

CAPITALIZING ON THE PATRIMONIAL AND CULTURAL POTENTIAL THROUGH SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ACTIVITIES

The world is a book, and those who do not travel can only read one page of it.
Saint Augustine (Augustine of Hippo)
(354-430)

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Abstract: This paper approaches capitalization of the existing heritage and culture through sustainable tourism activities that influence development, increase the individuals' standard of living in particular and the economic growth in general in the field of tourism, in economy. The entrepreneurs' free initiative in connection with the promoted system of rights and freedoms, especially economic freedom, which mostly occurs as the right of ownership and the scope of the free market, must be placed first, and the capitalization of the patrimonial and cultural potential through tourism may entail benefits in this field especially by its capacity for specific development. Therefore, the state, by its regulatory side, must generate a framework conducive to competition and competition by means of legislation and rules in the field, which will attract an increasing number of economic operators which will contribute to the diversification of the range of services in the field of tourism and will bring sustainable economic growth. At the same time, this complex process of readjustment of the legislative dimension, whose role is to increase competitiveness, requires an increase of specific training, a firmer approach through policies aiming at reducing inflation, a proactive approach to growth in terms of taxation, flexibilization of financial institutions, diminished underground economy, tax evasion and especially corruption. The reform of the legislative framework must promote competition in the field correlated with the existing interdependencies between freedom, inequalities and development. We believe that legislative changes must be based on an identification of the regulations limiting competition, freedom of action and free initiative in the field of tourism, and then on such alteration thereof aiming at promoting measures to decision-makers with a view to diversify the range of tourism services which mainly capitalize on the existing patrimonial and cultural potential, both national and worldwide.

Keywords: competitive advantage, economic growth, cultural heritage entrepreneurship, recreation, tourism.

INTRODUCTION

The flaws of capitalism cannot be avoided only if one keeps in mind the unsustainable bubbles followed by severe crises; inequality among citizens became more accentuated, and the population's income diminished; these realities also pertain to human nature and economists, as well as jurists, sociologists, and theologians are looking for solutions to these issues.

One may consider to a certain extent that the economic system may be changed and capitalism may be even replaced, but the main condition should be that the new system generates higher productivity than the one provided by capitalism, for example as it happened when capitalism replaced feudalism. Is it very important to understand how productivity arises? It can only increase if technological innovation and product innovation exist. We must be aware that capitalism allowed the occurrence of necessary conditions to promote continuous innovation, which was accompanied by a specific system of governance so as to make it ever lasting. This specific system is similar to a sequence including the most important elements such as: private capital, free initiative, free markets, fair competition, innovation, productivity, and the democratic system. Thus, private property, free initiative and competition are significant for the analysis of the environment which is favourable to the balanced development of capitalism.

On this basis, experts, researchers and academicians may create methodologies, best practice guides, economic models, and conduct specific scientific research for some economic areas. Such works may also be based on econometric calculations and highlight the link between competition and economic growth.

Thus, premises can be created in order to promote economic activities, with fair competition, ensuring sustainable economic growth for Romania as well.

Local businesses may be developed based on these elements, considering the capitalization of the existence of universal heritage and culture by sustainable tourism activities, which influence development, increase of living standard and which entail an increase in the quality of life.

It is also very important to consider how human psychology influences economy in general, including how it relates to global capitalism. This can direct our attention to the role of human greed in triggering crises or income imbalances in any society.

John Maynard Keynes¹ describes a concept like animal spirits and considers that it would be a manifestation of the trust in a naive optimism urging the consumer to spend and the entrepreneur to invest, whereas individuals are not fully aware of risk, and fear of loss, as the healthy does not think of death.

At the same time, one must bear in mind that in this case we discuss the consumers and companies' trust or the trust we have in each other, the reflection of honesty in transactions, the degree and manner in which we deal with greed, dishonesty and corruption as generators of malicious attitude in economy. A climate of trust is needed in order to carry out economic activities which generate economic growth.

One must consider that phenomena such as past economic crises were also deemed due to the loss of trust. Generally speaking, economists have a special approach to trust. A lot of phenomena are characterized by two or more balances. For example, if there is no individual to rebuild his or her house in a town where there has been a devastating, powerful hurricane, no other citizen will want to rebuild. Who will want to live isolated, with no neighbours and no shops? However, if there are many who rebuild, others will want to rebuild as well.

Therefore, it can be said that there is a reasonable reconstruction balance, in which case we believe that there is trust. We also consider that there is another side of balance, namely the balance of mistrust, the lack of reconstruction due to the lack of trust.

