

READING THE TOURIST DESTINATION: BIBLIOTOURISM AND PLACE PERCEPTION

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ABSTRACT

Bibliotourism is a recent concept and an emergent segment of cultural tourism. Considering both the phenomena of tourism increase and the passage from the information society on to the knowledge society, the role of public and heritage library faces new challenges and priorities. The building's architecture, the artistic bookshelves display, and the value of the collection may be offered as cultural values, determining the library as a tourist attraction. Furthermore, libraries may also assist in all the travel phases, from the preparation to the place experience and its memory preservation. Considering that the cultural tourism motivations are related to learning, experiencing and understanding the place's history, culture and heritage in both intangible and tangible components, libraries, as documental repositories, are crucial to support the tourist's information needs and demands. While traditional libraries are reinventing cultural mediation strategies to spread knowledge about those issues, namely by organising exhibitions and performative events, digital libraries, over the past two decades, have become crucial channels in obtaining information. By providing access to data through a range of resources and services in a very inclusive and ubiquitous manner, digital libraries are an essential tool to the tourism planners and consumers, and play a strategic role for the newest tourist generations, and mainly for the Generation Z tourists. Bibliotourism and tourism activities focused on libraries create mutual benefits and development opportunities, as the available knowledge enhances the sense of place and more immersive experiences. The research in this field is at a very early stage, and the theoretical framework is underdeveloped, even if some case studies have been presented in the last years. The main objectives of this paper, conceived as a descriptive study, are to provide critical analysis of the bibliotourism concept and to provide an overview of how to approach the public libraries functions from a touristic perspective. The methods used to achieve these objectives are based on bibliographic research, by confronting the term citations in the general and specialised press with its references in scientific journals, followed by the direct observation of the use of libraries by tourists, in the framework of a theoretical and empirical research model. The expected results are the creation of a new perspective about integrating libraries, cultural mediation and entertainment in leisure tourism and a contribution to the definition and description of a bibliotourism concept.

Keywords: Bibliotourism, Cultural Mediation, Cultural Tourism, Digital Library, Library, Tourist Experience.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of bibliotourism (or library tourism), as a segment of the cultural tourism, is based on the recognition of the libraries as tourist attractions and of its crucial role in choosing a tourist destination. The building's architecture, the artistic bookshelves display, and the value of the collection may be offered as cultural values, determining the library as a tourist attraction. Through the ages, libraries have been considered places of interest, because of their particular architectural, artistic or historical merit. Even if visiting libraries is a longstanding tradition, bibliotourism is a recent concept and an even more emergent segment considered in the context of cultural tourism. Although bibliotourism might be related to literary tourism, it must not be confused with the latter, which involves visiting sites associated with literary creations and their authors (birthplaces, environments where they had lived or visited, burial sites). However, bibliotourism may be related to literary tourism, as far as the library's collections are integrated into literary trails. Traditionally and like other cultural heritage institutions, such as museums and archives, repositories of knowledge and creativity, libraries are committed to make their collections available and useful to their users and to preserve them for future generations. However, libraries, and most of all, public libraries have been taking other skills to deeper involvement with the community. At the same time, users are no more only presential but increasingly virtual, pressing libraries to find a wide range of communication strategies appropriated for the new publics. While traditional libraries are reinventing cultural mediation strategies to spread knowledge about those issues, namely by organising exhibitions and performative events, digital libraries, over the past two decades, have become crucial channels in obtaining information. By providing access to data through a range of resources and services in a very inclusive and ubiquitous manner, digital libraries are an essential tool to the tourism planners and consumers and play a strategic role for the newest tourist generations, and mainly for the Generation Z tourists. So, library activities and functions are examined, from the conventional book warehouse to a place of informal knowledge and active citizenship, to observe possible lines of convergence with tourism.

The central purpose of this research is to analyse the potential contribution of the libraries to improve the tourist experience as a basis to describe the emerging concept of bibliotourism. According to this purpose, this research aims to explain how libraries have historically evolved and reacted to the cultural and social circumstances, to identify possible interactions between libraries and tourism and to understand how libraries may contribute to tourist experience and to define the 'bibliotourism' concept.

From the literature review (point 2) and critical analyses, theoretical results (point 4) are presented through the historical synthesis of libraries from the conventional book depository towards the extended function of knowledge creation (4.1), to explain the relationship between libraries and cultural tourism (4.2), distinguishing their role as a tourist destination (4.3) and as a services provider to tourism, to describe the emerging concept of bibliotourism (4.4).

Considering that the cultural tourism motivations are related to learning, experiencing and understanding the place history, culture and heritage in both intangible and tangible components, libraries, as document repositories, are crucial to support the tourist's information needs and demands. Whereas the library's mission is centred on providing services, generally related to the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, it is proposed, as a starting hypothesis, that the correlation with cultural tourism could be improved by gathering and delivering reliable information about the place and its cultural heritage. Libraries may also assist in all the travel phases, from the preparation to the place experience and its memory preservation. Public libraries are described as part of the community where

they are located, but their services extend beyond these boundaries. They are asked to increase knowledge of the territory. In this sense, libraries play a fundamental role in tourism, not only by providing services and events, mostly of free access but, above all, by promoting the relationship between tourists and residents, which are called to collaborate in the construction of narratives about of the place, its culture and its traditions. Thus, the library, while preserving and disseminating knowledge of the region, plays a crucial role in opposition to the processes of homogenisation and standardisation of offerings in tourist destinations.

