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The complex relationship between leisure, culture and tourism from the perspective of the quality of urban life

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**The complex relationship between leisure, culture and tourism
from the perspective of the quality of urban life**

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Abstract

Defining quality of life (qol) at personal or societal level is a difficult process which largely depends on the selected determining factors. Among the various parameters having been proposed as qol determinants, leisure and culture issues have only recently found their place, as they had long been neglected.

In the ‘developed’ societies leisure time is acknowledged to be an integral part of a well-balanced management of personal time and a significant determinant for a person’s well-being. The ‘right’ to leisure is considered to be a measure for the societal quality, in the terms of personal freedom, participation in social life and creativity.

A special dimension of the relationship connecting leisure, culture and qol which is also highlighted in the literature, concerns the ongoing development of consumption patterns regarding the ‘exploitation’ of leisure options. The issue of leisure time acting as a qol determinant emerges mostly as a matter of quality rather than a matter of quantity. Thus, amplifying the ‘discretionary’ time for all is not always sufficient for upgrading the collective qol. Cultural resources, leisure options and opportunities for improving of this type of time are needed.

From this point of view, urban infrastructure concerning leisure activities and culture, constitute a significant determinant for the collective quality of life in a city. At the same time, cultural and leisure urban resources act as a powerful attraction for visitors, enhancing –

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or even driving- tourism development. Thereby, cultural and urban resources reinforce the tourist profile and competitiveness of cities.

One could argue that this procedure also leads to an improvement of qol for citizens at a secondary level, but the relationship between tourism development and qoul is not always straightforward. Although tourism attraction acts as a driving force of a city's economic development, it has also been denounced as a carrier of several problems, including environmental degradation and social disturbance. Thus, while some cities pursue tourism development through the promotion of their cultural and leisure resources, others face with skepticism the effects of tourism in everyday urban life.

Finally, the relationship between tourism, culture and leisure from the perspective of qoul is complex, and this paper aims at highlighting and analysing the issues arising from this relationship.

Keywords: quality of urban life, tourism development, leisure, cultural resources

JEL Classification Z10

INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of urban life's quality has recently earned the attention from academics and stakeholders because the concept 'quality of urban life' (qoul) seems to be the most efficient term to approach the complex nature of cities, unlike the 'traditional' economic indexes which have been proved to be inadequate. The acknowledgment that the high qoul can also drive development through the attraction of working forces and enterprises has given impetus to a remarkable number of various relevant research, reports and classifications which rank cities according to their qol.

A significant issue which involves in the qoul research concerns the definition of the relevant determinants. Because of the underlying subjectivity of the concept, there have been several approaches, leading to various (although often similar) criteria and specific indicators. Among the different parameters which have been proposed as qoul determinants stands the triptych of free time, leisure and culture which seems to be a major dimension only recently acknowledged (British Office for National Statistics, 2011).

On the other hand cultural activities and leisure facilities are among the key elements which can upgrade the everyday life in a city, while enhancing its touristic profile too. Generally speaking there is an interface between the components of a successful city image targeting to urban tourism and those characteristics which assign to a city a high qoul level. There are also critical factors for determining the qoul which are not reflected directly in a city's touristic image and vice versa.

Answering the question whether the qoul is always compatible with tourism development or not, is not an easy task. There are cases where tourism development (especially mass tourism) threatens sustainability and living conditions of the permanent residents. Thus, while some cities pursue tourism development through the promotion of their cultural and leisure resources, others face with skepticism the effects of tourism in everyday urban life. However, when a city is characterized with a high qol, this is normally considered as the most significant component of the city's external image which can enhance its touristic profile.

There is a doubtless but complex linkage between the qoul and the triptych formed by tourism, culture and leisure. The issues arising from their relationship is the subject of the current paper which deals with the following questions: does leisure increase the qol, does culture enhance the qoul and finally how is tourism linked to the qoul?