A confident prediction may generate a favourable future, just as an unconfident one is one that favours a gloomy, dark future. The term trust is generally defined by "belief", "good faith".

There are experts, researchers and academicians who address the current issues generated by the multiple health, economic and security crisis and reveal opinions; they try to find answers if these multiple crises generate conflicts between social classes, leading even to self-destruction of capitalism.

FREEDOM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – FREE-MARKET ECONOMY

In the field of the relationship between the individual and society, it is important to observe the extent and degree in which internal norms, respectively the moral ones, support and agree with other freedoms, especially the economic one. In this case, there is an opinion contrary to the unanimously recognized truth. In the Western world, as society agreed on an ever wider scale to ever greater individual freedoms, the psychosocial support of the ultimate goal that determined the manner and behaviour of individuals or social groups regarding economic freedom was diminishing. This phenomenon occurred under the influence of the anti-liberal, group vision.²

Only bankruptcy of socialism and other forms of presence of the anti-liberal view would represent the necessary conditions for taking a precise form of social respect for ownership rights, namely private property, free market, but also the individual's free initiative, respectively one's freedom to conclude contracts, to which we would also add free markets, fair competition, altogether with innovation, productivity and even the democratic system.

¹ Maynard Keynes 1936.

² J. A Schumpeter had a vision of the fall of capitalism as consequence of anti-capitalist views mainly expressed by intellectuals (Schumpeter 1950).

It is important that Max Weber shows that a similar attitude was revealed through behaviour and attitude in other situations against the background of the development of religions such as Protestantism - which gave birth to the spirit of capitalism.³ Max Weber was the first to research Comparative Socio-Economics. In his aforementioned pioneering research, he combined a broad view of people's desires and ideas about how certain religious movements altered the economic structures of feudal Europe and then the United States of America, turning them into a competitive economy

In order to analyse the required freedom to be able to generate economic development in the market economy, it is useful to approach three compulsory dimensions: state, law and freedom.

Freedom must be approached from the individual-state relationship so that the state becomes the guarantor of freedom providing unselfish help, unconditional support and which is not a structure with discretionary powers, paternalistic and which destroys freedom.

This topic has concerned people, professionals, experts, researchers and academicians, for at least the last century, especially philosophically but also in political practice. There have been two colliding viewpoints during the last hundred years, namely liberal individualism and anti-liberalism, which entailed a more significant role of the state, which was considered essential in the organization and administration of economic and social life.

The first viewpoint, liberal individualism, reveals a significant degree of individual freedom, drawing attention to the fact that there may be a risk that it will be intimidated both by other individuals and by the authority of the state. In this liberal perception, the authority of the state should be present in such a way as to counteract the violation of individual freedom by other participants in economic and social life, and at the same time it should not be the state itself the one violating this freedom. Therefore, from this approach, the state must behave as a main tool for political and administrative organization through which the social system operates and the relations between people are regulated; it protects individual freedom that is thoroughly defined. It is accepted that state authority intervention is present only for the defence of individual freedom.

One must be aware that freedom may be affected over time if regulations, legal guidelines are adopted under pressure of society, especially in the economic area, respectively detailed legal provisions that can affect private capital, increased taxes, free initiative, free markets, fair competition, innovation, productivity and even the democratic system.

A fundamental suitable law such as the Constitution would be a convenient solution, namely a complex system of laws, regulations that are difficult to change and that should represent the normative framework for less significant normative acts.

We believe that some mandatory provisions must be included in this fundamental law, generally represented by the Constitution; they would limit the attempts of the state as much as possible, as a complex structure, to attack individual freedom. Such a fundamental law, generally represented by the Constitution, should be adopted at times when a consistent political force occurs and not in pre-election periods or during periods of electoral struggle.

With regard to the second viewpoint, namely the anti-liberal one, we believe that it held limitation of individual freedom, especially the economic one and the appropriate increase of rights and especially of the state's area of intervention as the solution to development. The opinion according to which coercion and the rules ordered from the central level as well as the lack of confidence in the approach according to which order and development may be promoted against the background of activities carried out voluntarily by free people were the main factors of the anti-liberal viewpoint. Its followers believed that a high degree of economic freedom inevitably promoted important material inequalities between individuals. As a relevant example, socialism was an element of this vision, which was implemented in Eastern Europe over several decades. Also, this vision spread in many third world countries after the Second World War.