Libraries contribute to local knowledge, broadly understood as the information acquired about a specific territory, a physical place or a community. It includes knowledge about history, anthropology and cultural heritage, both tangible (such as archaeological sites, monuments, historical buildings, museums, cultural spaces) and intangible (such as oral traditions, social practices, rituals, festive events, gastronomy, skills and objects or instruments therewith related). Local knowledge enhances the tourist experience, turning it more immersive in the so-called “spirit of the place”, or its distinctive atmosphere. In this sense, local knowledge contributes to preserving the authenticity of the place, defined as one of the most relevant values of visitor attractions.

Therefore, the definition of the concept of bibliotourism involves the affirmation of the library as a tourism product, but it also implies libraries commitment with these specific tasks: provide cultural services and facilities; establish connections between tourists and locals; promote knowledge of the place to increase the tourist experience.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural heritage has been appropriated by tourism (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Timothy, & Boyd, 2003; Timothy, 2014), while cultural heritage is perceived as a focal point of tourist attraction (McIntosh, Hinch, & Ingram, 2002; Domši, 2013; Adams, 2016; Urošević, 2019). A wide variety of cultural products emerge in tourist programming. Still, their stakeholders do not have the expertise in managing cultural heritage, which can lead to some situations of imbalance and conflict. However, tourism generates an economic and financial return necessary for the conservation and preservation of cultural heritage (Russo, & Van der Borg, 2002), while this is a relevant factor in local and regional development (Herbert, 1995; Nuryanti, 1996; Ballart Hernández, & Juan Tresserras, 2001), thus drawing the inevitability of collaboration between tourism and heritage institutions, where libraries are inserted.

In contrast to what happens with museums and heritage sites, the theoretical analysis of the involvement of libraries in tourism has been scarcely studied. Even the designation is not fixed yet, ranging between bibliotourism and tourism library.

The term “bibliotourism” has been appearing in non-scientific literature. Greg Zimmerman (2012, June 21) used it, by applying to travel through bookstores, while Sarah Anderson (2016, November 6) used it to talk about different “book-loving Portland” references. The term “bibliotourism”, with the sense of journey through libraries, seems to have appeared in the 2nd half of the 2010’s decade. Brenda Cronin (2016, July 19) used it in an article entitled precisely “Bibliotourism: Memorable rare-book troves”, published at the Wall Street Journal, where she proposes a way through some of Europe’s most relevant libraries. At an article in the Huffington Post, by Fleur Morrison (2017, June 25), “library tourism” appears in the title, while “bibliotourism” is introduced in the body of the text. After that, a non-signed post published in the digital magazine Faena Aleph, was entitled “Why practice ‘bibliotourism’ (and six of its most beautiful destinations)” (2018, July 23). Stephen Abram (2018, November 13), a librarian and executive director of the Federation of Ontario Public

Libraries, also adopted the term “bibliotourism”, to present “7 reasons why tourists should visit the library”. In the academic literature, the occurrence of the term is even more sparse, but it appears in article titles published at librarianship journals (Blasco, 2017; Adegbilero-Iwari, Owoeye, Odefadehan, & Christopher, 2019).

The expression “library tourism” is more frequently reported. When digital libraries were still emerging, Helmuth Bergmann (1996) wrote an article about returning to library tourism, but as an ironic option to the newspapers interlending problems. Alex Lainsbury (2019) wrote a chapter entitled “Library tourism” in a book which intended to provide an actual and broad view of the issues related to literary tourism. She presents a consistent analysis of library tourism “considering the role and value of a library to a destination and to the individual tourist” (Lainsbury, 2019: 106) and taking it into the wide range of possible intersections of travel and libraries. Tourism is viewed as a potential (Moiteiro, 2016; Tokić, & Tokić, 2018) or a new direction for the sustainable development of libraries (Li, & Liu, 2019).

The research in this field is at a very early stage, as well as the theoretical framework is underdeveloped. However, some case studies have been presented in the last years crossing tourism and libraries: at the library of Alexandria, in Egypt (Tosic, & Lazarevic, 2010); in Italy (Bovero, 2009); in Croatia (Smolčić-Jurdana, & Pintarić, 2012; Tokić, & Tokić, 2017) and, specifically, at the Zadar Public Library (Karuzza, Krajnovic, & Volic, 2017); at the Sofia city library in Bulgaria (Yankova, & Stoykova, 2016); in Brazil (Schamberlain, & Teixeira, 2018); in Iran (Seifi, & Kazemi, 2019); in India (Dharam, & Pardeep, 2017). Even if these studies, referring restricted research fields, cannot fill the gap in a systematic review of library’s fulfilment in providing tourism services in the context of the knowledge society, they offer an insight into the evolution of the library mission in this domain.

Although culture is not a global goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the post-2015 United Nations General Assembly in October 2016, the International Federation of Arts Counsels and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) and the Arts Council Malta hosted the 7th World Summit on Arts and Culture in Valletta, where 400 delegates from the arts and culture sector and representing 90 countries reflected on the theme “At the crossroads? Cultural leadership in the 21st century” (IFACCA, 2017b). One of the axes was the role of culture in sustainable development combined with the concept of alternative development. As well as in its preparatory document, “D’art report 52” (IFACCA, 2017a), which analysed the notion of cultural leadership from different perspectives, underlining how culture can play a leading role in driving positive social behaviours (IFACCA, 2017b).

