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A New Era for Urban Tourism? The Case of Venice, Italy

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ABSTRACT

In the last decades a number of studies have dealt with the negative impacts of tourism, still, there is a lack of research that explains why these impacts have emerged. The present article addresses this research gap, and after the identification of the different impacts, attempts to explore the reasons for their emergence through the case of Venice. Given that certain tourism impacts have been the focus of recent protests of Venetian residents, the article also tries to explore the connections between tourism-related issues and social movements that is, the reasons behind these demonstrations. The study is based on qualitative interviews with opinion leaders from local (Venetian), regional (Veneto Region) and international (European Union) levels.

Keywords: Venice; Urban Tourism; Negative Tourism Impacts

Az utóbbi évtizedekben számos tanulmány foglalkozott a turizmus negative hatásaival, azonban hiányoznak azok a kutatások, amelyek megmagyarázzák ezeknek a hatásoknak a kialakulását. A jelen esettanulmány Velencére fókuszálva ezt a hiányt igyekszik pótolni és megpróbálja azonosítani a turizmushoz köthető különböző negatív hatásokat, valamint megvizsgálni a kialakulásuk okait. Mivel az elmúlt években Velence lakosai több turizmushoz köthető problémával kapcsolatban is tüntettek, az elemzés ezen demonstrációk okait is igyekszik feltárni. A tanulmány véleményformáló szakemberekkel készített kvalitatív interjúkon alapszik, akik a helyi (velencei), regionális (Veneto Régió) és nemzetközi (Európai Unió) szintek valamelyikén tevékenykednek a turizmus területén.

Keywords: Velence; városi turizmus; negative turisztikai hatások

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Introduction

There is no doubt that Venice is one of the most important urban destinations in Italy and also in the global tourism market. The historic centre of the city attracts millions of tourists yearly due to its rich culture and special urban structure. Tourism, however, can not only have positive impacts, but also a number of adverse effects (see Deery, Jago & Fredline, 2012). In the case of Venice, already in the 1990s it was presented that the costs of tourism had exceeded considerably its benefits to the local community and this gap was expected to become wider (van Der Borg, 1992). By that time the historic centre of the city had been in an “urban crisis” and tourism had been regarded to be responsible for that (van Der Borg, 1992). In such a context, the recent news (Coldwell, 2017; Edwards, Binnie & Zuvela, 2017) about protests of Venetian residents can be worrying. These demonstrations shed light on a number of tourism-related negative impacts. Different studies have determined issues related to tourism in Venice (see e.g. van der Borg, Costa & Gotti, 1996), however, there is a lack of research that both identifies the problems (or negative impacts) and also gives an explanation of why they have emerged.

Departing from this research gap the present study sets out to explore the negative impacts of tourism and the possible reasons for their emergence. Besides, as the protests of Venetians have focused on different tourism-related issues, I attempt to find out the connections between negative tourism impacts and social movements that is, why these demonstrations have emerged. The research is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the negative impacts of tourism in Venice?
2. What is the reason for the emergence of the negative impacts?
3. Why did local people start to demonstrate in Venice?

The analysis is informed by a literature review on the impacts of tourism on urban areas and the negative social impacts of tourism, presented in the next section (Section 1). The literature review is followed by the research methodology in Section 2 and the findings in Section 3. The last section presents the conclusions.

1. Theoretical background

1.1 *Tourism Impacts on Urban Areas*

The general topic of ‘urban tourism’ has been overlooked by academics – as Ashworth (2003) admits, scholars dealing with tourism disregarded cities and academics dealing with cities disregarded tourism. Despite its neglect, in the 1980s scholars started to deal with the impacts of tourism on urban areas. The studies tend to be concerned with one or more of the economic, ecological (or physical), cultural and social impacts that can be either positive or negative. The majority of the studies are based on cases, presenting the effects of the industry on cities (Belisle & Hoy, 1980; van der Borg et al., 1996; Gilbert & Clark, 1997; Jeonglyeol Lee, Li & Kim, 2007; Montanari & Staniscia,

2010; García-Hernández, de la Calle-Vaquero & Yubero, 2017), particular districts (e.g. Füller & Michel, 2014) or even on a Special Administrative Region (Lai & Hitchcock, 2017).

There are varying views about the extent and the importance of tourism impacts. In their study of urban tourism Ashworth & Page (2011) claim that only a tiny part of the physical extent, services, facilities and host communities of destinations are influenced by tourism to any notable degree. This viewpoint, however, is not shared by other scholars. According to García-Hernández et al. (2017), the positive tourism impacts can influence the destination as a whole, but the negative effects are inclined to be more focused on surrounded areas. They acknowledge also that more study is necessary on the extent of tourism impacts. More specifically about impacts on residents, van der Borg et al. (1996) express a distinct view: they claim that the whole urban community is affected by tourism in cities. The study of Füller & Michel (2014) about Berlin-Kreuzberg, a district of Berlin, gives evidence of how the 'new urban tourism', which is "oriented towards an experience of the city beyond the officially stated tourist attractions" (p. 1314), changed an inner-city locality that had not been regarded as an important tourist destination. Therefore they suggest that the area on which tourism has an impact has been extended due to the new behavioural patterns of urban tourists. The different and sometimes opposing views imply that the extent of tourism impacts on urban areas and their citizens cannot be universally and explicitly stated. Besides, urban areas affected by tourism seem to be expanded by tourists, who are not only interested in the traditional attractions of cities (like iconic buildings), but also in 'off the beaten track' locations (see also Maitland, 2013).

