# CONSIDERATIONS ON THE CULTURAL TOURISM MARKET AND CULTURAL TOURIST PROFILE

**Simona-Violeta ARDELEAN[1], Alina BADULESCU[2]**

[1]*Doctoral School of Economic Sciences, Faculty of Economic Sciences, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania*
[2]*Department of Economics and Business, Faculty of Economic Sciences, University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania*
[sjardelean@yahoo.com](mailto:sjardelean@yahoo.com)
[abadulescu@uoradea.ro](mailto:abadulescu@uoradea.ro)

**Abstract:** *The article proposes a conceptual analysis of the cultural tourism market and the profile of the cultural tourist. The way in which, depending on the different types of motivations, the cultural tourism market can be subdivided into a number of sub-markets or niche markets such as: tangible heritage (tangible), intangible culture (intangible), city breaks, tastings (food and wine), community tourism in which tourism experiences are managed by local communities and religious / spiritual tourism. Cultural tourists are individuals or groups looking for distinct experiences, focusing on visual arts and entertainment, architecture, cooking and crafts, often combining primary motivation with secondary motivation. Cultural tourism is linked to the profile of tourists, and here the generational component seems to be particularly relevant. Identifying and understanding the most appropriate tourist markets and the motivations and needs of tourists in travel experiences is a critical step in attracting tourists to tourist cities with cultural and heritage values. Cultural tourists validate the importance of heritage, arts and culture through experience in these destinations, and income from this type of tourism contributes to the prosperity of the community and local businesses, while supporting activities related to culture, art or local public services. The methodology used includes bibliographic documentation for the analysis, detailing and exemplification of niche markets of cultural tourism, as well as the investigation of the relationship between the availability of cultural goods and the motivation, typology and profile of cultural tourists.*

**Keywords:** *cultural tourism; cultural tourist; cultural tourism market*

**JEL Classification:** F63; L83; Z32.

## 1. Introduction

Cultural tourism is based on the mosaic of places, traditions, art forms, celebrations and experiences that define the diversity and character of destination places, and to a large extent the diversity and complexity of visitor experiences, expectations and

personalities. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation defines cultural tourism primarily in terms of visitor intent: "movements of people for essentially cultural motivations, such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art, and pilgrimages" (UNWTO, 2020), (UNWTO, 2021) but most perspectives emphasise the value and desirability of cultural activities as part of a rich, consistent and rewarding visitor experience. Destinations, especially urban ones, have the opportunity to present outstanding cultural activities and experiences, whether we are talking about the defined attractions of a particular place, the existence of cultural districts, opportunities to discover the history of a community to which visitors feel connected, or simply to travel cultural routes or trails that thematically link different attractions and destination points in a country, or in different countries.

## 2. Description of the product and market of urban cultural tourism

Cultural tourism refers to travel based on the intention or motivation to get to know, experience and learn about the culture of a country or region. The cultural tourism market can be divided into two main groups. On the one hand, tourists whose main travel motivation is related to culture and who represent only about 5-10% of all cultural tourists (CBI, 2021). These tourists are keen to learn, discover or experience local culture. For the majority of tourists included in cultural tourism flows, however, their main motivation is not predominantly cultural. They simply like or are curious to visit cultural attractions or enjoy culture as one of the activities they undertake to complement and diversify their trip or holiday. To give an example, this could be, for example, the 'sun and beach' tourist who stays in a resort in Tunisia and visits a religious ensemble and then a nearby Roman site and ends the day in a remote desert village, enjoying the hospitality and traditions on show. The traditional cultural tourist is attracted to the main cultural sights and attractions, and the market for this type of cultural tourism has grown considerably in recent decades and has caused overcrowding in many such destinations, resulting in the loss of their authentic character.

Probably also for this reason, an increasing number of cultural tourists are no longer attracted by crowded cultural attractions, preferring instead more personal, small-scale and authentic cultural aspects. Examples of this include artisanal and handmade products and unforgettable and truly memorable experiences that touch visitors in an emotional way and connect them with that place, the people and the specific culture (whether tangible or intangible), in short, attractions, products and experiences that are unique and cannot be found anywhere else.