1. LEISURE AS A QOL ELEMENT

Although the significance of leisure as a life domain for qol has recently begun to be widely acknowledged, its role of leisure in subjective well-being around the globe is well documented in the literature, through surveys and research which have been conducted both in “western” societies (e.g. Lloyd and Auld, 2002 for Australia; Michalos, 2005 for Canada; Wendel-Vos et al, 2004 for Netherlands) and in countries with differentiated cultural characteristics, like Iran (Kousha and Mohseni, 1997) or Taiwan (Kao et al, 2005). The existing concepts about labor and leisure may be easily conceivable, but the corresponding perceptions are not easy to be combined. This happens due to the subjectivity of the issue, as what is labor for one can be leisure for the other and vice versa (Haworth, 1997).

According to the theory by Wilensky, attitudes and practices at the work are generalized, affecting the person’s life as a whole, including her leisure options. It is also possible to find the opposite procedure. People often seek in their distinctive time a restitution for the working conditions at work (Wilensky, 1960). According to Parker, on the other hand, people in western societies live under a continuous time pressure. Given the fact that the working time remains at least stable (if not increasing), while goods and services considered as ‘necessary’ are increasing, drifting up the time needed for their obtainment, free time is actually diminishing (Parker, 1983). Therefore, pressure generated by work has long been acknowledged indirectly as a factor for degrading subjective well-being.

According to Iso-Ahola, employees in the western societies tend to devalue leisure, mainly because they find it difficult to coordinate efficiently work, family and leisure. This attitude deprives the person from the beneficial effects of relaxation and leisure, having direct negative impacts on both physical and psychological health (Iso-Ahola, 1997).

In this context the findings of a recent Australian survey concerning working and free time are not a surprise: according to the survey conducted by the Australia Institute among 1700 employees, 80% of the interviewees answered that they do not wish to work overtime, while 60% from those who have to do so, noted that extra working time deprives them from valuable time which could spend with their family. Australia Institute suggests the establishment of the 35 hours working week, in order for a better equilibrium between working and not working life domains to be achieved and for the unemployment to be reduced (Fear and Denniss, 2010).

The triptych work, leisure and qol in current cities is characterized by a contradiction: the lack of free time coexists with the purposeless waste of time, in the same society but in different societal groups. Employees usually complain about their need for more time, wishing the reduction of working hours, while unemployed people have difficulties in spending their time surplus meaningfully (Zarotis et al, 2008). According to Csikszentmihalyi, what matters most when seeking an harmonious relation between free time and qol is the optimal time flow. Under this view point, balancing the number of activities with the spare time is the wanted quality. Boredom is usually caused by a surplus of time in relation with activity, while a lack of time in relation with commitments usually generates stress (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991).

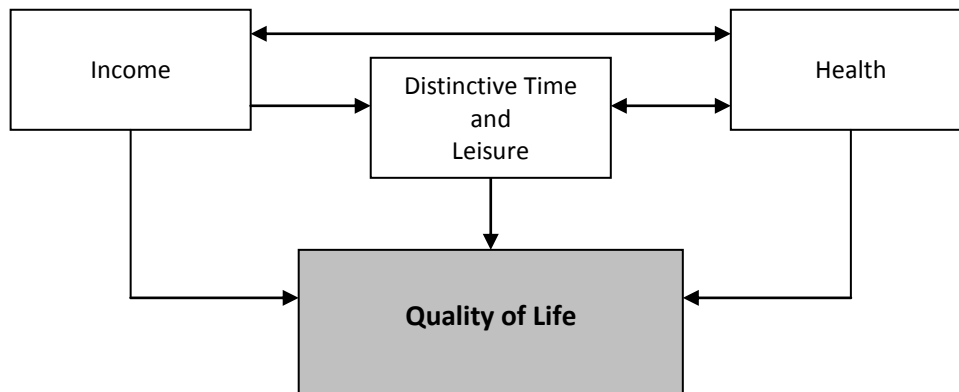
As far as the benefits of leisure activities are concerned, most scholars consider relaxation to be the most important among them, regardless the selected type of leisure (Shaw, 1984). 'Healthy leisure' includes those activities which can distract thought, happen in a natural and unforced way and can finally be described as pleasant experiences (Killinger, 1991). When leisure combines the previous characteristics it favors health at least through the confrontation of stress. This view is confirmed by empirical research according to which even passive forms of leisure- (e.g. watching T.V. or listening to the music) are listed as equally important to subjective well-being as more energetic forms (Kleibel et al, 1993). Energetic types of leisure, especially sports and other forms which include physical activity, have, however, significant and direct positive impacts on physical well-being as well.