The primary source of the study of the library’s mission is the documentation produced by International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), or in the context of events promoted by this international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users. In this field, the research crosses issues, combining librarianship (IFLA, & UNESCO, 1994) with access to information (IFLA, & TASCHA, 2019), digital libraries (IFLA, 2017a; IFLA, & UNESCO, 2018), and cultural heritage promotion (IFLA, 2009; Clausen, 2018, June 28), to confirm that “IFLA aims to encourage the safeguarding and respect for cultural heritage especially by raising awareness and strengthen cooperation and participation in cultural heritage activities” (Clausen, 2018, June 28) and, then, in tourism. So, libraries promote services, events and activities to tourists, as they are a large space of informal learning (Häggström, & IFLA, 2004; IFLA, 2016). The relation between libraries and tourism must be framed by the 4th Industrial Revolution challenges (Ahmat, & Hanipah, 2018). Under the IFLA Global Vision discussion, the Report of the public libraries section meeting how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future (IFLA, 2017b) stressed the role of the libraries in promoting the availability of open access to trusted information. Kirsten Drotner, as far as 2005, had analysed the role of public libraries

in the knowledge society age, in which it is possible to consider their use as a multimodal extension of tourist information centres (Seifi, & Kazemi, 2019), bringing a new dimension to bibliotourism.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research methodology has been designed as qualitative, analysing the relationship between libraries and tourism. Qualitative research (Gorman, & Clayton, 2005) was applied as a systematic and subjective approach to highlight and explain this relationship and to give it a proper meaning.

Bibliographic research (Snyder, 2019) and subsequent literature review (point 2) conducted to form the basis of the conceptual framework presented as research results (point 4). The conceptual research was conducted by collecting, reviewing, and analysing relevant information on the topics, aiming to propose new relationships among their constructs. The published data are collected from books, articles published in scientific journals, conference proceedings and reports, publications of international bodies and their subsidiary organisations, as well as born-digital online resources like websites, blogs, and bibliographic databases.

Considering the research design as “a plan for collecting and analysing evidence that contributes to answer the question posed” (Ragin, 1994: 26), the collected literature was reviewed according to the research objectives to obtain reliable results in a reasonable and justified manner. Bibliographic research was applied to confront the term “bibliotourism” and the expression “tourism library” citations in the general and specialised press with its references in scientific journals. The authors independently analysed the collected data and then examined and articulated the results to arrive at the main conclusions.

Flick has outlined the theoretical sampling as a powerful research tool and appropriate in qualitative research (2018: 174). As well as “a theory synthesis paper seeks to achieve conceptual integration across multiple theories or literature streams” (Jaakkola, 2020: 21) and “may seek to increase understanding of a relatively narrow concept or empirical phenomenon” (id., *ibid.*), the literature review contributes to summarise and integrate extant knowledge connecting tourism and libraries.

4. TOWARDS THE CONCEPT OF BIBLIOTOURISM

4.1 Library: From Book Depository to Knowledge Creation

In the so-called Romance languages, libraries are designated by words from Latin *bibliothēca*, originally from Ancient Greek *βιβλιοθήκη* (“*biblion*”, book, and “*theca*”, deposit). So, *bibliotheca* was, literally, the place where books are kept. While the concept of book has spread to a broader range of data media, the library has also taken on new strategies and functions.

The Great Library of Alexandria (El-Abbadi, 1990) was founded in Egypt by Ptolemy I Soter (ca 367-282 BCE) and built until the reign of his son and successor Ptolemy II Philadelphus (ca. 308/9-246 BCE). It was as part of the Mouseion, at the palatine complex, to keep documents according to the model of Aristotle’s library and his peripatetic school (Erskine, 1995), may be seen as a prototype of the functions, services and connection to a scholar community. The library, along with the deposit of books role, was a place for the creation and acquisition of knowledge. These functions have been fixed over time and

inform the actual concept of public library as a place for informal education and lifelong learning (IFLA, & UNESCO, 1994).

The 5th International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V, Hamburg, 1997), organised on behalf of UNESCO, expressed the need of:

Strengthening libraries and cultural institutions:

1. by continuing to fund museums, libraries, theatres, ecological parks and other cultural institutions, and by recognising these cultural institutions as adult learning centres and resources;
2. by promoting the conservation and use of the cultural heritage as a lifelong learning resource and by supporting the development of methods and techniques for strengthening heritage and cultural learning. (UNESCO, & CONFINTEA V, 1997: 24)

In the same vein and already supported by the Lisbon Strategy (Lisbon European Council, Lisbon, 2000), the European Commission prepared the document A memorandum on lifelong learning, advocating the reallocation of resources for the creation of learning centres in public spaces, civic meeting points or everyday use, including the library (Commission of the European Communities, 2000: 19). By then and following CONFINTEA V recommendations, IFLA launched the project “The role of public libraries in lifelong learning”. The conclusions, presented at IFLA Berlin Conference in 2003, argued that libraries, as a socially inclusive space, are a crucial factor in the development of continuing education, between formal education and broader learning systems.

In a society of lifelong learning public libraries will be nodes connecting the local learning setting – whether it is of a formal or informal kind – with the global resources of information and knowledge, public libraries can therefore play a role of fundamental importance in the development of future systems of lifelong learning (Hägström, & IFLA, 2004: 3).