Ashworth & Page (2011) also argue that "Tourism impacts upon cities in general is almost certainly overestimated and extrapolated from a few well-known and often overpublicised cases..." (p. 9). However, in the literature of tourism impacts on urban areas one can find a number of cases of cities with different levels of tourism development. Some studies are indeed about tourism impacts on 'traditional' and well-known tourist destinations with high numbers of visitors, such as Rome (Montanari & Staniscia, 2010) or Madrid (Valenzuela & Hidalgo, 2010). Other authors, however, present less 'well-known' cases. Glasson (1994), for instance, depicts both the positive and the adverse effects of tourism in Oxford. Belisle & Hoy (1980) also identify the positive and negative effects of tourism in Santa Marta, Columbia. Van der Borg et al. (1996) explore the negative impacts of tourism on seven heritage cities (Aix-en-Provence, Amsterdam, Bruges, Florence, Oxford, Salzburg and Venice). Another study presents the impacts of tourism on the inner city of Zagreb and implies the possible dangers of tourism growth (Kesar, Dezeljin & Bienenfeld, 2015). Thus, tourism impacts on cities are discussed in various studies, so the topic cannot be said to be extrapolated from only a limited number of cases.

1.2 The Social Impacts of Tourism on Host Communities

There is a well-established line of research about the social impacts of tourism. The study of Deery et al. (2012) scrutinise the literature on the topic and suggest two categories to consider, when dealing with the constructs utilised in social impact studies. The first category includes those factors that affect residents' perceptions of tourism impacts and the second category includes the impacts themselves. The present

study focuses on the latter category: the negative impacts or, as they are also regarded, the 'artifacts' (Deery et al., 2012). Deery et al. (2012), claiming the necessity to better understand the impacts on host residents, propose a new research agenda of five steps – the present study focuses on the first step that aims at determining the social impacts of tourism, however, it also goes beyond the mere identification.

Section 1.2.1. presents the review of the literature about the negative social impacts of tourism. Primarily those studies have been selected that deal with the social impacts of tourism on host communities of urban areas.

1.2.1 The Negative Social Impacts of Tourism

The social impacts of tourism on host communities can be different in nature. Based on the literature these impact-types can be divided into four categories: economic, ecological (or physical), cultural and social. Given the scope and focus of this study, only the negative effects are highlighted and discussed in the following.

In the past three-four decades a number of studies have dealt with the negative *economic* impacts of tourism. A recent case study about the city of Donostia-San Sebastián, Spain shed light on a number of adverse economic effects: “commercial homogenization and disappearance of traditional local traders, colonisation by foreign brands, rise in unstable and uncertain employment in the hospitality industry, threat to the neighbourhood’s social and economic fabric due to the growth of tourist rental property business” (García-Hernández et al., 2017, p. 14). Issues related to tourist rentals seem to have a central role in recent impact studies. Füller & Michel (2014) in the earlier mentioned study of Berlin-Kreuzberg present that the increasing number of holiday apartments is a consequence of growing interest in tourism and also that it is an area of conflict, as it exacerbates competition on the housing market. Sans & Quagliari (2016) also deal with the impacts of vacation rentals in Barcelona through the analysis of Airbnb. They conclude that there are big numbers of businesses camouflaged among local people sharing their apartments and that there is incorrect competition in the hospitality sector due to the lack of regulations. Connected to cruise ship tourism, its positive economic impacts are often highlighted (see e.g. OECD/ITF, 2016), but recently studies deal with the sector’s adverse impacts as well (see e.g. Vianello, 2016 or Jordan & Vogt, 2017). Another frequently mentioned economic impact is the vanishing or altering of local businesses and economic activities with the appearance of businesses dedicated to satisfy the needs of tourists (Füller & Michel, 2014; Montanari & Staniscia, 2010; van der Borg et al., 1996). Rising prices of goods and services (in some cases including properties) also seem to be problematic in some cities (Lai & Hitchcock, 2017; Montanari & Staniscia, 2010; Belisle & Hoy, 1980).

Probably the most tangible effects of tourism are the *ecological* or *physical* ones. According to Gilbert & Clark (1997), however, “urban centres are far more durable and able to absorb tourism's impact on a physical/ecological level, than areas that are more rural, exotic or that were previously underdeveloped” (p. 350). Nevertheless, other studies prove that even in urban areas the physical impacts of tourism can be crucial. Overcrowding and related problems (such as traffic and car parking difficulties) are among the major impacts on public spaces of city destinations (García-Hernández et al., 2017; Sans & Quagliari, 2016; Füller & Michel, 2014; Montanari & Staniscia, 2010; Glasson, 1994; van der Borg, 1992). Studies present also that congestion can have

serious consequences: for instance, it can be a stress factor for local residents (Jordan & Vogt, 2017) or it can threaten old buildings and destroy economic activities (van der Borg et al., 1996). In many urban areas some kind of environmental problem is identified (García-Hernández et al., 2017; Jordan & Vogt, 2017; Montanari & Staniscia, 2010; Gilbert & Clark, 1997; Glasson, 1994). Different environmental issues can be present in different cities, but they are most often connected to litter, noise and water or air pollution. Not surprisingly, in the majority of the cities, where environmental issues occur, overcrowding is also identified to be a problem. Another impact that contributes to the degradation of the urban landscape's quality, as García-Hernández et al. (2017) note, is the competition between local residents and visitors for public spaces (see also Montanari & Staniscia, 2010; Gilbert & Clark, 1997). Consequently, based on the literature, overcrowding, environmental pollution and competition for public spaces seem to be the most frequently occurring physical impacts on city destinations.