As physical health is considered to be one of the most significant factors of qol on the personal level, promoting good health could be a sufficient reason for leisure to advance qol (WHO, 2001; Psatha et al, 2011). This causal relationship tends to be bidirectional: participation in leisure activities reacts on health, while the state of health affects the ability to participate in leisure activities as well. This is why it is important to define the conditions under which leisure activities advance health, as well as the conditions under which the state of health involves in the utilization of distinctive time. The relationship linking income with leisure is also interactive in an analogous way. Figure 1 illustrates the complex relationship between quality of life, health, income and leisure.

It is not only the lack of free time but also its depreciation which undermine psychological health and qol level, increasing boredom during spare time and impeding the adoption of more energetic forms of leisure. On the contrary, the participation in various 'healthy' forms of leisure (as described above), and the socialization during free time, are linked with increased levels of subjective well-being. Self-esteem and the overall satisfaction with life

levels increase, social interaction ameliorates and the depression penetration levels deescalate (Caldwell et al 1992; Haworth, 1997; Iso-Ahola, 1997). Thus, activation and socialization during free time contribute to psychological well-being, satisfaction with life and finally to the qol.

Figure 1. The interactive relationship between quality of life, health, income and leisure



It is well-documented by various researches that the contribution of free time and leisure in subjective well-being, although passing through very different canals in different cultural contexts, is finally a global phenomenon. In Japan, where the culture of Far East is combined with the western way of life, a shift to a lifestyle better oriented to free time has been observed, with Japanese people considering free time as the most important domain of everyday life when compared with work (Harada, 2004). In China, the enhancement of mental serenity is considered to be the main component of ‘healthy’ leisure time, as it is linked to the comprehension of the meaning of life (Gong, 1998). Similarly to Csikszentmihalyi’s ‘time flow’, the chinese ‘Jing Jie’ is considered to be the highest form of free time in China, as it is experienced in harmony with the nature through the participation in creative art activities, meditation, poetry or music (Gong, 1998; Yang, 1998 as cited by Iwasaki, 2007). In less economically developed societies, despite the remarkable differences in the ways of life, leisure or free time activities also play a critical role for the satisfaction with life, as proved by research conducted in various contexts (e.g. Sheykhi, 2004 for Iran).

2. THE ROLE OF CULTURE

The role of cultural activities and fine arts in the qol tends either to be neglected by urban policymakers or to be taken for granted but in a rather rhetorical way which is rarely accompanied by the necessary corresponding urban policies for the enhancement of art education and societal participation in culture.

Although empirical research focused on the contribution of culture in qol is not abundant, it has been proved that the engagement in cultural and art activities has significant direct and long-term benefits, both on the personal and the societal level, which should not be negligible. Among the different cultural activities for a person to engage with, music (either playing or listening to) is the one that has been better investigated (Galoway, 2006). Generally, the contribution of the participation in cultural activities mainly concern the reinforcement of self-esteem (which is considered to be the foundation stone for happiness), the obtainment of new skills and abilities, personal cultivation and the enhancement of creativity. There is also research evidence that the engagement with fine arts contributes to a healthier and a longer lasting life (Byrgen et al, as cited by Galoway, 2006).

Personal benefits, when transferred on the community level reinforce social interaction and participation, strengthen the social networks and enhance local identity and inclusion motivating even people who have not been active in civic participation before, supporting, thus, indirectly the democratic procedures. The diffusion of participation in cultural activities is particularly beneficial for the less privileged, because poverty has been proved to exclude people from their interaction with culture and fine arts (Matarasso, 1997). In addition, the developmental dimension of culture can also bring secondary benefits for the qoul, when it is used as the vehicle for urban regeneration.

In accordance with the previous findings and after empirical research, Coalter has recognized the positive impact of cultural activity in the following domains: physical and psychological health, combating poverty, social participation and inclusion, enhancement of personal self-esteem and offer of new jobs (Coalter, 2001 as cited by Galoway, 2006).

All the previous benefits are directly connected with the main qoul determinants, as showed in table 1.