Since then, the need for lifelong learning is on the top of the political agenda with direct implications for the library’s role in society as well as for the skills required of librarians. “In a society of lifelong learning - whether of a formal or informal nature- public libraries will be nodes connecting the local learning setting with the global resources of information and knowledge” (IFLA, 2016).

Kirsten Drotner analysed the role of public libraries along with the transformation from the information society into a concept of the knowledge society. The author argues that “libraries must move from defining their professional role in multimedia literacy centres encompassing information as well as entertainment, retrieval as well as production” (Drotner, 2005, para. 2). This mission implies an active collaboration with other civil society partners, without prejudice to the library’s specialised services in collecting, organising and making information available.

In the context of the fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0), cyber-physical systems (CPS), by encompassing technologies for automation and data exchange, enable integration and interoperability between real-world and virtual commands. It causes a paradigm shift in the concept of network with the active and direct contribution of all participants. Industry 4.0 has an imponderable impact on the library universe and the librarian profession. “Librarians should continuously be prepared to empower people in terms of knowledge and skill capabilities, especially by making them understand how the future world of technology works and become technology literate for them” (Ahmat, & Hanipah, 2018: 62).

Automation and artificial intelligence challenge the creation of new services and new operational and communication modalities. IFLA organised a discussion on this topic (IFLA, 2017b), where was pointed out this impact on libraries core values and missions.

Libraries enable literate, informed and participative societies. When we look at the future, according to the debates in our teleconference, libraries will be trustworthy information

brokers; will do more with new technology; provide universal access to information and scholarly works, whether it be media or information we already know or new media; preserving and providing access to information in all formats and providing trusted and effective support for political and social engagement. Libraries will be advocates for and facilitators of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, where people create their own devices and objects (Church et al., 2017: 3).

Among the missions committed to the public library, there are aims related to the heritage preservation and promotion: “promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations”; “providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts”; and “supporting the oral tradition” (IFLA, & UNESCO, 1994). Besides, the public library is obliged to provide information and attend to the different needs of all its users.

The public library has been compelled to promote meaningful access to information, equitably and inclusively (IFLA, & TASCHA, 2019). “The provision of access to information is the core mission of libraries. By acquiring, preserving and organising information and allowing users to read and apply it, libraries have long been at the heart of our cultural and research infrastructure” (Wyber, 2019: 17). This mission is the axis of the proposed link between library and tourism.

Considering the impact of changes on the concept of LLL, it is required to incorporate the different public profiles in the design of a library program and, so, the occasional and mutant users, such as tourists. Although the library remains centred on the local community, it extends its mission to this fluctuating and heterogeneous population, with different modes of behaviour, usage habits, as well as other skills, objectives and levels of knowledge. In this sense, tourism and, mainly, cultural tourism offers an opportunity for the dynamization and updating of library services, both in the context of LLL and in correlation with other memory institutions, such as archives, museums, and heritage spaces (Bovero, 2009).

Karen King and Martin Scarrott (1999) underlined the crucial role of the library in supporting tourism research, both by making information available and by providing research aids. At a time when digital libraries were still embryonic, they had already announced the importance of their access to updated information, namely through thesis and dissertation repositories. Tosic and Lazarevic validated these statements: “Libraries, as cultural institutions, are an important factor behind the development and improvement of cultural tourism. By digitalising their book holdings, libraries have become an important factor behind the social progress based on knowledge managed by digital technology” (2010: 109).

Recently and in a wider version of information availability, Giulia Crippa describes the library in a convergent culture framework, marked by “trasformazione delle strutture gerarchiche della conoscenza che si osservano nel passaggio tra l’uso della biblioteca come spazio fisico e tangibile, organizzata a partire dai campi del sapere della modernità occidentale, e la struttura – apparentemente priva di gerarchie – che l’accesso alle reti mondiali ci offre” (2017: 235). In this sense, it is not feasible to separate libraries and information sources from their reconfiguration on the various digital platforms, with a direct impact on the availability of information for tourism.

As knowledge-based organisations, libraries can be put into service of tourism as centres of information about the heritage, culture and traditions of their places. “The closer the libraries are to these tourist attractions and historical monuments, the more successful they will be in benefiting from this situation” (Seifi, & Kazemi, 2019: 2). Therefore, “relying on new strategies and skills for survival and evolution in the world of information, the librarians should be able to expand and promote tourism services” (Id., *ibid.*), combining multimodal skills with its conventional functions in the context of cultural mediation.

Multimodal competences encompass the ability to access, but also to use mediated forms of communication; it denotes the ability to retrieve and receive but also to produce such forms of communication. And, most importantly, it signals that information is but one element in a multifaceted spectrum of mediated expressions that also encompass entertainment, interaction and performance (Drotner, 2005, "Multimodal literacy", para. 6).

Generation Z, meaning those who were born beyond the turn of the century, are digital natives, having been raised on the internet and social media and demand more from libraries than their predecessor. Digital libraries try to correspond to upcoming demands, by "taking advantage of the increasing convergence of communications media and institutional roles to create and disseminate digital content" (IFLA, & UNESCO, 2018). Interoperability and sustainability are the key to digital libraries to improve world-wide knowledge dissemination and access. Even considering the digital illiteracy and the lack of confidence in using digital tools (IFLA, & UNESCO, 2018) by target niche audiences, digital libraries are called "to collaborate with other cultural and scientific heritage institutions to provide rich and diverse digital resources that support education and research, tourism and the creative industries" (IFLA, & UNESCO, 2018). By providing access to data through a range of resources and services in a very inclusive and ubiquitous manner, digital libraries are an essential tool to the tourism planners and consumers and play a strategic role for the newest tourist generations, and mainly for the Generation Z tourists.