As far as the *cultural* impacts are concerned, two categories can be differentiated: impacts on the physically existing cultural aspects (like heritage buildings) and on the intangible cultural aspects (like local customs or traditions). Both “things and activities”, as Cohen (1988, p. 380) refers to them, can be turned into commodities by tourism “packaged and sold to tourists, resulting in a loss of authenticity” (Cole, 2007, p. 945). There is a well-established debate about cultural commoditisation – Greenwood (1978) was one of the first ones to discuss cultural commoditisation through tourism. In his case study Greenwood (1978) presents how the Alarde festival of Fuenterrabia, Spain, a traditional event for local people, was converted into a show for visitors from outside the community, thus losing its authenticity and becoming a cultural commodity. This process is often initiated by people from outside the local community, which might lead to the exploitation of the cultural resources and the local people themselves (Cohen, 1988). The “commercialization of culture” (García-Hernández et al., 2017, p. 14) is mentioned also in the case study about Donostia-San Sebastián together with other issues: “banalisation” (p. 14) regarding experiences and souvenirs, the loss of the typical local food and drink and the loss of the Basque language in the streets. As Montanari & Staniscia (2010) suggest local people are elements of the cultural heritage together with their customs and practices, thus, for instance the loss of the Basque language in the earlier case can be seen as a harmful effect of tourism on the cultural heritage of the city. In the case of Canterbury, Gilbert & Clark (1997) also find that some of the local people feel that tourism harmed the cultural heritage of the city. In the study about seven European heritage cities van der Borg et al. (1996) emphasise the “wear and tear” (p. 316) of heritage as a general impact on culture in the seven cities.

The *social* impacts of tourism are diverse and sometimes its boundaries with other impact-types (like economic or cultural) are vague. For example, Cohen (1984) alludes to socio-economic impacts, when, referring to other authors and claims that new job opportunities in the host area encourage residents to stay and attract people (e.g. job-seekers) from outside the community. Additionally, he also states that “in mature tourist areas, tourism spurs urbanization” (Cohen, 1984, p. 386). Other studies, however, have contrasting results. For instance, García-Hernández et al. (2017) suggest that increasing land prices bring about the expulsion of local people from Donostia-San Sebastián and van der Borg et al. (1996) give evidence of crowding out of residents

from Bruges and Salzburg. In the case of a Jamaican town some of the residents were literally displaced (they had to move outside the town) to enable the building of a new cruise port, but water and electricity were not available in their new neighbourhood (Jordan & Vogt, 2017). As Deery et al. (2012) also present, “increased urban development” (p. 69) can be understood as a factor that reduces the quality of life of the residents and changes the character of the area. Deery et al. (2012) make a list of other crucial social impacts: referring to a number of other authors they identify crime in general (see also Gilbert & Clark, 1997; van der Borg et al., 1996), alcohol related tourist conduct problems, drug related issues (see also Belisle & Hoy, 1980), unruly behaviour (see also van der Borg et al., 1996), gambling and prostitution (see also Belisle & Hoy) as social impacts of tourism connected to “delinquent behaviour” (Deery et al., 2012, p. 68).

Even if Deery et al. (2012) examine social impacts in general, other studies about urban areas support the relevancy of the ‘delinquent behaviour’ in cities. Others determine increased police control (García-Hernández et al., 2017) or “police harassment” (Jordan & Vogt, 2017, p. 542) as social issues.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Approach and Design

In order to most effectively answer the research questions posed in the introduction, a qualitative approach was applied. According to Deery et al. (2012), most tourism impact studies have applied quantitative methods, thus, they suggest more qualitative research to get a better understanding of issues regarding tourism impacts. Departing from this proposal, qualitative interviews were conducted to get to know the perceptions and thoughts of research participants concerning the effects of tourism in the case of Venice and in general. The interviews were conducted with six opinion leaders from the public, private, non-governmental and academic sectors. The respondents were selected from three different levels: local (Venice), regional (Veneto Region) and international level (European Union):

- Local level:
 1. Francesca Callegari (Responsible for partner and affiliate network of Vivo Venetia; 17 November 2017).
 2. Valeria Dufлот (Co-founder of Venezia Autentica, a social enterprise in Venice; 30 November 2017).
 3. Carlo Beltrame (Spokesperson of Gruppo 25 Aprile, a civil organisation in Venice; 11 December 2017).
 4. Mara Manente (Director of the International Centre for Studies on Tourism Economics at Ca’ Foscari University of Venice; 21 December 2017).
- Regional level:
 5. Stefano Marchioro (Responsible for territorial projects and tourism governance at the Tourism Department of Veneto Region; 23 November 2017).
- International level:

6. István Ujhelyi (Member of the European Parliament, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, Chair of the Tourism Task Force; 12 January 2018).