Based on the different types of interests/motivations, the cultural tourism market can be subdivided into a number of sub-markets or niche markets, listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Niche markets and niche markets specializing in cultural tourism

| Niche market | Products and services offered | Examples and observations |
|---|---|---|
| Tangible heritage | Museums, art galleries, historical sites and areas, places of worship, buildings and constructions, architectural sights, other attractions and points of interest. | Malta's historical heritage, unique in the Mediterranean, is reflected in the country's architecture and national collections, heritage and cultural areas, restored fortifications, where past and present come together in an enduring and admirable lesson. Museums exhibit magnificent works of art from the early Renaissance to modern times. Another example is Songup Folk Village, on Jeju Island in Korea, which offers a cultural heritage with traditional lifestyles and historic landscape dating back more than 500 years. |
| Intangible culture (immaterial) | Music festivals and events, film, genealogy, battlefields, dark tourism, festivals and events. | Among the many traditional practices and customs still alive, authentic expressions of Greece's intangible cultural heritage are the "Veggera of Andros" (an impromptu traditional visit or gathering at a friend's house to meet and have fun), "Melekouni" of Rhodes (a traditional cake with sesame and honey), the famous pottery tradition of Sifnos, the famous outdoor festivals (panegyria) of Ikaria, the agricultural networks of Limnos and the Orthodox Easter tradition "Kalandira" of Nisysros. In South Africa, tours and performances are offered on the battlefield of Kwazulu Natal. |
| City breaks | City breaks - considered the best way to explore the history, culture and art of a place in a short space of time - leave powerful memories, snippets of local life and the chance to see some of the world's most iconic attractions and architectural sights. | With world-famous landmarks such as Big Ben, Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament, as well as museums and art galleries, London is a top cultural destination. Marakech, the 'red' city on the edge of the Sahara is exotic adventure, from the acrobatics and taming of Jemaa El Fna Square, to the noisy souks, the tiled courtyards of Bahia Palace, or the enchanting Majorelle Garden. |

| Tastings - Food and wine | Culinary festivals, gastronomic routes, culinary museums, food tastings, cooking classes, wine tastings, wine routes, wineries and vineyards, vegan tourism, visits to producers in local farmers markets. | There are many tour operators offering wine and culinary holidays and tours to Latin America, Africa or Europe. Among the many culinary and wine experiences offered by tour operators are preparing traditional local dishes with a local chef on the Greek island of Crete, visiting a cork factory and tasting olive oil in the Alentejo region of Portugal and exploring truffle fairs in Tuscany and helping to prepare and test dishes with this special ingredient. |
|---|---|---|
| Community tourism / Community-Based Tourism (CBT) refers to tourism experiences hosted and managed by local communities that are sustainable and responsible. | Accommodation and activities, visits to villages / communities, local festivals, learning local crafts, participating in community life. | In Tanzania, tour operators offer cultural experiences, village visits and wildlife viewing and share the profits from tourism with the local Maasai communities. Other examples include trips to small, eco-friendly settlements in the Rosalie rainforest valley in the Dominican Republic. The women, who are subsistence farmers, make unique, finely woven handicraft souvenirs (purses, mats, bowls, vases, picnic and laundry baskets, bread trays, wall decorations) which can then be purchased by tourists. |
| Religious / spiritual tourism | Pilgrimage, visiting a sacred place, church tourism / mosque / temple, missionary travel, worship, spiritual guidance, etc. | In Africa, the Vodun festival in Benin and the Osun-Osogbo festival of the Yoruba people in Western Nigeria are religious events that attract tourists from all over the world. The Ethiopian festival of Timkat (also known as Epiphany) is another world-famous attraction. The Chapel of the Apparition in Fatima, Portugal or the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, Spain are other well-known examples. |

Source: adapted by the author after (CBI, 2021), (UNWTO, 2021), (European Commission, Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, 2022)

## 3. Opportunities in cultural tourism

There are a number of general and practical guidelines and guidelines for carrying out these activities and businesses in tourism, especially important for tourism in

small communities with limited information and financial resources. The 2019 Kyoto Declaration on Tourism and Culture makes it clear that investing in cultural tourism is an investment in future generations, provides useful direction for innovatively using the positive potential of cultural tourism to sustain tangible and intangible heritage, enhance community capacity, generate inclusive wealth and strengthen capabilities (UNESCO/UNWTO, 2019). The Community Tourism Programme initiated by AirBnB provides financial support to innovative projects in local communities that encourage tourism in new ways to strengthen communities, empower citizens and preserve and promote local culture. One category of projects that local entrepreneurs and associations can apply to are festivals and events: projects "preserving or celebrating local festivals and events while introducing them to a wider, open audience to these events" (CBI, 2021).

