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Sustainable tourism as a driving force for branding Gjirokastra

Creative Tourism and Tourism for All,

as enhancers of Cultural Tourism

in achieving sustainable development

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To Astrit and his patience

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Abstract

Although we are well into the 21st century, our cities are still governed by political, environmental, economical and social problems. With globalization spreading all over the world, these issues are not local anymore; instead they are quickly becoming evident at a global scale. As a consequence, cities, places, destinations are suffering the effect of an increasing standardization and the declining quality of urban spaces, followed sometimes by loss of identity, structure and meaning. This has pushed researchers and experts to investigate issues of space and places as means of correction by offering new marketing tools focusing in Branding Places, especially Cultural Heritage sites. In disposition to these common trends, nowadays there is an increased competition between different countries and cities throughout the world in attracting investments and investors, followed by local and government policies, which leads cities to implement marketing and branding strategies almost every year. Albania as many other countries in the world, is also know of holding many potential regarding tourism development. Beside the fact that for the past ten years Albania has been trying to create a brand for attracting more investments, and attention as a touristic attraction attempting to build up a tourism brand, the country is still lacking many basic resources and new methodologies in transitioning from an aggressive tourism (intervention to the landscape, cultural heritage, environment) to more sustainable tourism trends in branding the country and especially Gjirokastra. Referring to the standardization of cultural tourism as a simple mean of branding a place, in accordance with change in tourists' motivations and interest, has resulted in identifying and developing new trends and forms of sustainable tourism worldwide: such as cultural tourism experienced through cultural routes; creative tourism, and accessible tourism, as new forms which avoid mass tourism and the "Mathew Effect" of places enhancing new possibilities of the applied place with social, economic, and environmental benefits.

Similar to many other destinations that have been working on basing their branding methodologies relying to new trends of sustainable tourism which have gained contribution to the economical and cultural activities of the area applied, this research explores the possibility and means of transforming Gjirokastra in an sustainable tourism destination by creating a winning strategy for long-term sustainability of the region, potentially impact the visitor experience and at the same time enhancing the economical, social, and environmental factors of the area.

Key words: Branding, Sustainable Tourism, Cultural Routes, Creative Tourism, Tourism for All

1.1 Motivations

This research was conducted as part of the joined PhD programme between POLIS University in Tirana, Albania and the University of Ferrara, Italy. While attending some interdisciplinary activities of University of Ferrara and POLIS, sustainability, culture, heritage and branding sustainable projects were brought up into discussion, which soon became potential keywords (Sustainable Tourism, Cultural Routes, Creative Tourism, Tourism for All, Branding Places) in researching furthermore the sector of tourism, with special focus in Gjirokastra, Albania.

Referred as a Western Balkan country, Albania and the rest of the WB countries are rich in natural; historical and cultural resources, which form the backbone of the tourism industry. However the percepted image that the region has gained for many years, due to political disputed, economical issues etc, has gained Albania and the rest of the countries of the WB, a bad and vague image perception, in terms of tourism attraction.

Gjirokastra,one of the most important touristic site of Albania is a great historical Albanian city with great potentials in attracting visitors, also inscribed by UNESCO as rare example of an architectural character typical of the Ottoman period. Although recognized as a product under the UNESCO brand, one of the main problematic's related to the area (compared with Tirana), stays in the lack of non-holding visitors through the entire year, thus making the spring summer season the only period of time when the city is fully activated. This is a common phenomena for cities the size of Gjirokastra, which do lack in experience in valorising and fully activating their potentials as historic cities.

For the past ten years Albania has been trying to create a brand for attracting more investments, and attention as a touristic attraction. However, with all the attempts in building up a tourism brand, the country is lacking many basic resources and new methodologies in transitioning from an aggressive tourism (intervention to the landscape, cultural heritage, environment) to a more sustainable tourism trends in branding the country and especially Gjirokastra.

This has increased the motivation in researching the right path which sustainable tourism can be developed in Albania focusing on the case study of Gjirokastra through new trends of sustainable tourism, such as cultural route intervention in regards of cultural tourism; creative tourism; accessible tourism, in establishing a solid branding ground to latter on be used as a marketing tool to promote Gjirokastra, and Albania in international level regarding the tourism sector.

1.2 Research context

The standardization of cultural tourism as a simple mean of branding a place, in accordance with change in tourists' motivations and interest, has resulted in identifying and developing new trends and forms of sustainable tourism worldwide: such as cultural tourism experienced through cultural routes; creative tourism, and accessible tourism, as new forms which avoid mass tourism and the "Mathew Effect" of places enhancing new possibilities of the applied place with social, economic, and environmental benefits. Thus, many destinations have been working on basing their branding methodologies relying to new trends of sustainable tourism which have gained contribution to the economical and cultural activities of the area applied. Small capacity countries such as Albania and other WB countries, are desperate cases which can never compete in relation to Western European countries not only in the attraction of mass tourism, but also economically and socially. Nevertheless, small cities such as Gjirokastra full in cultural and natural heritage potential thrive to compete economically and socially with bigger cities (Tirana, Shkodra, Durres) within the Albanian territory. The phenomenon of branding of places, cities, thus does not attract and activates peoples persuasion outside the territory of a country or region, persuasion occurs also within a common territory creating competitiveness between big cities and small ones. Thus by researching new trends of sustainable tourism, the defined "new products" will urge in activating small cities within the Albanian territories to define themselves through these sustainable tourism products building up branding methodologies (in this case Gjirokastra) to be applied according to their true cultural potential. Although this research applies only to the region of Gjirokstra, the methodology and result can also be applied and tested to other small cities or town in the WB countries.

Nevertheless, this research also comes at a time when many experts, researchers and Albanian governmental entities are now paying attention to the role of developing sustainable tourism in terms of economic growth for Albanian regions. Experts have been trying to develop a strategy for the development of tourism without taking in consideration new tourism trends, which not only benefit to the sustainable tourism sector, but has a high impact in the social context and urban and landscape image of the territory. Although, Albania has and is facing many political, economical and social problems, this fast-growing area is becoming more and more important for economic development.

This research aims to contribute to this new trends (cultural tourism / cultural routes; creative tourism; accessible tourism) of sustainable tourism trend being proposed as a solution for branding Gjirokastra, a reinvention of culturally/creativity/accessi-

ble destination for all in a time of severe economic crises, putting Gjirokastra and its region on the map. This research finds grounds at a time when the responsible entities for developing tourism strategies has been presented and is urging the need of alternative methodological approaches towards branding destination, places, cities as a fairly new topic, especially for the Albanian contexts and the Western Balkan countries.

As the data of this research show, the research done emphasises the need of creating sustainable tourism as the right tool in fostering a sustainable economy, environment, and social development, seen as a potential branding tool for the right image construction for the county and especially Gjirokastra. In places and cities where the local economy, environment, and social development lack in supporting the basis for creating a brand, rather than applying unnecessary marketing means for a place, a branding strategy focusing on potentials should be seen as an introductory tool in fostering furthermore the image of a city or region in Albania.

1.3 Research purposes and Practical Implications

Sustainable tourism trends in Gjirokastra thus need to be mapped, networked, coordinated to brand the city aiming in achieving a leading position in sustainable tourism and improve its economic development and competitiveness in Albania.

Thus,this research aims to propose a strategy for sustainable tourism in Gjirokastra, stressing the role of cultural routes in regards of cultural tourism; creative tourism, and tourism for all, as main enhancer of not only sustainable tourism but also the build environment of the city and its region, defining a new brand.

Thus the main research questions for this thesis consist in:
• How can Gjirokastra, Albania, a UNESCO site rich in cultural heritage resources be branded through sustainable tourism trends in achieving an authentic experiences of the place?
Secondary question related to this research that will try to answers more deeply the main thesis question focus on:
• What is branding, and how does it relates to cities, places?
• What are some of the sustainable tourism trends applicable for Gjirokastra?