The interviews were semi-structured, except for the one with Francesca Callegari, which was unstructured. Questions were mostly formulated based on existing theories, presented in the prior section, in order to make the interviews as relevant to the researched topic as possible.

The interviews lasted for an average of 30 minutes and were conducted through online calls with two exceptions: Francesca Callegari and István Ujhelyi that were conducted personally. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed, as the respondents permitted, except for the one with Francesca Callegari, here only notes were taken.

2.2 The Case Study

My case study is based on Venice, a city in the north-eastern part of Italy with 54,705 residents in 2016 (Cittá di Venezia, n.d. a). Venice is the capital of Veneto region and one of the main city destinations both in Italy and in the global tourism market. According to the recent report of Euromonitor International (2017), in 2016 Venice was the 38th most important city globally and the 3rd in Italy regarding international tourist arrivals. Apart from its remarkable culture (museums and symbolic monuments), Venice is also well-known for its unique city structure – it is located on more than a hundred small islands. Given its special natural and cultural characteristics, Venice and its lagoon have been included in the World Heritage List of UNESCO since 1987 (UNESCO, n.d.). The city has a long tourism history dating back to the 16th century, the period of the Grand Tour (Towner, 1985) and, since the 1950s the industry has been growing almost continuously (Comune di Venezia, 2016). In the present study, when Venice is mentioned, it refers to the historic centre (built up on the small islands) and not to the whole Metropolitan City of Venice that consists of other parts, such as Marghera.

2.3 Limitations

The limitations of the present study are numerous. First of all, the research focuses on the perspectives of opinion leaders and does not deal with the viewpoints of local residents, who are the most impacted by tourism. Opinion leaders on the national level are also disregarded here, as the relevant national-level organisation that I tried to contact refused to answer my questions. Additionally, the perspective of the Venetian municipal government is missing too, given that they also rejected to answer the interview questions. Besides these, the study applied only one method (qualitative interviews), however, other methods, such as participant observation in the case study area or focus group interviews with local people would have made it possible to get better insights into the research topic. Finally, the study focuses on Venice, which is a unique urban area in terms of its special position and characteristics and thus, generalisations are not possible.

3. Findings

3.1 The “Costs” of Tourism for the Venetian Community

Venice, as one of the major Italian and European city destinations attracts an estimated 25 million tourists yearly. Even if tourism is the major industry in the city, it can be regarded as a key contributor to numerous negative impacts on the city in general and more specifically on its residents. Tourism related issues have recently been highlighted by local residents, who started to protest about tourism-related issues. The negative social impacts can be grouped into the earlier mentioned four categories: economic, ecological, cultural and social (see e.g. Deery et al., 2012).

3.1.1 Economic Impacts

The first impact-type can be seen as the most controversial in Venice. On the one hand, tourism is the most important industry and the main source of income for the city with approximately 2 billion Euros of gross revenues per year, but on the other hand, tourism contributes to the significant change of the city’s economy.

The increasing transformation or disappearance of economic activities in the historic centre seems to be one of the main economic issues in the city. An employee of a local operator company claimed the following: *“We’re losing our artisans! This market is dying. One Murano factory 20 years ago employed about 35 people, now only 7. A lot of the factories are closing. [...] Prices are high. There are no shops for children clothes. Book shops are closing.”* (Francesca Callegari). Thus, the economic transformation impacts generally the people living in Venice, as the shops for locals (e.g. groceries) are turned into takeaway restaurants, bars or other similar establishments catering for tourists. This results in the lack of shopping opportunities and higher prices for locals. Besides, more specifically the local artisan shops, selling traditional, handmade products are replaced by cheap souvenir shops or other types of shops for tourists. As Francesca Callegari also noted, artisans are sometimes literally forced to leave their shops: they either accept the offer of foreign investors (a sum of money) and leave or reject it and stay. If they decide to stay, investors offer higher rents to the owners of the shops (as artisans are usually just renters), so that the owners rise the rents making it impossible for artisans to stay. Another respondent claimed that: *“...here in Venice, like this [tourism] is almost the only industry that exists – main industry. [...] Everything else has disappeared or is disappearing!”* (Valeria Dufлот). This viewpoint implies that, due to the process of the replacement of traditional artisan shops and shops for locals by businesses catering to tourists, tourism is becoming the only industry in Venice.

Issues related to housing are also existent in Venice, however, these problems have emerged only in recent years with the appearance of platforms, such as Airbnb, making it easy for property owners to rent out their apartments to tourists. Renting out apartments for touristic use can be seen positively as it provides residents with additional incomes and this way they can benefit from tourism. However, it can cause severe difficulties on the housing market, especially if it is done on a commercial scale: *“There is many-many-many apartments, which are now proposed for tourists and no longer for residents and makes it complicated for people to be able to find housing. [...] But I think the main issue is more people, who are wealthy, don’t live in Venice or live in*

Venice, but buy the apartments and rent them using those platforms [like Airbnb] and so on. So, it allows them to rent like, sort of an illegal hotel chains [...].” (Valeria Duflot). This opinion suggests that renting out apartments for tourists (for short stays) instead of locals (for longer term) can cause problems for local people *per se*, but the situation is exacerbated by those “wealthy” people or businesses that exploit the legal loophole that allows them to buy properties unlimitedly and use them for touristic purposes. This point reflects well the findings of Sans & Quagliari (2016) about the adverse impacts of tourism on the housing market.