Cultural tourism is not only profitable for large companies and established tour operators, it can offer interesting opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises, including businesses that would otherwise be excluded from tourism. This means that cultural tourism offers the opportunity to collaborate and build useful relationships with other businesses and organisations, both inside and outside the tourism industry. This approach to cultural tourism starts with what the community considers important, and what the community wants to show.

The community, local government, tourism and adjacent businesses in the receiving areas need to carefully and responsibly examine the potential cultural tourism offer in their area, and propose the development of real, well sized attractions and sights. Secondly, they must understand the motivations of the cultural tourist and try to shape a cultural tourism offer with elements of uniqueness and authenticity. Collaboration with other businesses and organisations in the community can generate synergy and a better presentation and promotion of the place to better attract tourists. Cultural tourism is not the only trend in tourism, so local organisers can think about creating intersections between cultural tourism and, for example, volunteer tourism, ecotourism, wellness or adventure tourism.

In order to provide the market with a specific cultural offer, it should not be forgotten that the contemporary tourist needs online presence and convenience. Social networks, integration into home-sharing operators, etc. are just some of these opportunities, revealing the need to strengthen the offer and enter the cultural tourism market well prepared.

Local communities should not forget that success in this form of tourism can be the first enemy of the medium and long-term sustainability of the tourism offer and business. Too high a presence of tourists in these communities can lead to the danger that cultural tourism will have a negative impact on culture and heritage and affect the long-term sustainability of both the tourism and cultural sectors. It is therefore important to define the limits of change that the community finds acceptable and to manage cultural tourism properly.

## 4. The generational profile of the cultural tourist

Understanding cultural tourists, their typology, motivations and profile is not straightforward, however, and as Hargrove (2014) expressively points out most people do not go on holiday saying "Today I'm going to be a cultural tourist!", but often their motivations, actions and activities are affected by the availability of cultural goods.

"Cultural" tourists are individuals or groups seeking distinct experiences that focus on visual and performing arts, architecture, cuisine, and crafts, and the difference between a cultural tourist and a local resident (difficult to determine, apparently, in the hustle and bustle of urban traffic) is often that these individuals travel to a destination for a specific purpose - visits, events, business, conventions, leisure - staying overnight in a hotel or even combining their primary motivation with others, secondary or chosen ad hoc, before returning home.

A much debated issue in the theory and practice of cultural tourism is the assessment of tourist flows, specifically, how much of the tourist flows are culturally determined. The most widely held view, based on UNWTO research and publications, is that purely culturally motivated tourists (specific motivation) account for a relatively small share of total tourist flows, around 10-15%. However, the share of tourists with significant cultural motivations in their overall holiday motivation is much higher, at around 40% (UNWTO, 2021), (European Commission, Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, 2022). While there is little dispute about the first figure, the second, of tourists combining cultural motivations with those of relaxation, visits to family and friends, health care, nature, etc., is divided. For example, according to a 2013 report by Mandala Research, 76% of all leisure travelers in the US engage in cultural activities and the market size is estimated at 129.6 million adults, who spend approximately $171 billion annually (Hargrove, 2014). In Australia, between 39% and 45% of domestic tourists are motivated by cultural and heritage attractions (Arts Hub, 2018), and in the UK research shows that although the majority of domestic and international tourists visiting the UK do not necessarily (self-)identify as cultural tourists, 57% agree that history and culture have a strong influence on their choice of annual holiday destination, and 62% are keen to see famous and well-known locations, the UK's vibrant and exciting cities (Audiences London, 2010).