In order to help to answer these questions, several case studies and literature review are researched in each of the topic of sustainable tourism (cultural routes, creative tourism, tourism for all), to find common points with this research, in order to answer the above questions. Regarding the branding of places and cities, litera

ture review about this topic is conducted with exploring the relationship and linkage between branding and tourism. An in-depth research about Albania tourism and its neighbouring countries in the Western Balkan is done, through statistical data regarding tourism. Gjirokastra is elaborated furthermore with an overview of the current economical, demographics, feasibility and research situation of the county, followed by a SWOT analyses and questionnaire regarding tourism development, social and economical factors. Trends of what tourism in Gjirokastra consist are also highlighted, showing that the acquired entities dealing with development tourism in Albania lack developing strategies of tourism based on the potentials of the site.

This research follows the rationale that the tourism sector is of great importance for economic development in any region and that sustainability can be applied to that, creating distinctive value for destinations. It also shows that there is potential in Gjirokastra to develop sustainable tourism as a branding methodology.

1.4 Chapters review

This research start with a broad description of the touristic image of Albania (Chapters 2), its location, climate, natural and cultural heritage of the country. Data concerning physical capacities and tourism development during the period of 1990-2011 are illustrated in order to understand Albania's tourism development from a closed destination to a welcoming one. As far as tourist perception of Albania, unique selling point analysis main strength and weaknesses are elaborated to set the grounds for the possibilities and opportunities that Gjirokastra offers in term of being one of the most recognized places in Albania. Furthermore, touristic comparison of data is made between Albania and neighbouring countries in order to evaluate Albania's position in the tourism market.

From evaluated data regarding the economical and social development of each county in Albania, Gjirokastra results as one the most undeveloped counties (economical, social) due to migration and immigration factors. Based on this data, chapter 3 highlights the county of Gjirokastra touristic potentials, economical state, demographics, past project feasibility in relation to tourism and the potential of the actual research for the county. Same as in chapter 2, a general overview of how Gjirokastra is marketed through national and international websites, is illustrated, accompanied by a questionnaire done during this research. In addition to this, a SWOT analysis is conducted with the focus in finding the main strengths, weaknesses and potentials of the county.

Chapter 4 explores the general concept of branding, where further on focuses in

banding cities, places, destinations literature in creating an overall idea of how do city branders and managers foster the image perception of tourist about certain places. This chapter also overviews the relationship between branding cities and the tourist gaze, residents and research based on the built environment, hallmark events and famous personalities as acupuncture points of attracting tourists.

As chapters 2 and 3 set the overall state of Albania and Gjirokastra situation in regards to tourism development, and chapter 4 creates the basis of branding, chapter 5 consists in exploring the main principles of sustainable tourism. Although sustainable tourism is a very wide subject, three sustainable tourism trends are elaborated in this chapter as means of being used as a branding methodology for Gjirokastra. As the main three principles of sustainable tourism stand in three main pillars of environmental sustainability, economical and social sustainability, cultural routes are seen as enhancer of environmental sustainability; creative tourism as enhancer of economical sustainability, and tourism for all as an enhancer for social sustainability. For each identified sustainable tourism trends, specific case studies are given and taken as a potential reference for Gjirokastra. Identified upon cultural and natural heritage potentials that the area of Gjirokastra has, cultural routes are the first component elaborated as a direct product of cultural tourism. Included in this part of the chapter, specific approach on how cultural routes are created, elaborated and applied are portrayed. In terms of economical development, creative tourism approaches, components and application are portrayed. Tourism for all, seen as an enhancer of social sustainability, is elaborated and followed with specific case studies implemented in the recent years. For each of these components, final remarks are made out and taken into account in developing sustainable approach in branding Gjirokastra as a sustainable touristic destination.

Chapter 6 consists of the main methodology derived from chapter 4, and applied to the case scenarios of Gjirokastra. Actual input of how the three main enhancers of sustainable tourism could be applied is given through alternative schemes, where each of the elaborated sustainable tourism trends are integrated into forming actual suggestions.

Finally, chapter 7 consists of the main conclusions regarding the development of sustainable tourism in Gjirokastra as a methodology of banding cities, places and destinations, hence, potentially applicable to other regions in the Albanian territory, as well as the limitations and difficulties felt during its development and clues for future research are given

Chapter_2

2.1 Introduction

This research start with a broad description of the touristic image of Albania (Chapters 2), its location, climate, natural and cultural heritage of the country. Data concerning physical capacities and tourism development during the period of 1990-2011 are illustrated in order to understand Albania's tourism development from a closed destination to a welcoming one. As far as tourist perception of Albania, unique selling point analysis main strength and weaknesses are elaborated to set the grounds for the possibilities and opportunities that Gjirokastra offers in term of being one of the most recognized places in Albania. Furthermore, touristic comparison of data is made between Albania and neighbouring countries in order to evaluate Albania's position in the tourism market.

2.2 Albanian Touristic Image

Situated in the Southeast Europe, Albania is bordered by Montenegro to the northwest, Kosovo to the northeast, Republic of Macedonia to the east, and Greece to the south and southeast, the west with the Adriatic Sea and south west with Ionian Sea. As far as Tourism, is one of the main enhancers and promoter for the developing a country branding image, nevertheless this applies also to many regions within a territory and cities. Characterized by many archeological heritage from Illyrian, Greek, Roman and Ottoman times, mesmerizing southern riviera, natural and urban landscape, extreme layers of history, and unique traditions and hospitality, Albania was ranked in 2011 by Lonely Planet as the 1 destination to be visited in (Lonely Planet, 2011). Referred also as the "Last Secret of Europe", Albania has gained a lot of recognition as a touristic destination, especially due to its rich cultural and natural heritage, hospitality, and the famous Albanian Riviera in the south of the country. According the data's obtained form the Ministry of Economic and Tourism Development, international tourist visiting Albania are categorized in two groups a) Ethnic tourist from Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Greece, Italy; and b) Foreign Tourist mostly from Central and Eastern Europe, in particular from Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, tourists from Western European countries such as Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, France, UK, Scandinavia, and others including the United States tend to visit Albania (MTKRS, 2016). Hence, tourism in Albania is seen as a growing sector with more tourists visiting the country every year. Due to the high potential of tourism that Albania has gained through the last 10 years, most of the tourism development is focused in the Albanian Riviera during the summer season, thus enhancing returns of many emigrant during this time of year, developing the tourism sector in this areas and coastal tourism segment. Neverthe-
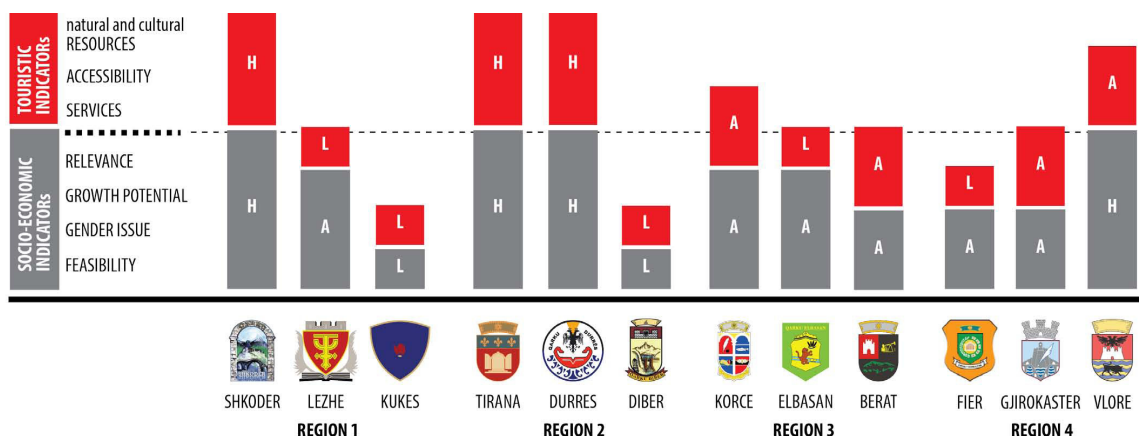
Fig.1 "*Comparison of county indicators*". **Source:** "*Regional Tourism Comparative Analysis In Albania*", (Aida Ciro, Enrico Porfido, Peter Nientied, 2016)