Table 1: The main categories of QOUL determinants and their connection with benefits from arts activity

<i>QOUL determinants</i>	<i>Benefits from arts activity</i>
<i>Economic Environment</i> (Employment, income, living costs)	Combating poverty Employment
<i>Social Environment</i> (Crime, social inequalities and exclusion)	Inclusion Social Cohesion Strengthening Communities
<i>Natural Environment</i> (Air, water, waste management, suburban environment, areas of natural beauty, weather)	Inspiration
<i>Built environment</i> (Building density, housing conditions, building stock)	
<i>Urban and suburban green spaces</i> (adequacy, condition, accessibility)	Inspiration
<i>Public spaces –Public buildings</i> (Area, quality, maintenance)	New pieces of public art
<i>Culture - Leisure</i> (Cultural and tourism resources, leisure activities-capabilities, available options)	Creative leisure activities Enhancement of options Vital cultural life
<i>Demographic data</i> (family status, age rates, education level)	
<i>Education</i> (Education units, attendance, private schools)	Aesthetic education
<i>Health care</i> (Health services, accessibility, social welfare)	physical and psychological health
<i>Democratic Institutions</i> (regime, local government, voting rates)	
<i>Traffic and transportation</i> (Traffic conditions, parking spaces, public transportation accessibility of districts)	

Sources: Psatha et al, 2011; Coalter 2001; Own elaboration

Although there is an obvious link between personal and social well-being, the examination of the effects of cultural activities tends to confine on the personal level. The evaluation of QOL on the societal level (e.g. for cities or countries), which are traditionally conducted through indicators, rarely include specialized cultural indicators, leaving out the issue of arts and culture. However, this case has recently started to change (Galoway, 2006).

One of the first attempts to include the cultural options in QOL indicators was the Knight Foundation report, which highlights the vitality of cultural life among the six most significant community QOL domains, together with family well-being, housing and community development, civic engagement, education levels and socio-economic characteristics (Knight Foundation, 2004). The specific indicators suggested by the Foundation's report for the assessment of a city's cultural life are the following (Table 2):

Table 2: Indicators for the assessment of a city's cultural life

<i>Determining Factor</i>	<i>Suggested Indicator</i>
Access to arts organisations	Number of organizations per 10,000 residents
Financial status of arts organisations	Per capita funds and/or capital, financing of arts organizations
Stability of the arts sector	Temporal evolution of the previous
Lack of cultural activities	Level of satisfaction with cultural life
Attendance of cultural activities	Number of tickets in cinemas, plays, concerts and art exhibitions
Giving back to the arts	Donations to cultural organizations
Community engagement in arts and culture	Number of volunteers in cultural activities

Sources: Knight Foundation, 2004; Galway, 2006; own elaboration

3. LINKING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT WITH THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Urban tourism development is closely related to the cultural and leisure facilities of a city. For this reason, these facilities also tend to be considered as drivers of economic development in cities, enhancing thus in a secondary way the qoul.

There are only a few research papers investigating the theories behind the effects of the tourism development on the resident's qol. It is rather clear that tourism development usually engenders positive economic results in the cities-receptors (Frechtling, 1994). However, it is also known that economic development is not considered to be a sufficient factor for a community's qol. In fact, economic resources are considered insufficient evidence when it comes for an assessment of the qol in a city (European Commission: Directorate-General for Regional Policy, 2009). For those reasons, beyond the economic benefits, there is a need for improvements in infrastructures, facilities and opportunities for all residents of the touristic

cities in order to achieve a real quality enhancement grace to the tourism development (Perdue et al, 1999).

Two basic theoretical approaches about the complicated relationship of tourism development in cities and the quality can be found in the literature: the circles of tourism development -in line with the circles of economic development- (Smith, 1992, Perdue et al, 1999) and the social disruption hypothesis (England and Albrecht, 1984, as cited by Perdue et al, 1999). The latter concerns mostly cases of a sudden development without underlying planning. According to the first theory, the quality for the residents of a community under touristic development is increasingly improved up to a certain point: the point when the carrying capacity of the community is reached. After this point, further touristic development provokes negative pressures on the quality. According to the second theory, the process is rather opposite: after a period during which the quality in the community accepts negative pressures due to the sudden socio-economic changes and the dramatic increase in the demand for all kinds of facilities and services, the situation gets normalized (as infrastructures gradually improve) and the residents start to savor the fruits of development.