Certified heritage data should be standardised to ensure adequate storage and retrieval. To achieve this, the role of libraries and information professionals is crucial in providing services such as digitisation and digital publishing, data management and preservation, content production and research assistance. "Above all, they need to understand and follow the developments in the international sphere regarding the profession to discover ways of developing and offering innovative services and products" (Vassilakaki, Giannakopoulos, & Triantafyllou, 2019). Librarians become information professionals and, as promoters of heritage knowledge for tourism, they are also cultural mediators.

4.2 Libraries and Cultural Tourism

Over the last few decades, the concept of heritage, the new meanings attributed to heritage and the analogical or virtual media in which heritage is represented, has undergone substantial change, while the boundaries between high and mass culture are blurred (Roque, 2017: 337). Tourism and, in particular, cultural tourism are agents and effects of globalisation and the processes of de-differentiation and hybridity of cultural forms (Id., *ibid.*: 338). Mobility and cosmopolitanism, enhanced by tourism development, also promote the empirical, collective and subjective knowledge of peoples, places and cultures, even considering the associated risk of artificiality.

Like monuments and museums, so archives and libraries hold cultural artefacts that represent a significant part of the heritage of the communities in which they operate. Library collections document the meaning of cultural heritage, its evolution and transformations, as well as textual discourses, intertextualities, narratologies, and semantics clarify the significance of its intangibility. The way how the library exploits data from the collection, in the sense of organising, processing and making information available aiming knowledge acquisition, tends to consider the increasingly large, complex and diverse audiences.

At this point, it is possible to identify some axes of the activities of libraries due to tourism: the library, or the building where it is installed, as a tourist attraction; the library's documentary resources as a source of information for tourists; cultural mediation events and activities, such as exhibitions and conferences, with the potential to attract tourists.

“Indeed, not only their collections, but also the museums and libraries themselves, including their history and buildings, are a cultural asset that can enrich local communities and, alongside other heritage attractions contribute to tourism associated with a city or region” (Loach, Rowley, & Griffiths, 2017). While the architecture classifies the library as a heritage site and, as such, a tourist attraction, the library’s other two axes concern the creation of narratives that enrich the local tourist offer (Tokić, & Tokić, 2017) and enhance the knowledge about the travel destination, contributing to the place perception.

Libraries can be a factor contributing to the cultural tourism development in one region and play a relevant role in understanding the tourist destination and so in enhancing the travel experience. “When it comes to tourists, the cultural approach enables deeper, symbolic-emotional consumption of cultures rather than just meeting their needs. The approach also makes room for local people to participate in the development work of their home region” (Saraniemi, & Kylänen, 2011: 140). By providing access to the collections about the history and culture of the place, in the physical space of the library or in a virtual environment, libraries contribute to increase the knowledge of the site and support the tourist in the travel preparation, throughout the journey and in the consolidation of its memories.

The role of the library for tourism development is part of a broader plan for the cultural, economic, social and environmental sustainability. Cultural institutions, such as museums, libraries and cultural centres have been promoting the formation of think tanks, leading to the training of a group of leaders in different areas, which are reflecting on how to expand social participation and relate to community life (IFACCA, 2017a: 16). Along with community involvement, heritage preservation and dissemination are fundamental axes of cultural sustainability, combating eventual adverse effects caused by tourism in the place authenticity.

The heritage story line represented culture as temporally and spatially embedded (particular places and time periods), and cultural capital was considered to accumulate on a temporal scale. Thus, the meaning of historical stocks of culture and their importance for the future and cultural sustainability essentially concerned the continuation of this culture in a linear time perspective (Soinia, & Birkelandb, 2014: 216).

The preservation of heritage, being crucial, is therefore also a challenge facing the growing phenomenon of globalisation and, to some extent, the related commoditisation and de-differentiation (Roque, 2017). Katriina Soinia and Inger Birkeland also highlight aspects related to “human mobility (immigration and outmigration) and trade and their impacts on languages, ethnic heritage, identity, and the distinctiveness of landscapes” (2014: 216).

Despite all these assessments, recognition of the importance of cultural sustainability has had little impact on library policy and programming.

Yet to date there has been limited acknowledgment of the notion of cultural sustainability as an equal concern within sustainability policies for museums and libraries, and as a result, their work to sustain culture continues to be considered as subsidiary to demonstrating their contributions to social, economic, and environmental concerns (Loach, Rowley, & Griffiths, 2017: 187).

Concerning the cultural sustainability purpose, it is crucial to review existing policies and define new models of action (Loach, Rowley, & Griffiths, 2017), linked to the core functions of acquisition, preservation, and investigation of the collections. The purpose of cultural sustainability in the global homogenisation process is ensured to the extent that these functions are properly and properly fulfilled. The effectiveness of library activities and services related to the dissemination of heritage and culture for tourism contribute to an inevitable stimulus to the diversity, authenticity, and identity of places of destination.

4.3 Libraries as a Tourist Destination

The definition of the library as a tourist destination is not unheard-of and coincides with the very history of travel and tourism. Tour guides mention libraries as places to visit. However, they are mostly historical libraries or libraries installed in heritage buildings.