less, apart form the popularity of the Albanian Riviera as a seasonal touristic place to be, the city of Tirana, Durres, Shkodra, Berat are also know for attracting tourist due also to existing infrastructure. Nevertheless, Tirana, Durres, Shkodra, Fieri, Vlora are also considered places which people from the Albanian territory tend to make a home for themselves, due to their higher economical and social opportunities. This has created a gap of many factors on why some cities and towns in the Albanian territory tend not to develop economically and socially, thus disabling also the tourism sector due to emigrants both tending in leaving Albania or smaller town and cities aiming for the capital. In an recent report conducted by POLIS University regarding "Regional Tourism Comparative Analysis In Albania", (Aida Ciro, Enrico Porfido, Peter Nientied, 2016), based on socio-economic indicators and touristic indicators; Tirana-Durres-Shkodra based on both indicators ranked as High, and only Vlora ranked Average based only in the touristic indicator; Korca-Berat-Gjirokastra ranked Average on both indicators; Lezha - Elbasan - Fier ranked average on socio-economic indicators and Low on touristic indicators; whereas Kukes - Diber were the only ones ranking Low regarding both indicators. This indicates and proves that some of the bigger cities in the country tend to be the main drivers of the tourism industry also. In regards of developing furthermore the tourism sector and apart form the results conducted by POLIS University, as far as cultural resources in the country the county of Gjirokastra holds on to 206 cultural resources and 110 natural resources and the country of Vlora with 210 cultural resources and 95 natural resources identified by the Ministry of Culture compared to the rest of the counties.

County	Berat	Diber	Durres	Elbasan	Fier	Gjirokaster
Cultural Resources	112	64	57	134	44	206
Natural Resources	46	106	21	47	39	110

	Korce	Kukes	Lezhe	Shkoder	Tirane	Vlore
	161	37	25	153	185	210
	89	60	38	94	28	95

Table.1 "*Cultural and Natural resources of counties*". Source: Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Enrolment

Recent publication regarding development in Albania, such as "Albania 2030 Manifesto" (B.Aliaj,E.Janku; L.Allkja; S.Dhamo, 2014); "Durana" (POLIS_Press, 2014); "Albania Riviera" (POLIS_Press, 2016), have increasingly aimed in fostering tourism as one of the main actors in the development of the territory, presenting conclusion which intended apparent implementation in regards of a national system of accessibility sensitive towards environmental, historical, cultural values with the uniqueness of the territory and landscape.

Beside noticeable potentials of "*sun & sand*" typology of tourism in the Albanian Riviera, Albania offers many other interesting alternative of tourism inside its territory, such as: cultural tourism; heritage tourism; religious tourism, nature tourism; landscape tourism. Beside the development of coastal tourism in the country, two of the main regions of Albania are surrounded by the largest lake in the Balkan Penisula "Shkodra Lake", and the deepest in Europe "Oher-Prespa Lake". Nevertheless, the overall territory is highly composed by small networks of lakes and many artificial reservoirs potentially serving as touristic potential. Rich in archeological heritage of Illyrian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Venetian, and Ottoman character, including: Butrinti (UNESCO), Apolonia, Bylis, Durrësi sites, etc. Monasteries, churches, mosques, castles and other fortifications belonging to the medieval age, including the two museum cities: Berat and Gjirokastra (UNESCO), Albania offers special architectural characteristic found all over the territory and its neighbouring countries. The rich culture of Albania stands also in the coexistence of different religions, its rich folklore, diversity and traditions. Hence the true spirit of the Albanian territory consists in its hospitable and friendly people, engaging in passing on their knowledge and traditions to visitors. Although many of the highlighted potentials are credible, Albania still lacks it potentials in increasing awareness towards effective tourism development in accordance to its regions; capacity building for local public and private actors; and lack of national spatial visioning and policies (B.Aliaj, 2016).

Besnik Aliaj (2016), notes that tourism in the Albanian region should be linked in accordance within the instruments of spatial planning (B.Aliaj, 2016) . Aliaj, argues that territorial planing experts and target entities should focus on promoting strategic touristic regions, such as: the Riviera, the Alps, Ohër-Prespa, and the Metropolitan region. According to the report of UNDP and UNESCO Culture and Heritage for Social and Economic Development Programme regrading the "Culture Marketing Strategy for Albania " some of the key findings highlighted that traveller perception of Albanian main strength relied on archaeology/ heritage/ culture, whereas landscape and 'hospitality' were seen as supporting (nevertheless significant) attributes.