The importance of knowing the size of the cultural tourism market also stems from the fact that these tourists usually spend more and stay longer than other types of tourists. For example, cultural tourists in the US spend 60% more, about $1,319 per trip, compared to $820 for domestic leisure travel (Hargrove, 2014). The cultural traveller also takes more trips than the average tourist in this country: 3.6 versus 3.4 trips annually, and numerous statistics, surveys and polls support this behavioural profile over more than two decades. In the UK, cultural tourists (mostly foreign) spend on average £560 per trip, more than 2.5 times more than domestic tourists with the same motivations, whose lengths of stay are shorter anyway (Oxford Economics, 2016).

Cultural tourism in its modern forms dates back to somewhere in the 1980s. Initially, cultural tourism was driven (in developed countries) primarily by the interest of the baby boom generation to visit major cultural sights and attractions such as museums and monuments, scenic settlements, often travelling in groups. Based on these findings, the image of the cultural tourist belonging (more or less) to this generation is predominantly that of middle- and high-income, well-educated people, with over 55% preferring leisure travel that also has educational and cultural components, interested in interacting with locals through "immersive experiences" (Hargrove, 2014), and over 40% of them being willing to pay more in distinctive, distinct forms of accommodation (such as boutique hotels, hostels, etc.) that reflect the culture of a destination.

Beyond this generation that has been carefully analysed in studies, and which has contributed to the strong growth of cultural tourism (Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI), 2020), but which will obviously shrink quantitatively over the horizon of the next decade, research in recent years highlights the growing impact of Millennials on cultural tourism. Of course, we are willing to accept the rather imprecise temporal and conceptual boundaries between all these generations (baby-boomers, millennials, centennials, X generation, Z generation, etc.) and, above all, the limited overlaps and correspondences between American and European or national perspectives on the composition of these generations. However, it is worth noting the efforts made by researchers and economic and social players to identify the characteristics and specificities of each generation and to adapt or design cultural and tourism products (and not only) for the specific characteristics of each generation.

Returning to the importance of new cohorts (generations) of cultural tourists, numerous studies, attempting comparisons between different generations, show that 73% of millennials "want to benefit from the cultural goods and artistic activities of a destination", being by far the most highly rated activity in terms of importance, even if cultural motivations and interests are also of high importance for baby boomers (65%) and generation X (68%). More than two-thirds of millennials also rated the "authenticity" of experiences as extremely important. Ethnically, racially and culturally diverse, open to technological innovation and communication, millennials (those born roughly between 1977 and 1994) represent the largest cohort since the Baby Boomers and are clearly the target of today's tourism policies.

We could say that the generations following the Baby Boomers, Generation Y (millennials) and Generation Z (centenarians) have shifted the demand towards more authentic, unique, small-scale and personal experiences, for a culture closer to everyday experiences. For these generations it is more important to "be somewhere" than "go somewhere", stating that "we want to do it our way, not their way" (CBI, 2021). As a rule, people from these generations prefer to travel alone (or with their families) and less in large, organised groups. In Figure 1 below we schematically present a number of general features of the contemporary cultural tourist.
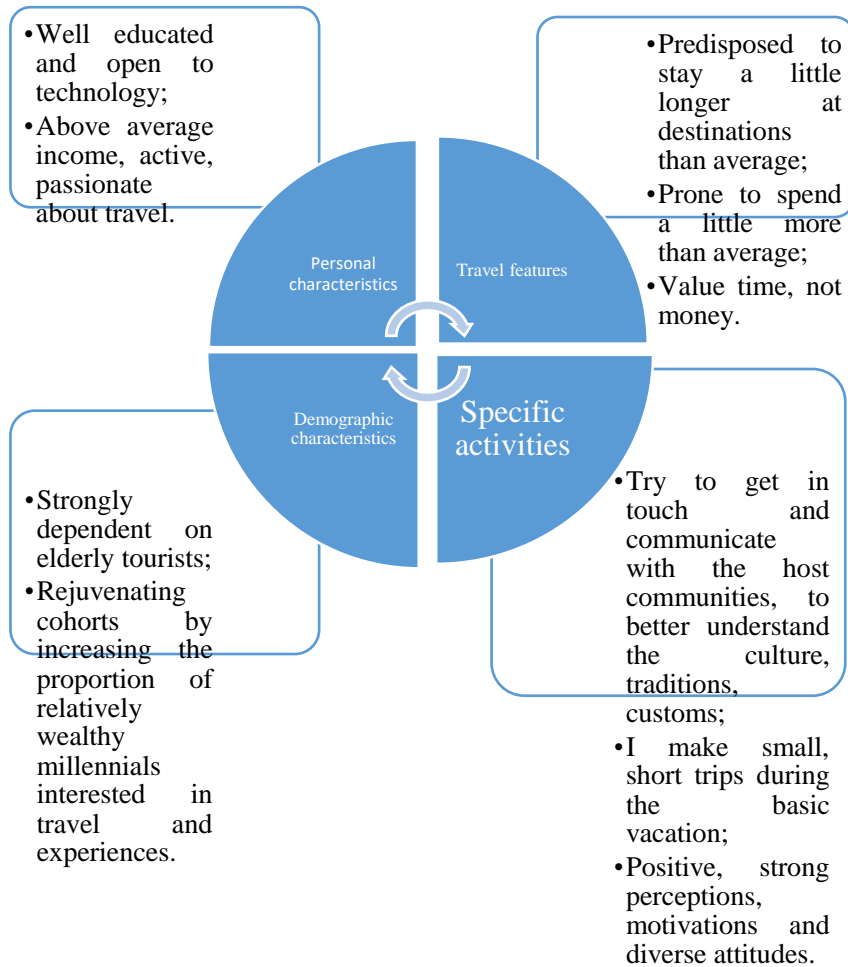
- Well educated and open to technology;
- Above average income, active, passionate about travel.