Tourism, recreation and leisure compose together a field for applied research for which the theoretical framework is insufficiently developed. One reason for this lack of theory mentioned in the literature is the relative newness of the field, at least when compared with other 'neighbouring' fields, such as planning. However, there are older and well-tested theories coming from other disciplines, like sociology, which can cover successfully the remaining gaps of the tourism's theoretical background. Those, according to Harrill, include the 'social attachment theory', the 'social exchange theory' and the 'economic development machine theory' (Harrill, 2004). All previous theories are borrowed from sociology, but have also been used to explain how the residents of the touristic areas and cities encounter the tourism development (for an extensive review: Harrill, 2004).

Unlike theoretical work, there are plenty research papers discussing the attitudes and perceptions of the residents in touristic areas concerning tourism development (indicatively: Allen et al, 1993; Perdue et al, 1990; Andriotis and Vaughan, 2003; Wang et al, 2006). Although this research is based by its nature on subjective views and cannot drive to safe conclusions as far as the effects of tourism development on the quality are concerned, it summarizes the major dimension of the issue.

Allen et al have examined how the attitudes of residents towards seven significant factors of qol in their community are formed in twenty different areas, according to the area's revenues from the tourism sector. Their findings defend the economic cycles theory: while low and moderate levels of tourism development are beneficiary for the perceived qol of citizens, in the areas with an intense tourism development a remarkable deterioration in significant qol factors (such as social interaction and sufficiency of facilities and infrastructures) is recorded (Allen et al, 1988).

The 1991 research by Perdue et al is also of particular interest. The authors, instead of questioning the residents, have examined the changes that can be observed in a variety of objective factors concerning the qol in 100 different counties in the USA, which were classified in five groups, in terms of their per capita revenues from the tourism sector. According to the findings, significant qol factors, such as per capita income, educational costs per student and the quality of health services are improving while the tourism development goes on. On the contrary, crime seems to follow the inverse process: it reduces with the increase of tourism (Perdue et al, 1991, as cited by Perdue et al, 1999).

Research works which investigate the residents' attitudes towards the tourism development usually classify the points of view recorded on the basis of the sociodemographic characteristics of the questioned people, the distance of their residence from the touristic focal epicenters and the degree of dependence they have from the tourism sector (Harrill, 2004).

Despite the numerous attempts to relate the socioeconomic and demographic factors with the attitudes of people towards tourism, it seems that those factors finally play an insignificant and even contradictory role in the formation of the aforementioned attitudes (Perdue et al, 1990). However, some researchers have highlighted the role of the educational level as a determining factor for one's attitude towards tourism development: people with a higher educational level appear to be more skeptical concerning the potential consequences of the tourism development in their city or area (Andriotis and Vanghn, 2003; Wang et al, 2006).

As far as the role of economic dependency from tourism is concerned, this seems to be the most significant. For the interpretation of this finding the social exchange theory have been used, in order to explain how material and psychological tradeoffs can influence the residents' attitudes. (Harrill, 2004; Andriotis, 2007). In this context, the relationship between the residents' perceptions and economic dependency has been examined through different filters and in various scales (from single persons to entire communities), testing the hypothesis that

the more dependent a person (or a community) is from the tourism sector, the more positively disposed will be towards the tourism development. This hypothesis, pretty much is usually affirmed by the research.

But what are the cautions mentioned by those people who do not wish tourism development or are skeptical towards it? As Harrill summarizes the relevant evidence, these cautions include concerns whether tourism disrupts social cohesion and alters the identity of place and people, but also the anxiety that some residents may stay out of the game, unreached by the economic benefits brought by tourism. The fear that tourism may be harmful for the environment and the city's aesthetics are also expressed (Harrill, 2004). Generally speaking, in most cases the residents of touristic areas -developed or under development- although acknowledging the positive effect of tourism development on the local economy, worry about the potential negative consequences for the society and the environment, like congestion, crime, public safety and pollution ((Perdue et al, 1999).