Some of them are magnificent repositories of art and culture. It is the case of the Vatican Apostolic Library, founded in 1450 by Nicholas V, the bibliophile Pope, from the libraries of his predecessors, where the immense documentary collection coexists with the works of art by Melozzo de Forlì, David and Domenico Ghirlandaio, in the Sistine Room designed by Domenico Fontana. Another example is the Laurentiana Library in Florence, designed by Michelangelo Buonarroti and with later interventions by Bartolomeo Ammannati and Giorgio Vasari. Others libraries were installed in convent spaces, maintaining the tradition of medieval scriptoria for the preservation of knowledge, such as the Casanatense Library in Rome. Some libraries were founded near universities such as the Sorbonne and Sainte-Geneviève libraries in Paris, the Trinity College library in Dublin, the Bodleian Library in Oxford, or the General Historical library in Salamanca. Still, others stand out for the importance of the collections, but also for the uniqueness of the building's architecture, such as the Royal Portuguese Cabinet of Reading, in Rio de Janeiro.

In Portugal, it must be mentioned the library of the Palace and Convent of Mafra and the Joanine library, at the University of Coimbra, both built in the 18th century during the reign of the king John V. Joanine library, named after its founder, features a great central hall decorated with elaborate ceiling frescoes, huge rosewood, ebony and jacaranda tables and gilt chinoiserie shelves holding some 40,000 books, mainly on law, philosophy and theology. Mafra library, considered one of the most significant Enlightenment Libraries in Europe, occupies a long barrel-vaulted room with wooden carved bookshelves holding about 36.000 leather-bound volumes dating from the 14th to the 19th centuries, many handbound by the convent monks. They are both tourist destinations, also due to the bat colonies who protect the books, by eating harmful insects.

In more recent times, the first Shakespeare and Company, a bookstore that also functioned as a library, opened in Paris in 1919 by Sylvia Beach. In the following decade, it became a centrepiece of modernist culture. There was possible to find literary works banished in the Anglophone world and to meet writers and artists of the so-called Lost Generation, such as Ernest Hemingway, Ezra Pound, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, or Man Ray. It was closed in 1940, during the Nazi occupation. Yet, in 1951 George Whitman opened another bookstore, Le Mistral, which also became a meeting place for Beat Generation writers, such as Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso and William S. Burroughs. In 1964 George Whitman renamed the store Shakespeare and Company, recovering the previous name given by Sylvia Beach. "From the first day the store opened, writers, artists, and intellectuals were invited to sleep among the shop's shelves and piles of books, on small beds that doubled as benches during the day" (Shakespeare and Company, 2016), establishing a close connection with tourism. Currently, it continues functioning as a bookstore and library with reading and lending services. The history and symbols associated with this library bookstore, especially after inspiring the film *Midnight in Paris*, de Woody Allen, make it one of Paris's tourist attractions on the "rive gauche", along the Seine, between the Sorbonne and Notre Dame Cathedral.

Like the historical libraries, also the recent library's buildings designed by renowned architects are poles of interest in travel routes. "The idea of architectural structures' potentially to attract attention to geographical locations is closely related to the idea of "starchitects" [...]. Such structures are highly visible, easy to mediate through imagery, and thus effective in attracting tourists and capital to particular places" (Strannegård, 2016: 48). These contemporary architectures include libraries such as: the Kings Norton Library

(1992), by Sir Norman Foster and Partners', at Cranfield University, in England; the Seattle Central Library (2004), by Rem Koolhaas &OMA's, in Seattle, United States; the Library and Learning Center (2013), by Zaha Hadid Architects, at the Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien (Vienna University of Economics), in Austria; or the recent Stadtbibliothek am Mailänder Platz (Stuttgart's public library), by Eun Young Yi Architects, in Germany.

In Portugal, one should refer to the Portuguese National Library, designed by architect Porfírio Pardal Monteiro. The building is a modernist architecture reference, within the framework of the Estado Novo ("New State", or the Second Republic, 1933–1974) massive official constructions. The set, conceived as an artistic whole with impressive stylistic uniformity, is decorated by some of the prominent artists of the time (Raul Lino, Guilherme Camarinha, Lino António and Leopoldo de Almeida, among others).

These examples validate that "libraries can be visitor attractions in their own right" (Lainsbury, 2019: 106). Monumental architecture has always been a reason for a journey and remains a strong attraction for tourism. The importance or uniqueness of architecture is a pretext for travel. "To attract tourists or gain cultural status, buildings must exhibit a radical difference of some sort" (Jenkins, 2006: 196). Given that architecture is a stimulus of tourism (Kaczmarek, 2016), libraries installed in building with a renowned architecture become tourist attractions because of these external features, which are marginal to their collections, functions and services.

In a society that is increasingly focused on visuality, architecture is not a misleading argument for promoting the library as a tourist destination, not in the usual category of literary tourism (Lainsbury, 2019), but for its heritage and architectural values. The places and buildings, whose images are broadly disseminated and popularised through specialised literature, social media and, now, through the internet and social networks, acquire an iconic quality, in the sense of visual and representational sign (Hershberger, 1970). In the motivations of travel, the desire to see something extraordinary (out of the ordinary or everyday life), is complemented by the desire to see what is already familiar (Specht, 2013).