- Predisposed to stay a little longer at destinations than average;
- Prone to spend a little more than average;
- Value time, not money.

Personal characteristics

Travel features

Demographic characteristics

Specific activities

- Strongly dependent on elderly tourists;
- Rejuvenating cohorts by increasing the proportion of relatively wealthy millennials interested in travel and experiences.

- Try to get in touch and communicate with the host communities, to better understand the culture, traditions, customs;
- I make small, short trips during the basic vacation;
- Positive, strong perceptions, motivations and diverse attitudes.

**Figure 1:** Cultural tourist profile
Source: adaptation from (CBI, 2021), (Hargrove, 2014), (Richards & van der Ark, 2013)

The different types of urban cultures and cultural attractions (and not only) are not sequential, but coexist in most cultural-tourist destinations. Thus, some tourists will limit themselves to a particular type of culture, such as lovers of classical culture, who will often be attracted by historic buildings, museums or classical concerts or traditional music. Others prefer to switch (voluntarily, or driven by impulses and opportunities) from one type of cultural experience to another, the so-called omnivorous consumption type described by Richards and van der Ark (2013). Thus, Greg Richards gives the example of Barcelona, where tourists like to think of themselves as 'cultural tourists', but who, after visiting Gaudi's 'iconic' attractions (Sagrada Familia, Casa Batllo, Parc Guell, La Pedrera) also visit the Camp Nou stadium or spend time on the beach in Barceloneta (Richards, 2018).
In other words the profile of the cultural tourist not only combines different types of culture, but the motivations for engaging in cultural tourism can also be mixed. A consistent research finding is that there are many more visitors with a general

interest in culture, but who see this as only one of many reasons for visiting a particular destination. This seems to be a confirmation of UNWTO (2018) research on cultural tourism, which shows that around 10% of cultural tourists are culture-specific tourists, directly motivated by culture in their decision to visit the destination, and the number of tourists who are also motivated by culture and other reasons, or who carry out cultural activities during their holidays exceeds 40% of all international tourists.

The Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS) notes that in recent decades, young people form a significant part of the audience for cultural experiences (2021). This seems to contrast with the traditional image of cultural tourists as predominantly older people. One explanation may lie in the rising levels of education in recent decades, which has given a boost to cultural consumption also among younger generations. Over 60% of cultural tourists surveyed by ATLAS have some form of higher education, and 25% have a postgraduate qualification, an unexpected side-effect of the 'degree inflation' affecting education in recent years (Richards, 2018). Young people are also more likely to be employed in cultural and creative occupations, and these are also linked to more sophisticated levels of cultural tourism. Moreover, a proportion of these young people interested in cultural tourism do not see it in contrast to everyday life, a regular escape from the banality of everyday life, but try to integrate it into their profession, ideas, career opportunities or future business, etc.