On the other hand Inadequate infrastructure was identified as Albania's main weakness by half of all survey respondents. Lack of planning and environmental protec
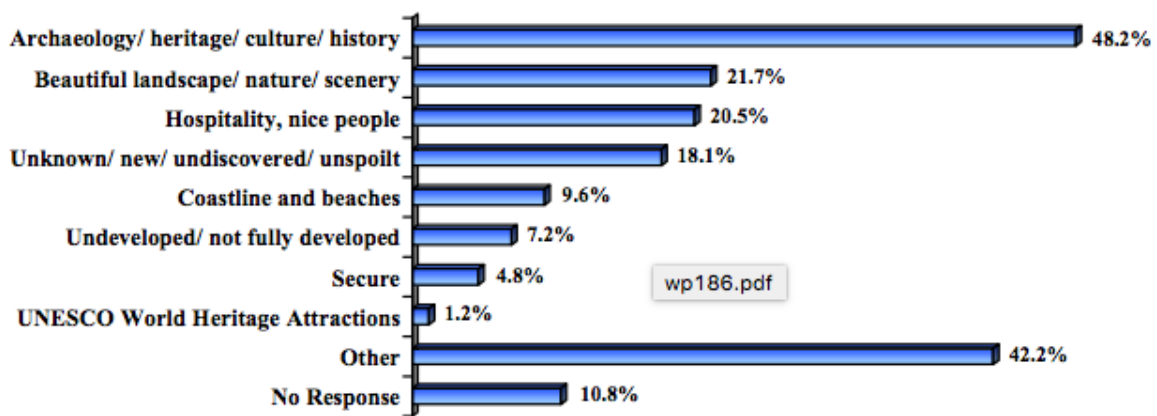
Fig.2 *"Albania main strength"*
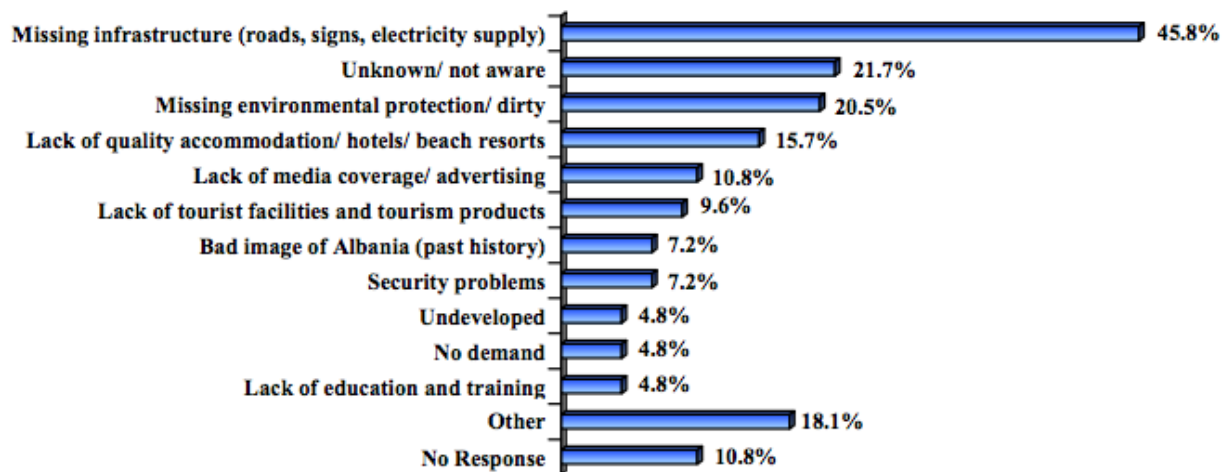
Fig.3 *"Albania main weaknesses"*
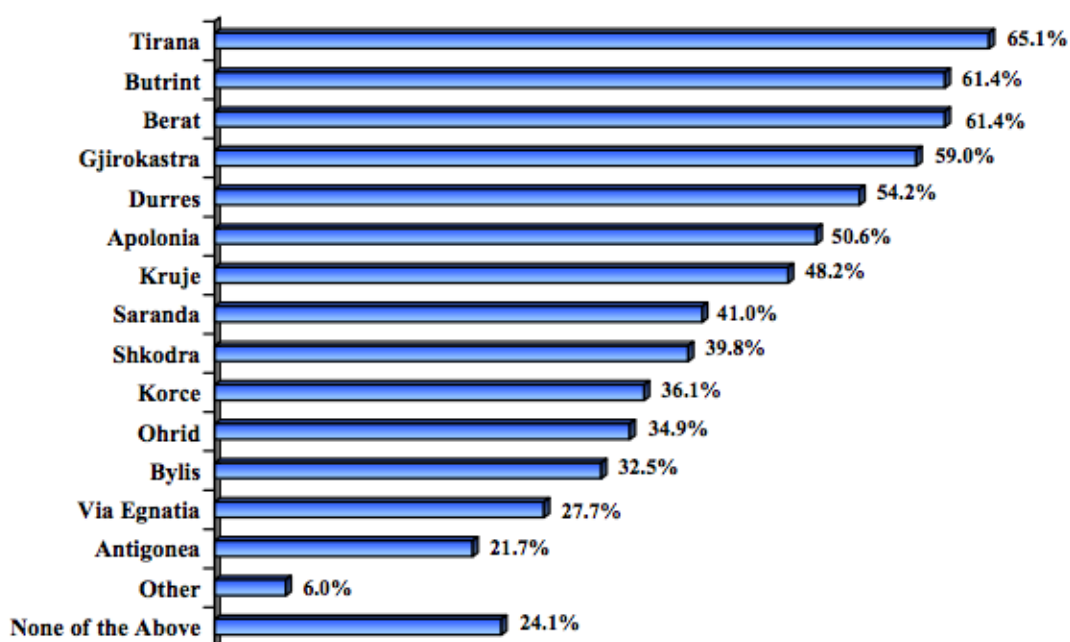
Fig.4 *"Albania Locations/Historic Sites heard off"*
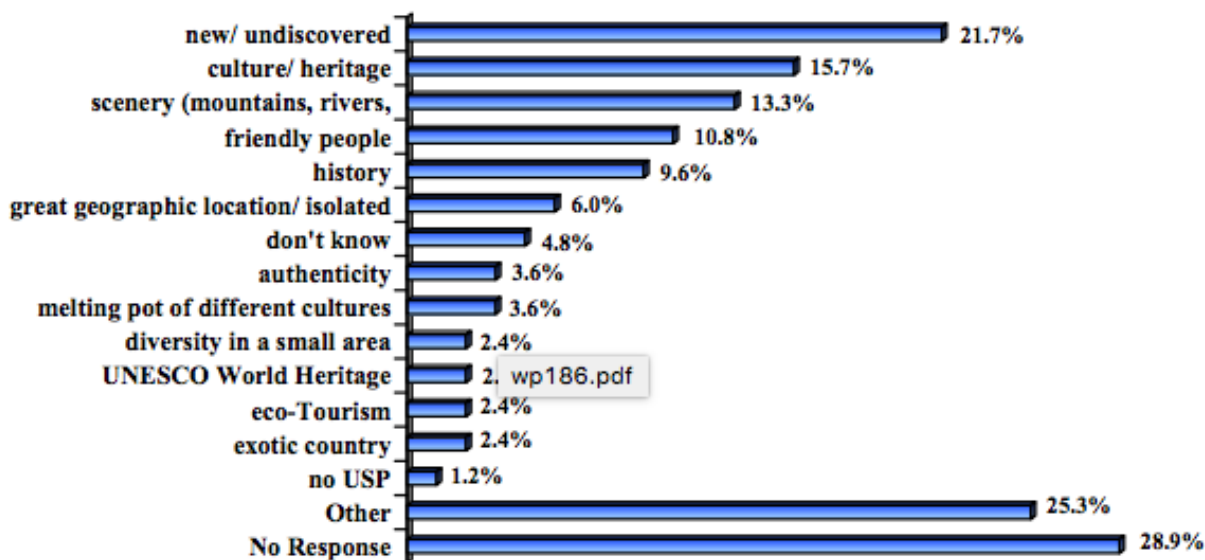
Fig.5 *"Albania's Unique Selling Proposition (USP)"*

tion policies allied to absence of quality of accommodation was also highlighted as weaknesses (UNDP, UNESCO, 2005).

Nevertheless, the most visited cities after Tirana in regards of cultural tourism seen as one of the potential drivers of the tourism industry are destinations followed as Butrint, Berat and Gjirokastra. Moreover, the study figures showed that Albanians unique selling proposition was based on the new/undiscovered place; culture/heritage; scenery/landscape; friendly people; history; great geographic position. Due to many issues accumulated for many years in regards of the tourism sector, the Albanian government developed the National Tourism Strategy 2014-2020 concerning tourist development 2014-2020. The main aim focused in creating new alternatives in regards of the development of Albanian tourism in the future, defining new touristic philosophy and new platform implementation which could possibly guide towards the development of sustainable tourism. One of the main issues made apparent in this report were also the lack of tourism planning, lack of capacity, problems related to services, deficiencies in infrastructure, lack of coordination between central and local government investment towards private subjects, the missing role of the Ministry (Ministry of Urban Development, 2014).

Based on the focus of this research, some of the main "Policy Statement and Vision" where the National Tourism Strategy 2014-2020 tended to focus where the

- Recognition of tourism as a priority sector for the economy
- Highlight the main categories of tourism for future development of it
- Branding and Marketing a new image of Albania as a touristic destination based on Cultural Tourism, Natural Tourism, Rural Tourism, Costal Tourism.

The new strategy also emphasizes the need to evaluate tourism trends based on

the Albanian regions to better highlight their potentials on where to focus. However, due to missing research which could potentially identify problems highlighted for each county with actual socio-economic indicators potentials the tourism trends highlighted by this report focused only in developing:

- Cultural heritage tourism
- Rural Tourism
- Nature Tourism
- Costal Tourism

Thus indicating that there is a need of developing a detailed tourism plan according to each region. Although many of the regions are known on holding cultural tourism potentials, they still lack in developing themselves as key places to live and visit, based on the concept of sustainable tourism.