Also, in terms of mentality, the anti-liberal vision has deeply influenced both Eastern and Western countries to this day. We believe that the opinion of some intellectuals but also of a part of public is that

³ Weber 1905.

the ideal of economic freedom enjoys less support than other freedoms, as it was strongly attacked by theories according to which economic freedom was the main obstacle to development and the main conditions for the emergence of inequities.

Therefore, we believe that innovation is a logical consequence of competition between economic agents on the free market. Thus, we can appreciate that competition on the free market can only occur if at least some of the means used in production are privately owned. Thus, we can infer that under the conditions of the existence of guarantees for increased labour productivity, capitalism represents a guarantee for the existence of democracy. In the end, democratic governance became increasingly visible only when the degree of development of labour productivity was high enough, as a result of capitalism.

At the same time, democracy provides the necessary, but not sufficient conditions for markets to manifest freely in the long term. They are necessary conditions because, in the long term, by voting, the population has the opportunity to change political leaders with permanent tendency to act in such a way as to lead to market congestion, which would diminish and even eliminate competition, and innovation as well, and, finally, would not ensure the increase of productivity.

Experts and researchers support the idea that even when interventions occur in their legitimate area, which is not based on principles, they lead to a reduction of economic freedom. Also, by various interventions, mechanisms for the permanent erosion of market discipline may be induced, to which governments will have difficulty in finding solutions.

If we understand freedom as a series of rights included in the laws of a country, it is important to point out three of its most important dimensions.

The first dimension emphasizes that there are a series of rights specified in regulations, normative acts such as the right to vote or the right to ownership that does not refer to specific individuals, but to citizens in general, so that every citizen appeals to them almost mechanically.

The second dimension emphasizes that any adult citizen may vote in democracy; however, those who have other general rights may not use them. By way of example, the above-mentioned free initiative does not mean that all citizens benefiting from this right will become private entrepreneurs, as some individual skills are required in this case. Those who become private entrepreneurs acquire a series of concrete rights related to property, because of the existence of the rule, the general norm, the main regulation of economic freedom. Similarly, not everyone is able to use freedom of speech to the same extent.

The third dimension refers to the way in which the state supports each individual.

Considering the three dimensions, the general rights, the concrete rights and the state guaranteeing them, topics such as freedom, legal norms and social equality may be analysed in more detail.

We may say that state interventions generate destabilization in society expectations and economy in general; they do not lead to economic development and growth. We also believe that noble goals set at the level of society are the enemy of market and stability. Another very important element may be that central banks may act in ways that may contribute to misallocation of resources.

In the end, an alchemy of systems is necessary to reach development and economic growth for long periods, and we include here the four coordinates defining the relations between the state and the economy, between the state and other states, state and society, state and other active organizations.

CAPITALIZING ON THE EXISTING HERITAGE AND CULTURE BY SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ACTIVITIES

A series of historical controversies, of great interest, have correlated two large categories of facts, such as religion and economic development. As we have previously emphasized, capitalism, as a way of economic organization, promoted the development of societies in an unprecedented manner and was displayed at the level of society by the ideas of some experts, researchers and academicians, the only way of rational development in the modern era. It originated in Western Europe and developed continuously, turning into a global system of economic organization. There are options regarding development models in the ex-communist countries, and capitalism is one of them. The question that arises is whether this system will also succeed in bringing benefits to South-East Europe countries as it did in the most developed areas of the world such as Western Europe, the United States of America, Japan, and Australia.

It should be noted that new ideologues keep bringing the emergence of capitalism and the economic and social development in general projected by Karl Marx to the fore, as well as the actions of some politicians from the former socialist countries. Summarizing Marxist thinking to the extreme, economic and social development would be possible by means of a modern technical base, sufficiently large volume of capital, with highly qualified workforce and a series of highly developed managerial skills. Otherwise, it would only be a matter of time. Individuals should look forward to the benefits that will come from an increasingly secure development. However, if one analyses the evolution of the last decades in some areas such as Africa, Latin America and Asia, one notices that there have been few cases in which this approach and social action had the expected results. Experts, analysts and researchers who studied these situations did not fully grasp the fact that the development model based on capitalism that had very good results in the areas where it was promoted did not lead to similar results in other regions of the globe, such as Eastern Europe.

In summary, it can be said that more factors are present in the development of the capitalist system than in Marxist thinking. In order to be aware of the role of these factors, it is important to analyse the way in which Max Weber (emphasizes their consistency in the previously cited work, respectively *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*).