4. QUALITY OF URBAN LIFE AND A CITY'S IMAGE

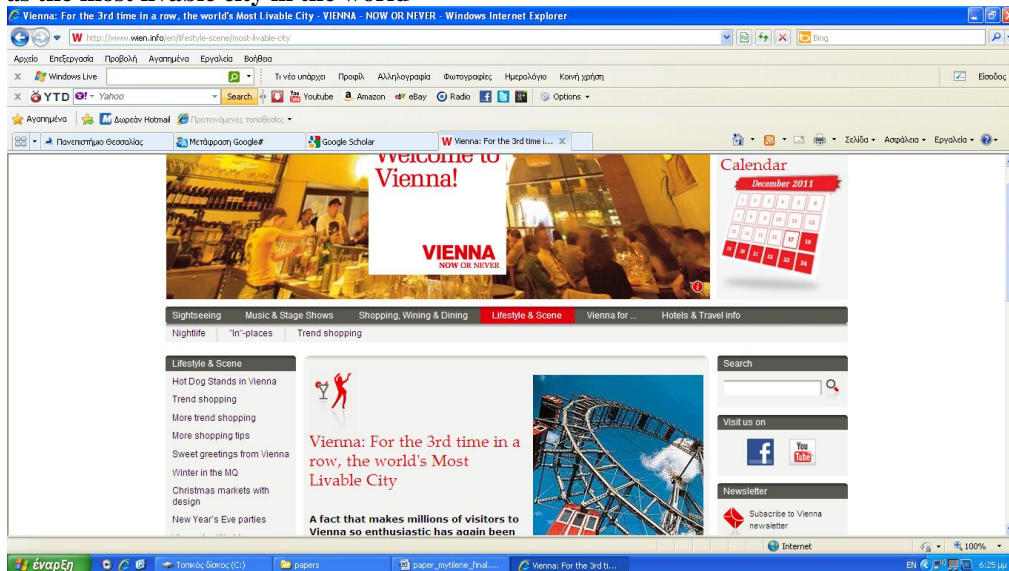
Research works about the qol aspire to direct policies in order to achieve better conditions of urban living for both residents and visitors of the city. Diverging from the previous goal, a new field of investigation concerning the qoul has appeared lately, considering the qol as a subject of consumption for people with increased mobility, who can become new residents or urban tourists. Hence, the qol is often faced as an object to be promoted and sold, through the image of the city (McCann, 2004).

The aforementioned category includes the popular city rankings often named "best places to live" or "most livable cities", which classify cities in lists, according to the qoul they provide. These rankings are issued for various spatial levels (worldwide, European-American, or national), and often use arbitrary and non scientific criteria.

The relationship that bonds together the various city rankings with urban policies lies on the level of goals. Rankings, through their adopted criteria, set the goals to be reached, maintained or improved (according to the performance each city gets in the relevant sectors) by the cities under classification. When a city manages to get a good position in the list, this fact is being used properly by the politicians and the local government, as the evidence to justify the options and policies followed. The city's inclusion in the 'top something' of a ranking driven by the press (e.g. The Economist's) or a Consulting Firm (e.g. the Mercer's), is

naturally used as a basic component in the city's campaigns for attracting tourists. The first thing to be noticed when visiting the official website of Vienna, is the city's success to get for the third time the first position in the Mercer's international evaluation (<http://www.wien.info>).

Image 1: The official site of Vienna includes in the most prominent position the city's success to be selected as the most livable city in the world



Source: <http://www.wien.info/en/lifestyle-scene/most-livable-city>

The examples from the United States, quoted by McCann, are also characteristic. Since Portland got one of the first positions in the '100 best places to live' list by the Money Magazine, the visitors' info point was covered by posters and frames originated from the relative press publications. On the contrary, when Michigan was left out from the previous list, because of the deindustrialization, residents organized a protest during which they burned in public the magazine's copies, considering them a tremendous defamation for their city (McCann, 2004).

City rankings, even when generated with ambiguous or non-scientific criteria, form a context for the formation of urban development policies, while they offer a useful tool for strategic place marketing, in the focal point of which stands the city's image. Cities build and promote consciously their image, in the context of the development perspectives opened by place marketing. The city's image has a special significance, as it influences people's perceptions and attitudes towards the city. Acknowledging this significance, people and institutions which are in charge with the touristic promotion of cities try to build the appropriate image which is

then diffused through all kind of media to potential investors, visitors and/or new residents but even to the existing residents in order to wake their pride (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996).