2.3 Physical Capacities

Nowadays, Albania is facing the challenge of limited physical capacities in regards of accommodation due to the growing demand of tourism. According to INSTAT Albania: i) The number of total visitors that enter our country by different means of transport (land, air, sea) has increased 10 times, from 300 thousand in 1995, to 4.2 million in 2015;

ARRIVALS OF FOREIGNERS BY MEANS OF TRANSPORT (1995 – 2015) in thousands					
Year	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
Total	304	317	748	2,418	4,131
Me ajër / By air	45	72	128	246	401
Me det / By Sea	83	79	130	216	212
Me tokë / By Land	176	166	490	1,956	3,518

Table.2 *"Arrivals Of Foreigners By Means Of Transport"* (1995 – 2015) in thousands. Source: INSTAT, 2015

i) The number of visitors' according to specific regions, in this case the highest number of visitors tend to be from the United States and Europe has grown from 317,149 thousand in 2000, to 4,131,242 thousand in 2015. Nevertheless, the data reflected from INSTAT do not specify the visiting purposes. iii) The number of arrivals of foreigners and Albanian in hotels from the period of 1995 - 2015, has grown form 142 thousand to 428 thousand, where foreigners tourist number in 2015 is higher than that of the Albanian tourist. iv) The number of visitors in hotels has grown from 211 thousand in 1995, to 791 thousand in 2015; iv) The hotel capacity has grown from 62 hotels in 1995 with 2,018 bed places to 220 hotels in 2005 with 6,742 bed places.   However, from 2005 to 2015 there is no data related to the number of hotels, although INSTAT claims that from the period of 2005 -2008,figures were revised by quarterly survey based on new methodology of improvement.

ARRIVALS OF FOREIGNERS AND ALBANIANS IN HOTELS (1995 – 2015) in thousand					
Year	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
Total	142	165	113	255	428
Foreigners	41	32	57	74	257
Albanians	101	133	56	181	171

Table.3 *"Arrivals Of Foreigners And Albanians In Hotels"* Source: Instat, 2015

Arrivals of foreign citizens according to regions (2000-2015)				
Year	2000	2005	2010	2015
Total	317,149	747,837	2,417,337	4,131,242
United States	13, 977	34,816	61,878	107,080
Europe	295,149	703,205	2,238,958	3,747,457
Northern Europe	14,810	44,829	85,463	130,352
Southern Europe	238,347	564,333	1,912,383	3,152,369
Western Europe	26,195	56,271	141,187	246,811

Table.4 *"Arrivals Of Foreign Citizens According To Regions (2000-2015)"* Source: Instat, 2015

OVERNIGHTS OF FOREIGNERS AND ALBANIANS IN HOTELS (1995-2005) in thousands					
Year	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
Total	211	328	344	610	791
Foreigners	88	98	130	185	484
Albanians	123	228	214	425	307

Table. 5 *"Overnights Of Foreigners And Albanians In Hotels (1995-2005)"* Source: Instat, 2015

HOTELS AND THEIR CAPACITY (1995 – 2015) number					
Year	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
Hotels	62	142	220	No data	No data
Bed Places	2,018	5,919	6,742	11,793	15,323

Table.6 *"Hotels And Their Capacity (1995 – 2015)"* Source: Instat, 2015

Based on the data's obtained by INSTAT it is apparent that Albania faces a big challenge in regards of the capacity development and accommodation by at least 2-3 times growth in 2030 (B.Aliaj; E. Janku; A.Allkja; S.Dhamo, 2014). Aliaj (2014), notes in his publication "Albania 2030", that in competing with other neighbouring countries for more touristic demands, Albania needs to expand its capacity with at least 15-20 thousand new beds, aiming to support a demand of 7 million visitors per year by 2030 (Aliaj, 2014). On the other hand, Aliaj emphasizes that with the suggestion of the expansion of the hotels, caution should be made in regards of future development and planning issues, which Albania has faced for many years. Thus, the main planning and development instruments should focus in: rehabilitation, re-vival, re- contextualization, and maximal reuse of the historic villages and traditional areas of the existing settlements and informal developments – instead of opening

new development areas with high costs on territorial consumption.

2.4 Accessibility

Albania has overcome many challenges in regards of inherited isolation of means of communication, nevertheless infrastructure and international access. Apparent in the previous data's obtained by INSTAT, physical accessibility in regards of visitor demands by sea-travel has doubled, thanks to the high numbers of Albanian emigrants in Western European countries; as well as from the improvements of ports and ferry services during the last decade. By the new construction of "Mother Teresa", Air-travelling has increased six times due to the increase of service quality and low-cost flights. Land-travelling has increased 15 times, due to the high numbers of emigrants in Greece; and also of the regional visitors from other Albanian-speaking territories such as Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and the region in general. Most of the numbers of travellers by land has been also the increasing numbers of visitors from Eastern European countries, such as: Poland, Czeck Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, etc (INSTAT, 2015).

2.5 Albania and the neighbouring countries

As defined by the European Union the "Western Balkans"are the countries located in the south-east European area, not yet members of the European Union, while others refer to the geographical aspects, the Black Mountains of the Balkans. The Western Balkans, a new term originated in describing the countries of "ex-Yugoslavia (minus Slovenia) and Albania" (Pond, 2006). Thus, the W.Balkan region includes: Croatia (now an EU member), Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania, aiming in becoming countries of the European Union.

Most of the area is covered by mountain ranges running from the northwest to southeast, such as Dinaric Alps in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro, the Šar massif spreading from Albania to Macedonia, and the Pindus range, spanning from southern Albania into central Greece and the Albanian Alps. With frosty and snowy winter in the northern part of the peninsula, hot and dry summers along the coastline of the region, rich in cultural heritage, nature heritage, etc, the W. Balkans have been noted as the last undiscovered places to visit and explore in Europe. As stated by "The Lonley Planet", "*the region lying in southeast Europe, stretching from Croatia's sublimely jagged Dalmatian coast, past Bosnia and Hercegovina's iconic Old Bridge of Mostar to the cultural crossroads of Sarajevo, spreading further east to Serbia, with its hedonistic music festivals and the pulsing nightlife of Belgrade, plunging south to newly independent Montenegro, where ancient towns flanked by limestone cliffs are suspended above the azure waters of the Bay of Kotor, east*

again is controversial Kosovo, abuzz in its bid to have its self-declared independence recognised globally, and lastly dropping south into Albania, busy casting off the shadow of communism and welcoming visitors to its quirky capital and dramatic coastline, heading east of Albania to Macedonia, where other-worldly Lake Ohrid sets the scene for the historical treasures surrounding it" (The Lonely Planet, 2014).

In 2012, USAID conducted a research regarding the Tourism development in the Western Balkans. The report highlighted that the main attraction point for tourism development and further economical development of the region were the cultural and natural assets that the region holds. The competitiveness of this region compared to other ones as a travel destination lied in its *"rich historical heritage, authentic culture and well-preserved nature"(USAID, 2012)*. If we compare this region to the rest of Europe in regards of tourism and economical growth the western Balkans are still a new image of an undiscovered part of Europe, *holding scattered pieces of historical sites, stunning landscapes, and authentic and welcoming communities, which can be the main attraction of traveler's with interest in exploring the off-the-beaten-path experiences* (USAID, 2012). The report highlighted that beside the fact that each individual country has a lot of potentials to offer, the joint marketing and branding of the Western Balkans as one destination enhances the competitiveness of the entire region. Furthermore, a great number of travelers, especially those from long distance destinations, encounter different obstacles in the ability to combine two or more countries into one itinerary based on specific interests or convenience, hence ending up as important factor in the ultimate purchase decision. "*Unfortunately, uneven economic development, socio-political dynamics associated with the break-up of former Yugoslavia, and severe military conflicts in some of the countries has made cooperation in the region difficult*"(USAID, 2012). As a result, the study conducted by USAID in 2012 regarding the "Tourism Development in the western Balkans", emphasized the need of effective collaboration between the countries to further develop a joint tourism product (cross-border routes, common themes, joint attractions, etc.) (USAID, 2012), resulting in an authentic regional experience, which will raise the potential of sustainable tourism and market themselves as one destination to be explored. Nevertheless, with all the fragmentation and divisions that the region has undergone through centuries, for many years, the region has gained negative quotations, due to political, economical, societal and religious disputes. The bad image perception for the regions in the worlds eyes, has gained many negative consequences, also in their branding image as separate countries. Along with the concept of branding (regions, destinations, places or cities), the WB region lacks in existing data's based on international perceptions of the region and its image.
One of the most prominent features that makes the WB regions so prone to develop certain categories of tourism and be branded as the place to visit, must also be its

authenticity, a non-expensive region, not too crowded or commercialized. For all its diversity and contradiction, the region is ultimately defined by the similarities between its countries, its enormous heart and hospitality, while it aspires to its European integration, it still remains one of the world's great travel destinations.