Once more, we underline that strengthening the right of ownership, and promoting major competition in economy brings significant benefits for consumers by diversifying the range of products offered at increasingly better prices for them; it brings innovation to the economy, promotes, as already mentioned, the entrepreneurs' free initiative, reduces the role of the state in economy and ensures democracy.

We believe that a high degree of competition may contribute to the improvement of the economic performance of a state; it promotes a series of opportunities for the business area of the citizens of that state and contributes to the reduction of the cost of goods and services at the level of the entire economy.

As shown above, we believe that too many rules, laws and regulations result in restricting competition in the market. Many of these go beyond the scope of what is required to fulfil the objectives of public policies undertaken by the political parties. Governments can therefore reduce and eliminate a number of futile restrictions by assessing competition based on a set of tools. Such tools may provide a general methodology for detecting those useless constraints and thus contribute to the development of different policies, which are less restrictive but which are able to fully achieve the governance objectives.

Among the important elements of such a set of tools may be a checklist to analyse competition in the economy, by which several questions of low difficulty are asked so as to identify regulations, laws and rules with an increased potential to reduce competition.

Limited budgetary and governmental resources may be used for such a testing system; it may be created as part of the works carried out by experts, researchers, academicians within research projects; it should include three directions of action:

- a. in order to assess laws, norms and regulations that are already in force, at the highest level, namely for the entire economy or at a lower level of certain activity sectors specific to certain areas;
- b. in order to assess drafts of laws, norms and regulations such as, for example, various programs to evaluate their legislative impact;
- c. by governmental bodies with roles and responsibilities in the development and revision of public policies, such as ministries that draft laws, implementing regulations or the authority with responsibilities in the field of competition to determine the impact of regulations in this field.

These tools may also prove useful for drafting reports on the development of competition in key sectors of economy and which may bring various global and specific perspectives on the present and on the evaluation from perspective concerning the economic-financial status of companies.

The Romanian Competition Council⁴ analysed the development of over 700,000 companies in the period between 2017 and 2021 for a better understanding of the business environment in Romania. The analysis emphasized that there is a positive evolution of most of the analysed aspects in Romania such as: the

⁴ Competition Council (2022) – Report on the assessment regarding competition development in key sectors, accessed at <http://www.competition.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Raport-sectoare-cheie-2022.pdf>.

weight of the number of profitable companies in the total number, the cumulative level of net profit, the number of companies that comply with the equity condition, but also their weight in the total number of companies.

It is known that culture is both an engine, and above all a vector with significant contribution to sustainable development. Therefore, it is very important that the forms of competition are present in businesses in all fields, including sustainable tourism. The cultural heritage of Romania is part of the European cultural heritage; we must be aware that it constitutes a valuable resource especially in the field of tourism, but also of education, which contributes to employment and sustainable development. Innovation and other specific techniques such as increasing competition, sustainable cultural tourism may be an essential part of regional or macro-regional development strategies.

Considering these elements, one may infer that culture may represent an engine, and also a vector of sustainable development, if this potential is properly capitalized. Tourism may thus be the balance point between development and economic growth but also for the protection of national, regional and European cultural heritage. The field of tourism may be part of an excellent vision and business development to encourage and contribute to the access of as many citizens as possible to the cultural heritage, but it also brings along a series of challenges related to the achievement of additional income, the promotion of social inclusion in general, or of the elderly in particular. At the same time, it contributes to the development of historical, cultural and leisure tourist regions in ecumenical, historical and geographical areas.

Another important role of tourism is that it brings money; it creates jobs for different categories of the population both in cities and in regions, but it can genuinely affect the daily life of the local population, especially the existing culture or heritage in those areas.

There are also opinions regarding the existence of possible negative effects such as excessive tourism and its effect on cultural heritage, but also the reluctance shown by some local communities and also by some heritage experts who have often opposed to tourism and its development.

In the end, sustainable cultural tourism creates a new direction for the development of local, regional and European businesses, placing cultural heritage and the concerned communities at the centre of complex decision-making processes.

The inclusion of both local communities and other interested parties in complex decision-making processes has a very important role that contributes to obtaining benefits both in the sphere of cultural heritage and the income of local population.

The end objective of sustainable cultural tourism may be to ensure both best practices in terms of heritage conservation, but also an authentic interpretation that would contribute to the development and economic growth of the local economy.

