban agglomerations, we argue that cultural heritage tourism is one of the key research domains to start with.

6. Conclusions

Historic urban cores in the Arab world and worldwide should be places in which people live, pursue their work, and enjoy their leisure time; they are not museums. They are primarily a setting for social interaction and cultural expressions. Functional variety should be maintained, through the permitting of mixed uses within individual and group buildings. For example, souks and bazaars can be promoted for local trade, crafts and tourism. While tourism can be promoted, consuming and marketing heritage resources should be kept to the level of not threatening the identity and authenticity of the historic environment.

The financial input that tourism can deliver to host communities can be the incentive for launching more urban regeneration actions. In resilient historic centers, over-emphasis on the tourist function creates pressures for new services and associated development, sometimes at the detriment of the local population and can damage significant cultural assets. It is therefore important for the tourism capacity to be carefully managed and controlled in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, a strong management is needed to avoid the proliferation of fake and inauthentic structures, which can further erode the character of the historic centre that visitors are willing to gaze. Based on Souk Waqif urban regeneration, the built environment should not be conceived as a physical entity, a functional container, an accumulation of goods and commodities, or a pattern of land uses. It is primarily, a setting for social actions, sensuous experiences and cultural expressions. It is well known that inhabitants are the catalysts of urban life in the city. They create and constitute the socio-cultural and economic systems, which bring life to the physical environment.

The right to work is another imperative of sustainable development; therefore there is a need to encourage the revival of the traditional crafts in historic centres. These will give a new breath of life to a historic city, and will contribute to its regeneration. This approach will enable the creation of jobs for a large number of people unemployed. Once the main heritage resources are conserved, and the cultural and economic activities enhanced, it is possible to present these heritage assets to visitors and tourists. The merit of social intercourse between tourists and local residents as a way towards fostering better understanding and good will between nations is a major benefit gained from tourism. Whilst this can be possible in countries where the flux of tourists is comparatively acceptable, however, in cases of mass tourism, tourist's tastes and habits have proofed to be in many circumstances offensive to the local population.

Many of the other socio-cultural problems linked to tourism are related to the degree of intensity of tourism development. While it is difficult to measure, there is a relationship between tourism density and the growth of local resentment towards tourism. The flow of tourists into a region increases the densities at which people live and overcrowds the facilities which tourists share with the local population. Therefore, overcrowding might reduce the value of the holiday experience and creates additional strains for the host community.

When opting for cultural heritage tourism, a cautious approach is needed regarding a respect to the local traditions and customs of the host community. Therefore, a strict management of cultural heritage tourism should be established in order to maintain a balance between social and economic needs. Over-emphasis on the tourist function creates pressures for new services and associated development, sometimes to the detriment of the local population, and can lead to damage significant cultural heritage resources. It is therefore important for the tourism capacity to be carefully managed and controlled in a sustainable manner.

Important underlying trends are globalization and urbanization. As tourism can be seen as a geographical and social phenomenon, understanding tourism in cities should include the wide spectrum of urban studies, urban and tourism geography, and social science. Knowledge and new insights from such studies should be integrated in place branding methodologies. Despite the fact, that some of these (interlinked) research areas are still in their infancies, as has been demonstrated in this paper, there exists a rich body of literature which could provide valuable insights to help governments to adjust their policies to reach their tourism ambitions. Based on our extensive literature research, we propose a research agenda which at least include the following key topics:

- What are the spatial patterns (spatial distribution and space usage) of tourists in medinas and how is this related to the morphological layout of a city and the historical shaped developments of the urban tourism infrastructure?

- How to pursuit sustainable equilibrium between cultural heritage tourism and a livable city, by contributing to urban quality and the well-being of local communities, and to avoid tensions, conflicts, and anti-tourism movements due to cultural commodification and tourism-induced gentrification?

- How smart cities objectives can be linked to cultural heritage tourism policies from a place branding perspective with a special emphasis on the integration and use of information, communication, infrastructure, and services?

- What is the impact of globalization on cultural heritage tourism and on which scale this phenomenon is visible in the urban transformation of a medina?

- How we can find a good balance between the (global) urbanization trend and reverse process of de-population in the medinas?

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