2.5.1 Accessibility, International Access - infrastructure

Although the region has common historic traces, the characteristics of destinations, the development of tourism sector as well as the overall infrastructure differ profoundly in each of the countries. Many expert agree that the region has a vast tourism potential but also a great number of problems such as; underdeveloped infrastructure, underdeveloped service industry, lack of strategic planning, formal and informal barriers within the tourism industry. According to UNTWO (2015) report, tourists' arrivals and income from tourism in, Albania, B&H, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia. Croatia is the leading destination in the region according to the number of tourists as well as income generated by tourism. It is followed by other countries with access to the Adriatic sea: Albania, Slovenia and Montenegro. However, in comparison to Croatia (table 7; table 8) these countries have substantially less tourist arrivals and more modest income from tourism. This group is followed by landlocked countries such as Serbia, B&H, Macedonia and Kosovo. Although access to the sea and coastal tourism still plays an important role in the destination attractiveness in this region, countries without access to the sea (Serbia) are catching up fast.

Most visited Western Balkan tourist destinations (in millions of tourists). Source UNTWO, 2015				
County	2000	2005	2010	2014
Croatia	6.20	8.50	9.80	11.60
Albania	0.32	0.75	2.19	4.20
Montenegro	0.07	0.70	1.09	1.35
Serbia	0.24	0.73	0.68	1.03
B&H	0.17	0.21	0.39	0.54
Macedonia	0.22	0.20	0.26	0.42
Kosovo	-	-	0.03	0.06
Western Balkan income from tourism (in billion USD), Source UNWTO, 2015				
County	2000	2005	2010	2014
Croatia	2.80	7.50	7.60	9.87
Albania	-	-	1.62	1.70
Serbia	0.03	0.31	0.80	1.14
Montenegro	-	0.27	0.73	0.91
B&H	0.23	0.53	0.59	0.71
Macedonia	0.04	0.09	0.19	0.29
Kosovo	-	-	-	-

Table. 7 *Most visited Western Balkan tourist destinations (in millions of tourists). Source UNTWO, 2015* **Table. 8** *Western Balkan income from tourism (in billion USD), Source UNWTO, 2015*

2.6 Albanian Tourism Potentials

Albania has gained a lot of recognition as a potential place to be visited in comparison to other WB countries. Nevertheless, general information for tourism obtained showed that tourism strategy is generalised without taking in consideration the true needs and potentials of each county. Defined by the authors of "Albania 2030", tourism should be developed according to the concept of 6 regions "Polycentric Regions", identified based on the regional identities and proximity within 6 functional economic areas, embracing the regions of Shkodra, Kukës, Tirana, Korça, Vlora and Gjirokastra as the main cities. In relation to this research some of the most important result derivered from this study were also the development of tourism industry based on the 5 economical areas in Albania, which could later on concluded in 5 cross-border regions to be further branded according to the distinctive landscape, culture, and heritage (B.Aliaj; E. Janku; A.Allkja; S.Dhamo, 2014). Based on these analyses, the study focused on branding the 6 reginonal identities as such:

The Alps Region, Shkodra being the centre of the main economic area. Considered a mountainous region, its economic potential where seen towards tourism and energy production, forming a cross-boarding region with Montenegro and Kosovo;

Arbri Region, Peshkopi as the main centre of the region holding upon strong historic and traditional background in the foundation of Albanian nation and state. The area potentials where mainly focused in the mining industry, energy production, serving also as gate to Macedonia and Kosovo;
Metropolitan Region with the main centre of Tirana, considered as the international hub and economic drive for the country, the study highlighted this region as the main pole of the main governmental institutions and public services;

Voskpoja Region centering Korça, as the main gate between West and East. Its branding identity was affiliated with tourism, holding a strong identity of Albanian revival and agriculture;

Myzeqeja Region, Berat being the centre of the main economic area, considered as "the prosperous" area of the nation, due to its high potentials on agriculture, oil and gas resources. Apart from the agriculture and industry, the area of Berat is also know as on of the three UNESCO sites located in Albania, and with the Skrapari area holding naturalistic and cultural tourism potentials;

Ionian Region is recognized with the main centre of Gjirokastra, where highlighted as one of the areas with the largest potentials on tourism, including the Ionian Rivi

ALPS REGION
"ALBANIAN MOUNTAINS"
ENERGY REGION
GATE TO MONTENEGRO & KOSOVO

ARBRI REGION
"ALBANIAN HISTORY & TRADITION"
MINING REGION
ENERGY REGION
GATE TO MACEDONIA

METROPOLITAN REGION
"INTERNATIONAL HUB"
ECONOMIC DRIVE
MAIN PUBLIC SERVICES
GATE TO ITALY

VOSKOPOJA REGION
"WEST-EAST GATE"
GATE TO MACEDONIA & GREECE
LAKE & MOUNTAINS TOURISM
AGRICULTURAL REGION
(FRUIT FARMING, GRAINS)

MYZEQEJA REGION
"ALBANIAN GRANARY"
OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY
AGRICULTURAL REGION
(VEGETABLES, GRAINS)

IONIAN REGION
"ALBANIAN RIVIERA"
SEA TOURISM
AGRICULTURAL REGION, FARMING
UNESCO SITES
GATE TO GREECE

REGIONAL SPACE
REGIONAL BOUNDARY
DRINI REGION
MAT-DRIN REGION
SHKUMBIN-ERZEN REGION
DEVOLLI REGION
SEMANI REGION
VJOSA REGION
REGIONAL CENTER

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

MORPHOLOGICAL TYPES:
RADIAL
ANNULAR

Fig. 6 "*Polycentric Profiles for each region identified in the "Albania 2030 Manifesto".* Source: Aliaj, Besnik, et al. "Albania 2030 Manifesto" a Spatial Planning and National Development vision. Tirana: POLIS_Press, 2014.

Fig. 7 "*Cross Border Polycentric Regions identified in the "Albania 2030 Manifesto".* Source: Aliaj, Besnik, et al. "Albania 2030 Manifesto" a Spatial Planning and National Development vision. Tirana: POLIS_Press, 2014.