Additionally, the local municipality itself sells palaces to – often international – companies (see e.g. Città di Venezia, n.d. b or Venezia Today, 2017) that establish new hotels: *“[...] in the last days they [the municipality] have sell another palace, public palace, transforming it in [...] a new hotel. So, you know that the UNESCO asked to the city, the administration, to stop the change, the transformation of the palaces in hotels, but [...] this is not happening! So, they are continuing in this way! So, we are very afraid because nothing is moving to, toward, what UNESCO asked one year ago.”* (Carlo Beltrame). This quote implies that the municipality contributes to the economic transformation of Venice with selling palaces in spite of the request of UNESCO that envisaged the inscription of Venice on the List of World Heritage in Danger (see UNESCO World Heritage Committee, 2017). The sale of palaces to foreign investors can not only contribute to issues in the housing market, but it can cause economic leakage, as Jönsson (2016) suggests.

3.1.2 Ecological/Physical Impacts

It is important to consider the physical impacts of tourism in a city with such a unique urban structure, which is characterised by tight spaces and special ways of transportation. Undoubtedly, there is a huge tourism pressure on the city all through the year, since tourism is not seasonal. However, the aforementioned estimated 25 million visitors tend to focus on certain periods of the day and certain parts of the city: *“The [...] majority is concentrated in a few areas. The recent analysis speak about 30% of the territory visited by [...] tourists and, a concentration in the space, and in some hours of the day – just five hours of the day.”* (Mara Manente). This spatial and temporal concentration insinuates that overcrowding, mentioned as an issue by all the interviewed Venetian opinion leaders, is acute in the most visited parts of the city, which is actually the historic centre (see Città di Venezia, n.d. c). The focus of tourists on the historic centre also implies that Venice is not characterised by the ‘new urban tourism’ (Füller & Michel, 2014; Maitland, 2013), as visitors do not seem to be interested in ‘off the beaten track’ areas. Vast tourist numbers can cause serious problems:

“Sometimes to take a motorboat, a public motorboat to move in the canals can be a problem, because of how crowded they are! And so, sometimes [...] it is not easy to move in the city, especially around San Marco square or close the railway station. You can have problems to move, because of the number of [...] tourists walking in the street.” (Carlo Beltrame).

This opinion insinuates that the big number of tourists can result in serious traffic issues for local residents, who are severely hindered from moving freely within the city.

Other acute problems, also alluded to by all the respondents, are related to cruise ships: “... *this is a big problem of course! Because the arriving of this big [...] cruise ship in the basin of San Marco [...] is not more sustainable in that way.*” (Stefano Marchioro). Another respondent also mentioned cruise ships as problematic:

“...this is another dramatic problem both because [...] the big ships contribute to bring thousands of tourists in the city and because of environmental problems. [...] So, they contributed with big number of tourists. Which, in this case visit the city without sleeping in the hotels. So, we can say that they don't bring money... They [...] occupy only place, but don't bring money!” (Carlo Beltrame).

Therefore, the identified issues concerning cruise seem to be twofold: firstly, they are considered to be responsible for environmental issues (e.g. air and visual pollution and the erosion of the lagoon were mentioned by respondents) and secondly, they contribute to the number of day-trippers (or excursionists). One respondent mentioned also the following issue: “...*you have like more day-trippers than regular tourists, right? [...] not regular, [...] but people, who stay for several nights. So, they drive the markets toward their needs...*” (Valeria Dufлот). Thus, besides being disruptive in terms of congestion, day-trippers are viewed also as the ‘drivers of the market’, contributing considerably to the earlier mentioned economic transformation, such as the crowding out of traditional handicraft shops. Cruise tourism, however, cannot be regarded as the only source of day-visitors, as they can also come by car, train and other means of transportation.

3.1.3 Cultural Impacts

The cultural impacts of tourism seem to be connected again, at least to some extent, to excursionists and interrelated with both economic and physical impacts. As one respondent noted:

“They [day-trippers] often, as they are in a rush, do not have the time to understand Venice, to go away from [...] this route, which links like the main sites of Venice – you know [...] like Rialto, San Marco – and no time to understand the difference between quality handicrafts and the [...] China-made copy-crafts [...] so it drives the market towards that low quality, which are of zero interests for the local community and, which cause people to lose their shops [...] And so leads traditions and culture and so on to disappear [...]” (Valeria Dufлот).

This implies that the concentration of day-trippers in the historic centre has serious consequences: it contributes to the crowding out of traditional artisans that results in the cultural homogenisation of the historic centre, as artisan shops are disappearing and souvenir shops are becoming widespread, and the banalisation of souvenirs – locally made handicrafts are being substituted by low-quality products, made outside Venice. Day-visitors, apart from contributing to the congestion of the most visited areas, do not visit museums and parts of the city other than the ‘highlights’ and learn about the culture, given the lack of time they have. Since tourists, especially excursionists focus on the central areas, businesses selling low-quality souvenirs are interested in opening their shops in those areas, thus crowding out artisans, as presented earlier, and contributing to the vanishing of traditional activities that are significant components of the local culture.