## 5. Conclusions

Cultural tourism is a huge opportunity, fuelled by a steady growth trend over the last decades, and there are, at least for the time being, no signs that this trend will slow down in the coming decades. As of 2018, it is estimated that at least 40% of all tourists worldwide can be considered cultural tourists (World Tourism Organization, 2018), and with all the quantitative decreases in tourist flows in the recent pandemic period, we have no reason, nor any particular data, to question the preservation of this percentage in the last few years (2019-2021). Culture is one of the most important motivations for the majority of international tourists, especially European ones. Cultural tourists, regardless of their origin, are more likely to travel by air and provide more economic benefits to host areas, as they tend to stay (and consume) longer in those places than regular tourists. Cultural tourism can help preserve the tangible and intangible heritage of host communities, provide opportunities to develop all kinds of creative activities and offer tourists memorable and authentic experiences.

## References

1. Arts Hub, 2018. *Feeling the impact of cultural tourism beyond the majors.* [Interactiv], Available at: https://www.artshub.com.au/news/features/feeling-the-impact-of-cultural-tourism-beyond-the-majors-256541-2360895/, [Accessed 28 02 2022].

2. Badulescu, A., Badulescu, D., Simut, R., & Dzitac, S. (2020). Tourism–economic growth nexus. The case of Romania. *Technological and Economic Development of Economy*, *26*(4), 867-884

3. Badulescu, A., Badulescu, D., & Borma, A. (2014). Enhancing Cross-Border Cooperation through Local Actors' Involvement. The Case of Tourism Cooperation in Bihor (Romania)-Hajdú-Bihar (Hungary) Euroregion. *Lex Localis*, *12*(3), 349.

4. CBI, 2020. *The European market potential for diaspora tourism,*. [Interactiv], Available at: https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/tourism/diaspora-tourism/market-potential, [Accessed 02 03 2022].

5. CBI, 2021. *What are the opportunities on the European Cultural Tourism market?*. [Interactiv]
Available at: https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/tourism/cultural-tourism, [Accessed 12 02 2022].

6. Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI), 2020. *What are the opportunities on the European baby boomer tourism market?*. [Interactiv], Available at: https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/tourism/baby-boomer-tourism, [Accessed 02 02 2022].

7. European Commission, Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, 2022. *Cultural Tourism.* [Interactiv], Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/cultural_en
[Accessed 22 01 2022].

8. Hargrove, C., 2014. *Cultural Tourism: Attracting Visitors and Their Spending,* Washington D.C.: Americans for the Arts.

9. Oxford Economics, 2016. *The impact of heritage tourism for the UK economy.* [Interactiv], Available at: https://www.oxfordeconomics.com/recent-releases/the-impact-of-heritage-tourism-for-the-uk-economy, Accessed 17 02 2022].

10. Richards, G., 2020. *From cultural to creative tourism: Sharing the material world through craft.* webinar, World Crafts Council Europe webinar on Craft and Tourism, November 27th, 2020.

11. Richards, G. & van der Ark, A., 2013. Dimensions of Cultural Consumption among Tourists: Multiple correspondence analysis. *Tourism Management,* Volumul 37, pp. 71-76.

12. Sharmin, F., Sultan, M. T., Badulescu, D., Badulescu, A., Borma, A., & Li, B. (2021). Sustainable destination marketing ecosystem through smartphone-based social media: The consumers' acceptance perspective. *Sustainability*, *13*(4), 2308.

13. The Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research (ATLAS), 2021. *ATLAS archive.* [Interactiv], Available at: http://www.atlas-euro.org/archives.aspx, [Accessed 12 12 2021].

14. UNESCO/UNWTO, 2019. *Kyoto Declaration on Tourism and Culture: Investing in future generations,* Kyoto, Japan: 4th UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture, 12-13 December.

15. UNWTO, 2021. *Tourrism and Culture.* [Interactiv], Available at: https://www.unwto.org/tourism-and-culture, [Accessed 11 12 2021].