Fig. 8 "*Cross Border Polycentric Regions identified in the "Albania 2030 Manifesto".* Source: Aliaj, Besnik, et al. "Albania 2030 Manifesto" a Spatial Planning and National Development vision. Tirana: POLIS_Press, 2014.
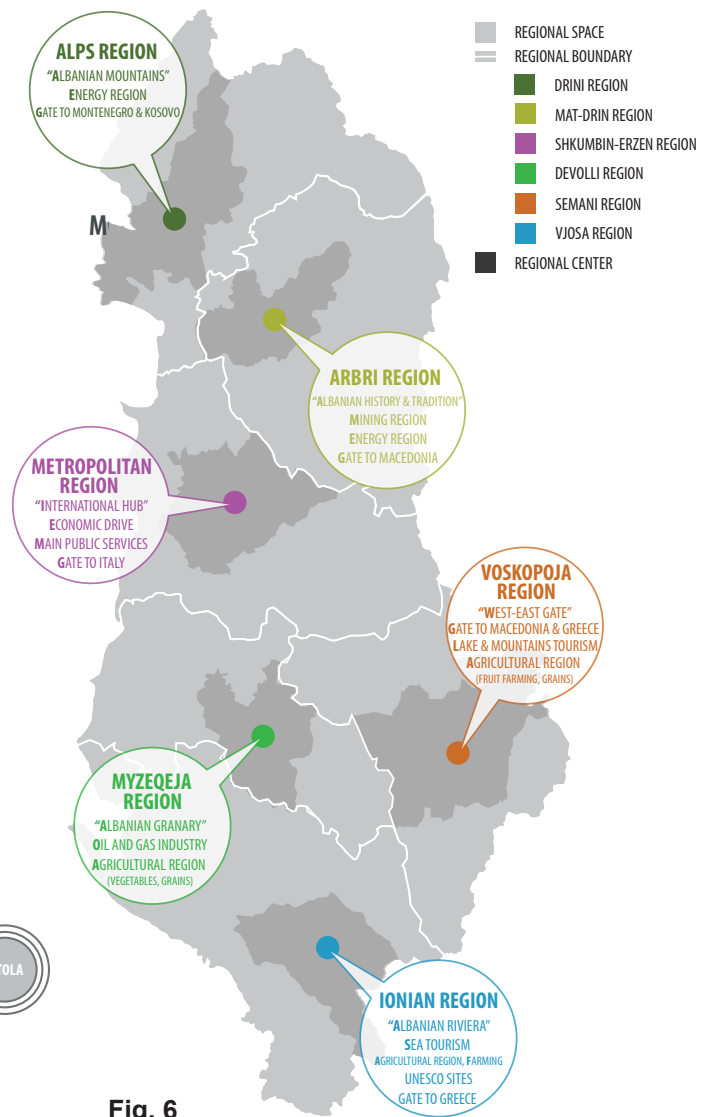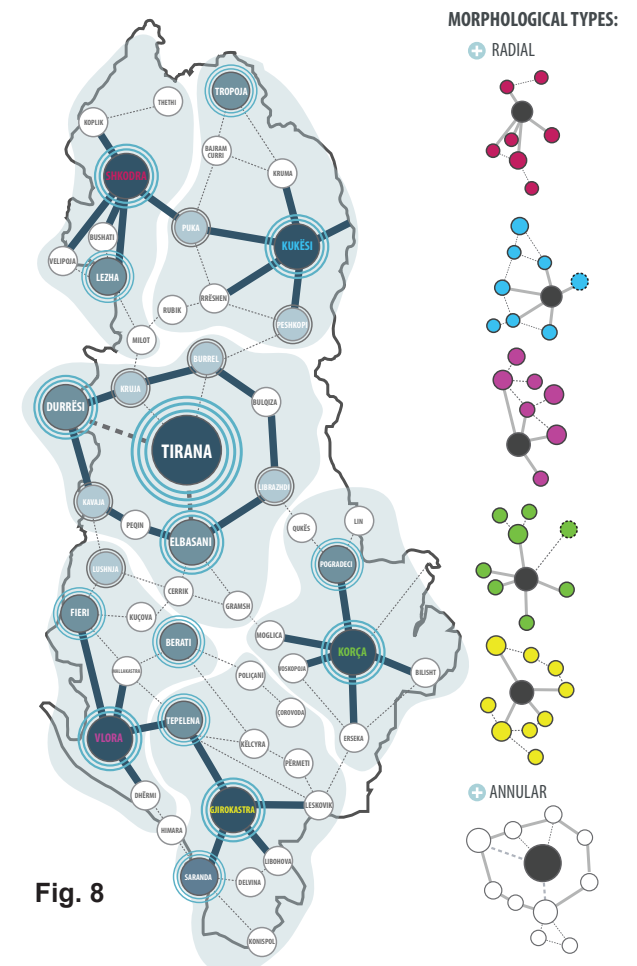
era and two UNESCO sites (Gjirokastra and Butrinti), also holding a great potential in farming. The main conclusion drawn from this research were to highlight the proposed regions as the foundation of sustainable touristic development along with the 6 regions identities to be used as a starting point for the concept of economic development of the country and the spatial plan.

Thus seeing the main potentials that the Ionian Region has with the main centre of Gjirokastra, will be taken as a case study in elaborating furthermore sustainable tourism trends potentially applicable for this region in further branding it. Nevertheless, the suggested approaches in creating sustainable tourism for the Ionian Region, should be as pragmatic as possible for the contexts applied and in accordance with new trends of sustainable tourism, such as cultural routes as a product of cultural tourism; creative tourism, and accessible tourism.

2.7 Concluding Remarks

Tourism for Albania has always been recognized as the main driver of the local economy. Although the Albanian territory holds a great potential of developing tourism through their rich cultural and natural resources, the country is still lacking in developing a strategy which could and should potentially shift towards sustainable tourism. Experts from POLIS University identify the need of developing the tourism industry based on the 5 economical areas in Albania, which could later on conclude in 5 cross-border regions to be further branded according to the distinctive landscape, culture, and heritage. Nevertheless, the assigned entities of the government should approach tourism strategies through its regions, in order to develop a diversified tourism market. The study conducted by POLIS University regarding "Regional Tourism Comparative Analysis In Albania", (Aida Ciro, Enrico Porfido, Peter Nientied, 2016) showed that although each regions potentials in tourism, many of the county's with such potentials laked in ranking high based on the actual socio-economic and tourism indicators. Key findings upon travellers perception of Albania from UNDP and UNESCO Culture and Heritage for Social and Economic Development Programme regrading the "Culture Marketing Strategy for Albania " relied on archaeology/ heritage/ culture, whereas landscape and 'hospitality' were seen as supporting (nevertheless significant) attributes. The most visited cities by travellers after Tirana, were Berat, Gjirokastra and Saranda (Butrinti) regarding the potential of cultural tourism. Study figures showed that Albanians unique selling proposition was based on the new/undiscovered place; culture/heritage; scenery/landscape; friendly people; history; great geographic position. However, inadequate infrastructure and information to the sites were identified as Albania's main weakness by half of all survey respondents. Lack of planning and environmental protection policies

allied to absence of quality accommodation was also highlighted as weaknesses (UNDP, UNESCO, 2010). From the data obtained from UNWTO, 2015, Albania is ranked as one of the most visited places in the WB countries, with an income from tourism higher than the rest. Nevertheless, USAID report on "Tourism Development in the western Balkans", emphasized the need of effective collaboration between the countries to further develop a joint tourism product (cross-border routes, common themes, joint attractions, etc.).**Suggestions:** a) The assigned entities for the development of the tourism industry should focus in developing tourism based on 5 region identities and potentials as defined in "Albania 2030"; b) Identify new trends of tourism sector to foster the socio-economic growth of the region; c) Emphasize the need of collaboration between countries to further develop a joint tourism product.

Chapter_3
Introduction

From evaluated data regarding the economical and social development of each county in Albania, Gjirokastra results as one the most undeveloped counties (economical, social) due to migration and immigration factors. Based on this data, chapter 3 highlights the county of Gjirokastra touristic potentials, economical state, demographics, past project feasibility in relation to tourism and the potential of the actual research for the county. Same as in chapter 2, a general overview of how Gjirokastra is marketed through national and international websites, is illustrated, accompanied by a questionnaire done during this research. In addition to this, a SWOT analysis is conducted with the focus in finding the main strengths, weaknesses and potentials of the county.