At the European, regional and national level, it is necessary to design some cultural directions based on several important development levels such as:

- a. promoting culture so that it is more accessible and more favourable to inclusion, where the following will be taken into account:
 - the development of skills such as cultural awareness and expression;
 - supporting access to culture using the facilities offered by current digital means: drafting policies and strategies to attract the wider public;
 - promoting the role of culture in increasing social inclusion, especially of the elderly;
- b. promoting cultural heritage by:
 - increasing the role of participative governance of cultural heritage;
 - developing some skills, promoting training and transfer of knowledge: for traditional professions, including emerging ones from the field of heritage;

- carrying out risk analyses regarding the assessment but also the prevention of risks regarding the protection of cultural heritage following the occurrence of some effects of possible natural disasters, including some threats generated by human action;
- c. the promotion of cultural and more creative sectors, respectively:
- creative economy and innovation by solutions that allow better and easier access to financing;
 - the promotion of public policies to increase an entrepreneurial and innovative potential for sectors such as the cultural and creative ones and generate increased competition by: creating opportunities for cultural and creative interactions that stimulate processes such as innovation, economic sustainability and social inclusion, especially of elderly people who can still perform specific activities; finding innovative measures to promote entrepreneurial spirit but also in terms of promoting new business models, especially in sectors such as the cultural and creative ones; the development of sustainable cultural tourism.
- d. supporting cultural diversity, culture promoted in external relations but also mobility, by:
- becoming aware of international instruments such as the UNESCO The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions,
 - promoting culture abroad as well as in Europe's external relations, by supporting the inclusion of culture in the current agenda, but also by using supranational cooperation tools and programs for the development of business with third countries, as well as the assessment of the role of culture in sustainable economic growth;
 - developing ongoing programs especially those promoting culture, especially in European countries, following the good neighbour policy;
 - encouraging intercultural dialogue and mobility;
 - promoting and supporting theatre, cinematography, music, arts in general;
 - supporting historical, scientific, geological, ecumenical tourism.
- e. fiscal and budgetary measures to support and encourage entrepreneurs whose fields of activity are sustainable tourism, but also elderly people who want to work in adjacent fields such as education, professional training, cultural, sustainable tourism.

In the author's opinion, sustainable tourism may have the diversity given by the particularities of Romania and may be carried out in areas with cultural, historical, geographical, ecumenical, recreational, sports, geological, zonal particularities - specific to some ethnic communities.

Among the destinations relevant to the previously mentioned areas, we include the following: the Botanical Garden in Cluj Napoca - a corner of nature with rare flowers, the Corvins' Castle in Hunedoara - an outdoor legend of Transylvania, the Mud Volcanoes in Buzău - a natural wonder of Romania, Bran Castle - which is also known as Dracula's castle, Peleş Castle - known as a former royal residence, Red Lake - the lake where a forest sank, located in Harghita county, in the Eastern Carpathians, 26 km from Gheorgheni city, the Black Church in Braşov - one of the largest Gothic worship places, the Râşnov Fortress – which is considered the best preserved fortress in Transylvania, Bicz Gorge - one of the most beautiful areas in Romania, Saschiz - a fairytale village in Transylvania.

The Danube Delta is a very special area of rare beauty, formed in about 10,000 years, which is constantly growing. Nowadays, according to some authors, researchers and academicians, it is considered to be the youngest Romanian land. The Danube Delta is one of the best maintained in Europe, and since 1990 it has been declared part of the UNESCO World Heritage as biosphere reserve. It consists of a maze of lakes and canals meandering along the world's largest area interconnected by reeds, being one of the most bio-diverse areas on the planet.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

To summarize, interventions in the market order are poor options, and we believe that those who support them are wrong; it is important to understand that market order is correct, and the speech of those supporting it deserves more attention. It is important to understand that capitalism generates conditions promoting continuous innovation and at the same time a specific system of governance is generated to make it last forever. By this specific system, private capital, free initiative, free markets, fair competition, innovation, productivity and the democratic system are promoted.

However, capitalism promoting freedom and development is preferable, a balanced capitalism, in which a macroeconomic balance favourable to development and economic growth is ensured.

In this context, we recommend capitalizing on the existing heritage and culture by means of sustainable tourism activities, respectively by the development of specific businesses by promoting culture so that it is more accessible and more favourable to inclusion, promoting cultural heritage, supporting cultural, more creative sectors, respectively creative economy and innovation, supporting cultural diversity, culture promoted in external relations but also mobility, adopting fiscal budget measures in order to support and encourage entrepreneurs in sustainable tourism, as well as the elderly people who want to work in adjacent fields such as education, professional training, culture, and sustainable tourism.

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