However, the problems cannot be attributed exclusively to the day-trippers, since tourists in general tend to visit only 30% of the area of Venice, as mentioned earlier. Still, the contribution of excursionists to the above issues is significant, as their share of the overall visitors was approximately 75% already in the 1990s according to estimates (van Der Borg, 1992). This share is further increasing (Ganzaroli, De Noni, & van Baalen, 2017), which insinuates the prolongation of the above described processes.

3.1.4 Social Impacts

Tourism has serious social impacts on the residents of Venice. The population of the city has been dropping for decades (see van Der Borg, 1992) and still it seems to be one of the biggest social issues in the city, if not the biggest: *“...inhabitants leave the historical centre and, for the first time in 2017 the number of inhabitants decreased to less than 55 thousand inhabitants. Okay? Less than 55 thousand inhabitants. That was considered sort of threshold of vitality of the city.”* (Mara Manente). This opinion implies that residents, similarly to businesses, are crowded out from the historic centre of Venice. Crowding out can be seen as the result of different processes, often interconnected with other types of impacts. First of all, it is becoming more and more difficult for locals to do their daily shopping, as the number of shops catering for them is decreasing, as mentioned earlier. Secondly, the costs of living are rising: as Francesca Callegari mentioned, basic food prices can be 3 times as much in the historic centre as in Mestre (which is the mainland part of the City of Venice). Finally, locals have to face serious housing difficulties (see in Section 3.1.1. about economic issues): due to the high property prices and monthly rents for many residents it is worth leaving the historic centre and rent out their apartments to tourists.

Issues concerning the behaviour of tourists can also be seen as crucial. It is not uncommon that tourists break the local laws and swim in the canals or litter in public places:

“...people are maleducated [undereducated] or they [...] do things, which you should be not doing: jumping in the water, leaving trash around, misbehaving, being rude and so on. [...]people have a very different rhythm. When, you’re on a holiday or when you’re living the city, don’t have the same rhythm [...] and people are often not aware that it’s a city [...]. They behave in a way, which is not acceptable, you know.” (Valeria Dufлот).

This viewpoint insinuates that the behaviour of visitors is not appropriate in Venice. The mentioned problems (like littering or being rude) are exacerbated by the fact that locals have to share public places and spaces, such as streets, restaurants or public transportation with tourists to a high degree, given the special urban structure of the historic centre. The share of public areas can also be problematic due to the dissimilar patterns of movements of residents and visitors.

Accordingly, the local community seems to be affected by tourism to a large extent, which reflects similar findings of van der Borg et al. (1996) claiming that entire urban communities are affected by tourism. However, the results would probably be different, if the study had a focus not only on the historic centre, but on the Metropolitan City of Venice as a whole.

3.2 *The Emergence and Change of Negative Tourism Impacts*

As demonstrated above, tourism has a number of different negative impacts in Venice that are often interconnected. In this section the reasons for the emergence of the above identified negative impacts are explored. It is argued here that there are two main sources of negative impacts: the expansion of tourism and the lack of tourism management. Furthermore, the protests of local residents are also identified as the consequences of the lack of management of tourism and its growth.

3.2.1 *Lack of Tourism Management*

The lack of tourism management can be considered as the first and major source of the negative tourism impacts. The local municipality is regarded to be responsible for the management of the Venetian tourism and, as such, it is blamed for the occurrence of the industry's negative impacts. Tourism-related issues, as mentioned earlier, have been known for four decades, which clearly implies that local governments so far have failed to tackle problems concerning tourism and deal with its negative impacts. As a local scholar mentioned:

"...it's an Italian problem that tourism is considered as relevant from one side, and that's true, but something isolated compared to the other policies, [...] in particular urban level. Which means that the different municipalities didn't consider tourism as a central sector, when they have taken decisions for the city, you know. [...] tourism has been considered something that arrives, a sector without big economic problems..." (Mara Manente).

The above opinion clearly implies that tourism has been taken for granted and at the same time it has also been ignored on the national and especially on the local level (in Venice for example) in terms of planning and policies.

The present administration of Venice was elected in 2015, after the previous mayor, together with some of the city council members, was arrested for corruption in 2014, which resulted in the dissolution of the council, thus, the city did not have an elected municipal authority for a whole year (Vianello, 2016). Different opinions were expressed about the present government. One respondent took the following view: *"We asked to all destination and also Venice to develop destination management plan in a way of sustainable tourism. UNESCO asked the same things to Venice too. The municipality has developed a new awareness of this necessity. I think the wind has changed..."* (Stefano Marchioro). Another respondent was more critical:

"If the administration will not do anything very quickly [about the negative impacts], the situation could become dramatic. And, we can say that in two years of administration, there is new administration, nothing has changed! And we can say also that the signs, [...] which [...] came from this administration are not good." (Carlo Beltrame). The above quotes imply that, on the one hand, it is admitted that in two years of governance it is not possible to solve the problems that have emerged in the last four decades. Some positive remarks were also made, such as the intentions of reacting to the requests of UNESCO or the shift in the way of thinking about tourism and the creation of a destination management plan. But on the other hand, the present administration has been criticised for not dealing with the negative impacts of tourism. The municipality is also blamed for the faster decrease in the population, exploiting

Venice (“...it does feel then the priority of the governments is to make as much as profit as possible out of Venice.” – Valeria Duflot) and also for selling palaces, as presented earlier. It is interesting to note the difference between the attitudes to the municipality of local-level and regional-level opinion leaders – the prior being more negative and the latter being more positive. It seems that the present local government is aware of the necessity to manage tourism, however, it seems its actions are not in line with its intentions.