In this informing process the new city's image has a crucial significance. It reaches to consumers as a perceived impression, either consciously or subconsciously, and having passed through different media may be significantly altered than the original message. At the end, consumers get a differentiated message, engendered by a combination of the original image with each consumer's needs, experience and personal characteristics (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Bramwell and Rawding, 1996).

The case of old industrial cities aiming to tourism development after the deindustrialization is characteristic. More and more cities are challenged by the effort to turn their marketing strategies from industrial promotion to tourism promotion. The benefits expected include a stimulation of the local economy, the enhancement of cultural infrastructures and leisure facilities (which of course are also-if not primarily- used by the permanent residents, ameliorating the qoul), and a further improvement of the city's image in a self-powered circle.

Yet, although the steps towards the improvement of the qol in a city are pretty much specific and similar between cities –as set by the determining factors for qoul- the cities images when targeting to the tourism development cannot be similar. Cities which intend to emerge as urban tourist destinations have to base their touristic product on those specific characteristics which cannot be found in neighboring or competitive cities. In the regime of increased competition between cities, visitors select their destination according to the projected image's elements they wish to get familiar with, considering that those can offer them an added value to their selection (Gilbert, 1990; Bramwell and Rawding, 1996).

During the last decades there has been a turn from mass consumption to differentiation and from models of mass tourism to more personalized touristic products. For cities to succeed in a society increasingly driven by consumption, they have to differentiate properly their image, with a twofold goal: to meet the preferences of at least one target group of potential consumers and secondly to compete the other cities. This requested differentiation impedes the qoul, even when is really high, to be the single basis for a city's constructed image.

According to Bramwell and Rawding, while the previous interpretation can explain why cities try to differentiate through their images, it also explains the opposite phenomenon: the homogenization of urban tourist destinations, since most cities usually promote images targeting to the most desirable target groups (which tend to be similar for all cities) (Bramwell

and Rawding, 1996). As other researchers have also pointed out, planning practices and marketing strategies that used to be innovative when first adopted -like regeneration of waterfronts and brownfields or festivals- now are being copied in many different cities in an indiscriminate way (McCann, 2004).

Generally speaking, developmental policies that are considered to be successful are being applied in a mass way, undermining the effort for differentiation. A 'serial reproduction of policies'³ is therefore created, which provokes an accumulation of similar cities and places in the (tourism) market. Therefore, each city undergoes a continuous pressure for renewing its policies, infrastructures and services in order to survive under the conditions of rivalry (McCann, 2004). Although the previous finding does not refer only to the cities' touristic policies, it highly regards the tourism market too.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In the context defined by the available theoretical and methodological tools, the investigation of factors which determine the quality of urban life (qoul) is in progress. To the extent that this primarily subjective issue can be faced in an objective way, the determinants of qoul concern at least twelve general categories of factors: the economic and social environment, the natural and built environment, urban green and public spaces, culture and leisure facilities, demographic data, education, health care, democratic institutions and traffic conditions including transportation (Psatha et al, 2011).

Free time, leisure and culture have major impacts on subjective well-being as it has been proved by empirical research in many different cultural contexts. However the contribution of leisure facilities and cultural activities to the qoul has only recently been acknowledged. Because culture and leisure form a dynamic dimension of tourism development in cities, the relationship between tourism, leisure and culture with the qoul has to be investigated. The linkage seems to be bidirectional. Tourism development can contribute to the enhancement of the qol in the city, through economic growth but mainly through the improvement of urban facilities. At the same time, high qoul level, when disposable, constitutes a significant component for the image of the city, which undoubtedly enhances its touristic profile.

³ The term is first used by Harvey (1989). Here is used as referred by Eugene McCann, 2004

The city image promoted in the context of tourism marketing raises issues concerning the representation of the city and the distribution of the tourist product, since the options available when constructing the image may leave some groups of residents or professionals out of the game of tourism development. The promoted image of the city may orient tourism development towards specific social and professional groups, reflecting the underlying or new inequalities (Bramwell and Rawding, 1996; Harrill, 2004).

For this reason, asking for the social participation in the tourism image building process (which necessarily summarizes some of the city's aspects, leaving behind some others) is a necessary condition both for the success of tourism marketing plans and for the optimal diffusion of economic benefits.

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