The recognition of what was already implicitly known through its representation becomes an emotional experience and creates a deeper connection between the individual and what he recognises. The possibility of seeing in situ the thing that is known by images, as visual representations (drawings, paintings, photos, prints, films, videos), is a strong appeal to travel and contributes to stimulating the decision of the tourist. "The recognisable and memorisable iconography of buildings – that is the use of images – is crucial to tourist's world. And because of architectural icons has become an increasingly popular phenomenon" (Konrad, 2010: 228). The recognition of this value provokes the wish of validating the presence in a place identified as obligatory or unmissable (a "must-see place"). So, the tourist becomes a producer and disseminator of new images.

The search for a destination for its architectural relevance stems from several factors. "Recognition value might be one of the reasons, the tourist's search for the photogenic, another" (Specht, 2013: 44). The desire to document the presence in the places visited, through textual or graphic records, has always existed and photography follows the history of modern tourism, as "recognisable or beautiful architecture help to validate the tourist, proving their presence in a destination" (Lainsbury, 2019: 107). However, in the last decade, a new trend has emerged: the selfie, a photo of yourself, taken on the visited sites and made available through social networks. "Photographs of visited sites [...] are made available to a large audience in various places around the world. Travellers put their photos on social media sites almost immediately after they have been taken; they also write about their experiences in and impressions about the places they visit" (Kaczmarek, 2016: 87). This phenomenon, broadened on a global scale, generates a new information source that reinforces the iconicity of the place and increases its popularity.

To be considered as a tourist destination, the library identity may be perceived as a testimony of those who created and designed it, of the will and tastes of those who acquired and formed the collection, but also the purposes of those who, over time, sought knowledge there. The sedimentations that build the narratives of these buildings determine them as heritage sites and, therefore, as tourist attractions. However, tourism agencies generally do not recognise libraries as a place of interest, preventing them from being included in tourism development plans (Lainsbury, 2019). Similarly, they have been avoiding libraries from being included in their tourist itineraries.

4.4 Bibliotourism

In 2017, a HuffPost's article introduced the concept of library tourism, announcing, in the title, the hypothesis "Library tourism could be the next big travel trend" (Morrison, 2017, June 25). Considering the massive influx of tourists into cultural heritage sites such as museums, monuments and archaeological sites, and the resulting disorder, noise and fatigue, quiet and silent libraries appear as a viable and advantageous alternative by providing a break in an urban bustle.

Reflecting this contrast between overcrowded tourist attractions and the ambience of the library, journalist and travel writer David Laskin (2017) recounts an autobiographical experience lived in Venice on a springtime morning: by the second-floor terrace window of the Nazionale Marciana library's, he watched the crowd of noisy tourists below Piazzetta San Marco crowded into the Palazzo Ducale (Doge's Palace), while he had behind him the vast and quietly decorated reading room designed by Jacopo Sansovino, according to Titian's suggestion, with works by Tintoretto and Paolo Veronese, among others. Wondering what led him to visit libraries in Italy, where there are historical remains, architecture and exceptional works of art, he concludes: "Because, as I discovered in the course of a rushed but illuminating week dashing from Venice to Rome, Florence and Milan, the country's historic libraries contain all of those without the crowds" (Laskin, 2017).

However, the concept of library tourism is broader. It incorporates not only libraries in historic buildings or buildings with relevant heritage collections but also local and public reading libraries that have abandoned the primordial condition of heritage and depository guardians, as a space knowledge creation and dissemination of and spaces for community support. "Libraries can form tourist attractions in a multitude of ways, from their architecture, which can vary from some of the oldest within a city to strikingly modern, to their role as both a promotor and a purveyor of cultural enrichment" (Lainsbury, 2019: 106).

Thus, "bibliotourism" means the tourist activity centred on the library, when the tourist route includes the library as a crucial and determining element, but also when going to the library is an integral part of the journey because of the information it delivers, the activities it promotes and of the services it offers, contributing to the fulfilment of travel purposes and the traveller's satisfaction.

The project "Library Planet" (vd. <https://libraryplanet.net/>), developed by Christian Lauersen and Marie Engberg, Danish librarians in the public libraries of Roskilde and Gladsaxe, respectively, fit this concept of library tourism. The idea came to them in November 2018, when they were talking about "how it sadly always is the big historical and architectural flagship libraries you find in travel guides and you really have to look for the minor more 'normal' libraries that makes such a huge difference in their local communities – civic as academic" (Lauersen, 2019, August 16). The project, "a crowdsourc travel guide to libraries of the world" (Id., *ibid.*), is collaboratively developed, based on a community of contributors who share their travel experiences related to visiting libraries of any type, size and scope.

The first two libraries that were part of the project were the National Library of Portugal and the public library of Hvalsoe, Denmark. Despite the differences between typologies and objectives, they are “all united by the same values of education and life-long learning, equal access to information and knowledge, promoters of intellectual freedom and democracy, shared places for everybody and forces of social good” (Id., *ibid.*). The National Library of Portugal is described as “a castle or a fortress”, and this feeling “is empowered by the guards you meet at the entrance”, while “the bad signing gave me the impression of a library that didn’t wanted me to enter and explore and I often found myself in places where I was in doubt if I was allowed to be” (Lauersen, 2018, November 24). Although the author recognises the quality of the collections and, mostly, the cartography and praises the reading room, qualifying it as “beautiful and lightful”, the experience was “destroyed by the guard who shussss’ed us and showed us the exit door” (Lauersen, 2018, November 24). By contrast, Hvalsoe’s public library is described as an open and welcoming space, with a dynamic and interactive relationship with the community, called to participate in its programming and to contribute its own narratives to the preservation of the local memory: “The library is organisational and physical combined with the Lejre Archive that collects and preserves materials about the history of the municipality [...]. A key activity in the archive is activation of local volunteers” (Lauersen, 2018, November 25). Despite the subjective and caricatural tone, the comparative analysis of the descriptions of these two libraries suggests the confrontation between two library models, one of a heritage institution, closed and to some extent oppressive, and the other of a creative space open to the community.