When dealing with tourism management in European destinations, it can be useful to consider not only the local level, but also the level of the European Union (EU). The ignorance of tourism does not seem to be a typical Venetian or Italian problem:

“...I confirm that, let’s say, one and a half years ago I was the only one in international forums always saying that we shouldn’t only celebrate tourism, but we should think what it can cause in the next 10 years. [...] This is how politics is! Everyone prefers not to deal with the problems, until they reach the stimulus threshold of political bodies. [...] everyone’s like ‘tourism, we don’t have to deal with it!’ ‘It works by itself’. So, tourism policy is not existent anymore [...] It’s not a state-level or European-level task.” (István Ujhelyi).

Thus, it is insinuated that politicians at the EU also tend not to deal with issues related to tourism until it becomes inevitable to manage them. Politicians at the EU-level began to deal with the negative impacts of tourism only after local people in different destinations, such as Venice or Dubrovnik, had started to protest.

Therefore, tourism appears to be a ‘taken-for-granted’ industry also for the EU and it is suggested that it has not been taken seriously, together with its negative impacts, until recently. At both the local and the EU-level political bodies seem to have a reactive approach to tourism instead of a proactive attitude – tourism-related issues are only dealt with, when they become clearly visible and political bodies cannot avoid dealing with them anymore.

3.2.2 Increasing Tourism Numbers

The second source of the negative impacts is connected to the numbers of tourism/tourists. Tourism, with shorter downturns, has been constantly growing for decades in the City of Venice (there is a lack of data for the historic centre, but the tendency is most probably very similar) (Cittá di Venezia, n.d. d). It is not surprising that there is a connection between the expansion of an industry and its negative impacts, as it was expressed by the Venetian opinion leaders connected to tourism. Nevertheless, in order to be able to manage the growth of tourism appropriately, it is necessary to know the reasons behind the expansion.

A Venetian academic see tourism growth as the result of three phenomena: *“...the general increase of tourism first. Second, the general increase of tourism linked to cultural attractions and third, the fact that Venice, as other Italian cities, [...] Florence for example, Venice is an icon city. And this means that the brand is quite strong and everybody wants at least one time their life to visit this icon.”* (Mara Manente). Thus, it is suggested that the constant growth of tourism in Venice can be seen, first of all, as a result of the general growth of international tourism due to global trends, such as the decreasing accommodation and transportation costs. Secondly, there is a growing demand for cultural destinations, like art cities and, finally, Venice has a worldwide

reputation for being a 'once-in-a-lifetime' destination. The above quote implies that the broader global trends, such as decreasing travel expenses, encourage people to visit Venice, an icon city with a world-famous "brand". One could wonder, however, why Venice has become so widely known. Intensive promotional activities seem to be important concerning the brand of Venice: for instance, in the second half of the 1980s, the promotional expenses of Venice were extremely high – in 1988 more than 1.2 billion US dollars (van Der Borg, 1992) – despite the fact that serious tourism-related issues were known already in the 1970s, as Mara Manente mentioned.

Recently, the promotion of the city is less intensive, since, for example the city *per se* is not advertised by Veneto Region and the focus of the different campaigns connected to Venice is said to be on slow tourism and not on the mass-events: *"As regard Venice, we don't promote specifically Venice. Venice is there... is here and everyone knows and you don't have to promote it at all! When we promote something Venice, we promote, for instance, the slow tourism..."* (Stefano Marchioro). However, the same respondent insinuated also that Venice is still an element of promotions, though in an indirect way: *"Veneto Region promotes the south as the land of Venice..."* (Stefano Marchioro). These quotes imply that the Region emphasises new forms of tourism (e.g. slow tourism) concerning Venice, although it is still part of campaigns indirectly, even if it certainly does not need promotion to attract tourists, as it was admitted already in the 1990s (see van Der Borg, 1992).

For Venice another issue can be the general promotion of Europe, as a tourist destination. For the most popular and traditional destinations, such as Venice or Barcelona that are well-known all over the world, such promotion can contribute to further tourism growth. An EU-level decision-maker took the following view:

"If we are waving with one of our hands to tourists from third countries, for example to Chinese tourists, like 'come here, come here!'... If we don't guide them with our other hand where to go in Europe when they arrive, the result is that those few cities that have become famous in China, will be invaded by millions, millions." (István Ujhelyi).

This view suggests that the promotions of Europe have contributed to the expansion of tourism in Venice and can be problematic in the future, if the promotions do not focus on directing the movements of tourists to destinations other than the most famous ones.

3.3 Another Consequence of Tourism Growth and the Lack of Management

In the last few years a number of Venetian demonstrations addressed tourism-related issues, as mentioned earlier. Demonstrations organised by different local organisations had different focuses – there were protests connected to, for instance, cruise ships (see Vianello, 2016) or the crowding out of residence. One of the biggest civil groups in Venice demonstrated against the decrease in the local population: *"...with this new administration the plusses of movement of citizens leaving the city to go to the country, go outside the laguna, had an acceleration. And so this is [...] the most problematic point [...] which we are trying to fight."* (Carlo Beltrame). Thus, this group considers the reduction in the number of residents as faster since the new administration is in power. Another respondent expressed similar opinion:

"...there is no real anti-tourism in Venice, okay? It is more a... Like [...] what you've been seeing happening in the past months – past year and a half there has been more

manifestation, more protests... it's more manifestation and protest against the way the city and the government manage the city and manage tourism. [...] Every year you have more people coming to Venice. So it extended the issue, because there is nothing, which is really done at the [...] government-level, at the international level and so on, to change the impact of tourism..." (Valeria Duflot).

Based on the above viewpoints, the demonstrations of local people appear to have been against the current management or lack of management of tourism and not against the industry – international media have presented the protests as actions against tourism/tourists and the phenomenon was named ‘anti-tourism’ or ‘tourismphobia’ (see e.g. Coldwell, 2017), which is seemingly misleading. The above quotes imply that the “extended issue” due to the expansion of tourism has reached a level that is not acceptable for the residents anymore. Therefore, throughout the last four decades, tourism growth and related issues were apparently addressed neither at the local, nor at the international level, which resulted in the emergence and gradual change of the negative tourism impacts into grave social problems (see also Section 3.1.4.).

The protests seem to have raised awareness of the necessity to manage tourism not only at the local, but also at international level:

"I think there is much more awareness in people and in the municipality and in the stakeholders that tourism should need managed and not just promoted. [...] this protest helps to develop a different awareness of fragility and sustainability of Venice..." (Stefano Marchioro).

Similar opinion was expressed about the EU level by István Ujhelyi that politicians have been dealing with tourism-related issues only since the appearance of these protests at the local levels. However, the recognition at the EU level has not only been achieved by Venetian protests, but also by demonstrations in other cities, like Dubrovnik or Barcelona.

Therefore, the demonstrations of Venetian people seem to be the consequences of the lack of management of both tourism and the problems emerging from its growth. The protests of locals, thus, cannot be seen as ‘anti-tourism’ sentiments, they could be regarded more as ‘pro-management’ views highlighting the problems connected to tourism that should be managed and dealt with. The demonstrations seemingly raised awareness both at the municipal and EU levels of the different tourism-related issues and the necessity to manage the industry.

Conclusion

The present study attempted to explore the negative impacts of tourism in Venice and explain why they have emerged. Besides, the reasons for the different social movements in the city were also explored.

The paper has shown that serious tourism-related issues are present in Venice. The anticipation of van Der Borg (1992) that the negative impacts of tourism on the historic centre of Venice, such as the decrease in the population or the crowding out of economic activities, will be aggravated proved to be true based on the findings of this study. The following severe negative tourism impacts were identified: significant

decrease in the local population, crowding out of residents and traditional economic activities, cultural homogenisation, the disappearance of industries other than tourism, higher living costs, congestion and related traffic problems, issues related to cruise ships and issues related to the behaviour of tourists. The analysis presented that the different types of issues are often interconnected and closely related to each other, implying their complexities.

The reasons for the emergence of negative tourism impacts in Venice seem to be twofold: the expansion of tourism and the lack of tourism management. The almost constant growth of the city's tourism can be attributed to a large extent to the general expansion of global tourism as well as to promotion activities and the resulting world-famous reputation of Venice. The other identified source of negative impacts is the lack of management of tourism and its growth. It seems to be an acute problem that both the local government and the EU have so far disregarded the problems related to the expansion of tourism. Additionally, the findings of the present study also imply that day-trippers still have a big share of the overall number of tourists, in spite of prior suggestions (e.g. Van Der Borg, 1992) that the excursionist segment should be reduced to prevent the aggravation of negative tourism impacts. Recently, however, the local government seems to have recognised the necessity of managing tourism, but it is not reflected in its actions that are not deemed to be appropriate by local organisations.

The demonstrations of local people in Venice apparently emerged due to the lack of tourism management and the issues resulting from uncontrolled tourism growth. Thus, these social movements can and should be regarded as 'pro-management' rather than 'anti-tourism', as they do not seem to be against tourism, but for the management of tourism growth and the industry in general. It was also presented that these protests have raised awareness of the necessity to manage tourism, which can result in the beginning of a 'new era', when tourism is managed and its impacts are considered and tackled properly. Otherwise, with the disappearance of residents, traditional activities and industries other than tourism, the historic centre of Venice can eventually become a theme park – a more negative prospect for the 'new era'.

Venice may be an extreme case, but other similar social movements in other European urban destinations, such as Dubrovnik or Barcelona, insinuate that Venice is not the only city, where tourism-related issues are not managed well. However, it should be emphasised that all the cases should be treated differently, given that all the destinations and communities are different (Horváth, 2018) and we cannot generalise the findings of case studies, like the present study. The case of Venice well represents the necessity of the adoption of a new, proactive approach to tourism by political bodies. This approach should be adopted both at local levels (e.g. municipalities) and at international level (e.g. European Union) in order to prevent the emergence of tourism-related problems.

The findings of the present study can inform future research: as Deery et al. (2012) suggest, identifying the different negative impacts ('artifacts') can be the first step in a new stage of tourism impact research. In the case of Venice, following such a research agenda is urgently needed to understand tourism impacts on local residents and to get to know how and why they perceive tourism in certain ways. This is inevitable for the appropriate management of tourism in Venice.

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