However, the role of the library, whether heritage or public, has a propensity to combine both models. Following a trend that has been implanting in the last decades and that is also found in museums (Ballantyne, & Uzzell, 2011; Andersen, 2019), libraries tend to divert the centre of the patrimonial function from the object to the user, without neglecting the original role of custody and preservation of collections. Recovering the attributes identified in the Alexandria library, the library is reinventing itself, as its features and services, as a meeting place and a community civic site (Aabø, Audunson, & Vårheim, 2010; Aabø, & Audunson, 2012).

The public library is positioned not just as a place to borrow or read books or even to access digital material, but as a key community resource and facility which can act as a venue for community events and as an access point connecting individuals with one another, connecting people with their local communities, and connecting communities with wider society [...] (Goulding, 2009: 47).

It is precisely from this point, concerning the connection of the local community with society in general, that the concept of library tourism develops as a new way for libraries to act. So, libraries should be considered as a tool for deepening tourist knowledge of the culture and identity of the place. As part of a recent correlational study on cultural tourism and libraries in the Brazilian capitals with the most extensive tourist influx, Schamberlain and Teixeira (2018) find that the activities developed are mainly aimed at residents and, concerning tourists, are limited to the scheduled guided tour. Tourists who want to visit the libraries must do it spontaneously. They also consider that the institutional public support is incipient, both in terms of site promotion and facilities investment. In general terms, and although empirically, these results are replicable in other contexts. The proposals presented by the authors are also valid, arguing that libraries generate a greater understanding and knowledge of the place, as well of the local history, culture and heritage (Schamberlain, & Teixeira, 2018: 103).

The presence of new audiences recruited from outside the local communities, the way tourists want to experience heritage and culture, the emergence of new communication

models, the changing paradigms of society, all these factors call on the library to reinvent itself in its functions and services.

Tourists prepare the journey and increasingly collect destination information before travelling (Tosic, & Lazarevic, 2010). Libraries can play a relevant role in this by providing credible, relevant and up-to-date information online. During the journey, the library remains a source of privileged information, allowing access to its collections in physical or digital media. On the other hand, in a context of media proliferation, it assumes an irreplaceable role in the organisation of knowledge and its availability. Notwithstanding its specificity, it can apply museographic methods, by organising exhibitions that incorporate residents' memories, narratives and experiences, increasing their sense of belonging, while helping visitors to enhance their knowledge of the local culture.

The role of libraries in the context of tourist-local intermediation involves the incorporation of the community into the activities they promote. Still, it depends on the qualifications, skills and performance of librarians (Lankes, 2017). "In terms of the development of cultural tourism, not only technical equipment and capabilities of the library but also the library staff, play an important role, primarily librarians" (Tosic, & Lazarevic, 2010: 109). Providing a quality service involves the study and disclosure of the collections, but also local knowledge, community involvement and communicational strategies, within the library and in a virtual environment. This entails new responsibilities and requirements to the librarian, as well as an update of the library's mission, where tourism must be considered.

5. CONCLUSION

The concept of library tourism and the term "bibliotourism" to designate it are still scarce, especially on academic and scientific research, even if we may report some occurrences. However, these occurrences enable to confirm an emergent trend connecting library and tourism, while that scarcity validates the novelty of the phenomenon.

The analyses of the librarianship documentation mainly produced by IFLA, a leading and renowned international body of librarians, had confirmed that libraries are focused on providing access to data and promoting access to knowledge. A library is a place of informal education and lifelong learning. Digital libraries have the potential to provide resources, ensuring the data availability and sustainability, for supporting e-learning and meeting the new generation's requirements.

The missions of the library concerning not only the preservation but also the knowledge dissemination, committed with the ongoing transformation of society, allow us to confirm its potential to supply services to new and enlarged audiences, which include tourists. The library also sees itself as a cultural mediator between residents (contributors to knowledge), and tourists (receptors of the information produced), creating new dynamics in the perception of the tourist destination. Therefore, the research hypothesis is valid, by confirming that the services provided by the library underlie its relationship with tourism, with relevant benefits. By increasing the knowledge of the local, it enhances the sense of place and, so, the quality of the experience, more immersive and memorable.

The concept of bibliotourism (or library tourism) involves two complementary, but not necessarily simultaneous, aspects:

- Library as a tourist destination, when the building where it is located, as well as its collections, are recognised by their cultural heritage value;
- Library as a tourist information office, when the cultural mediation services provide strategies for the site knowledge and interpretation, including the integration of residents' memories and narratives.

The library assumes a specific role in the context of cultural institutions by promoting the identity of the place and the peculiarity of its cultural manifestations. So, the library may act against the globalisation and homogenisation that tends to characterise contemporary tourism practices. In turn, the recognition of the library mission, roles and functions could have practical implications on the tourism industry, while offering additional interests and services that enhance tourist experiences.

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