3.1 The case of Gjirokastra

The region of Gjirokastra is one of the 12 regions in Albania, surfacing 2.884 km² of the entire area and a population of 73556 residents (INSTAT, 2014). Laying in the southeast of Albania, Gjirokastra consists of 3 localities, Gjirokastra, Tepelena and Permet, although its administrative centre is the city of Gjirokastra. Tourism is considered as one of the main sources and revenue growth for future development in this sector. Identified as one of the great touristic resources for Albania and claimed also the tittle World Heritage Site by UNESCO (already a very established brand), very little has been done by the government and investments in rebuilding and maintaining the city image as a touristic product. One of the main touristic potentials identified as the city's symbol is the castle of Gjirokastra created in the XII century, traditional houses, the old bazaar located in the old town of the city, archaeological sites of Antigonea and Hadrianopolis, and more than 500 historic buildings enhancing the landscape of the city even more, increasing the touristic appeal of the place. Many other cultural touristic resources can be also found in Gjirokastra county such as religious objects, monasteries and orthodox churches of Labova, Leuse, Melan, Cepo, Çatiste, Hormova etc, and 45 Bektashi Tekkes in Gjirokastra county, thus enriching the potential of expanding tourism. Nevertheless, alternative tourism categories could be identified, such as adventure tourism, eco- tourism exploring the natural areas in this county such as: Uji i Ftohtë in Tepelena, Viroi Lake in Gjirokastra, National Park of Hotova in Përmet etc. In regards to tourism development, besides the interesting perception of the cities landscape, and near by villages, Nemëcka Mountain and Bënça Valley canyons, Progonat and Nivicë (Tepelena) caves, Vjosa Valley and river (the last flowing river in Europe), are among the best know of this area for landscape tourism development. Another distinctive element of Gjirokastra region is also the thermal waters found in Bënjë of Përmet known for their curative abilities.

Fig.9 *"General county data of Gjirokastra"* Source: "Regional Tourism Comparative Analysis In Albania", (A.Ciro, E.Porfido, P. Nientied, 2016)

Fig.10 "*County connection and settlements*" Source: "Regional Tourism Comparative Analysis In Albania", (A.Ciro, E.Porfido, P. Nientied, 2016)

② Kardhiqi
④ Bredhi i Hotoves- Dangell
⑰ Bredhi i Sotires
㉑ Uji i Ftohte
㉓ Zhej
㊴ Rrezoma

■ PROTECTED AREAS
■ HIDROGRAPHY
▨ AGRICULTURAL LAND

■ SEA / LAKE TOURISM
MOUNTAIN TOURISM
AGRICULTURE LAND

Fig.11 "*County economic and development field".* Source: "Regional Tourism Comparative Analysis In Albania", (A.Ciro, E.Porfido, P. Nientied, 2016)

Fig.12 *"County protected areas and hidrography"* Source: "Regional Tourism Comparative Analysis In Albania", (A.Ciro, E.Porfido, P. Nientied, 2016)

Due to its proximity to the border, the county of Gjirokastër is considered as the gateway to Greece for travellers coming from both north and south. In 2014, a total of 302,034 foreigners arrivals was registered and almost 830,000 Albanians citizens. Important to the development of this county is also the crossed corridor of EU Adriatic Corridor, which will connect all the Adriatic coast (from Slovenia to Greece). However, the current infrastructure network for this county is quite poor, thus not allowing the future development of the tourism sector. As far as from a touristic service point of view, in the country of Gjirokastra holds on to an average number of accommodations registered, same for touristic restaurants. Digital accessibility service to this county are available only through 64 structures available on booking platforms.

3.2 History of Gjirokastra

Located in southern Albania, Gjirokastra was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2005, stating it as "A rare example of a well-preserved Ottoman town" in the Balkans, holding two universal values, that of a: its situated background of the city and its traditional houses. The depiction of the town is reinforced by one's first impression of hundreds of stone houses with gray slate roofs, flowing down the slopes of Mali Gjere Mountain.

Rich in historic architectural values, the historic town of Gjirokastra is one of the most important towns defining the urban life of the Albania's in the late medieval period. Gjirokastra is located on a steep mountain, a very dominant point for the city, suited for its military fortification and strategic location during the Ottoman Period, which allowed total control of the Drino Valley. The rich agriculture lands of Drino Valley were also an important reason for the welfare and development of Gjirokastra. The first statement in which is documented the existence of Gjirokastra is in 1336, mentioned in the chronicle of J.Kantakuzeni. Regarding the origin of the name of the town "Gjirokastra" J. Kantakuzeni mentions it in one of his passages, which he states that the name "Gjirokastra" derivers from the Greek word Silver- argýro and kastro – Castle (Riza, 2004), referred to the stones of the castle, streets and roofs which build up the city, "shining as silver under the rain", an image captured also by the Albanian writer Ismail Kadare in Chronicle in Stone (Kadare, 2007).During the 13th-century the city and its surrounding was ruled by the Zenebishi family, until the 14-century with the fall of Gjirokastra under the Ottoman Empire, thus becoming the capital of Albanian Sanjakiv (Riza, 2004). During the 14-century Gjirokastra was ruled and developed as a military and administrative centre. Since the beginning, unlike many other towns in the Balkans, Gjirokastra has not been developed as a craftsmen town, but rather a town with large number of land owners feudal, as well as officials from the Ottoman Empire, which is reflected also in the character of the

city as well as the architecture of the buildings. Another distinguish element of the town, are also its residential neighbourhoods. They are defined by an uneven terrain, characterized by steep slopes and escarpments, deep ditches and narrow ridges. The uniqueness of Gjirokastra is also documented by the author Michael Kiel in his book "Ottoman Architecture in Albania 1385 – 1912" based on the great traveller and writer Evlya Çelebiv in his book "Travelogue" (Seyahatname), the fullest manuscript of the Ottoman Empire. The work of Çelebi has a particular importance, not only because it contains simple description of the elements that the author encounters during his journey, but it provides important information about the history and the state organization of the Ottoman Empire and its Sanjaks, as well as personal view the author's regarding Albania and in particular Gjirokastra. Kiel synthesizes Celebi's valuable information about the history of architecture in his descriptions regarding the organization of green urban spaces, water management, defensive formations and architecture of the buildings. Celebis work can be considered the base of historical data's concerning the development of Gjirokastra, were reference is also given regarding the development of the first neighbourhoods in the historic city. Emin Riza states in his book "Gjirokastra, the Museum City" the development of the city and its neighbourhoods based on his studies of Celebis work. According to archeological findings and hypothesis of Emin Riza regarding the development of the city, he relies his studies on the Ottoman records of Gjirokastra during the 14 and 15 century and the writings of Celebi (Riza, 2004). So, if we develop a map of how the city of Gjirokastra would have been developed, it would have its origins from:

- First Phase: According to Archeological findings and Hypothesis part of the Eastern Citadel wall date back to the Roman Empire
- Second Phase: The castle and town of Gjirokastra are mentioned for the first time in 1336 by the Byzantine chronicler J. Katakuzen, which could possibly have been expanded as shown. It is thought that the castle could have been as referenced due to the writing of Evlya Celebi when he visited Gjirokastra in 1667, referring to the castle as 600 foot long, 100 foot wide, and 1400 foot in perimeter (Riza, 2004).
- Third Phase: According to the different hypothesis of the development of the city of Gjirokastra the first neighbourhood, it is thought to be the neighbourhood of "Old Bazaar" on the Eastern Part of the Castle. In this neighbourhood was the Old Bazaar, and the first feature of the castle as a settlement with the surrounding area (Riza, 2004)
- Fourth Phase: Expansion of the inhabited area outside the walls of the castle "Pllake"
- Fifth Phase: Period when the city was visited from Evliya Çelebi in 1667. Expansion of the city during Memi Pasha during the 17th century
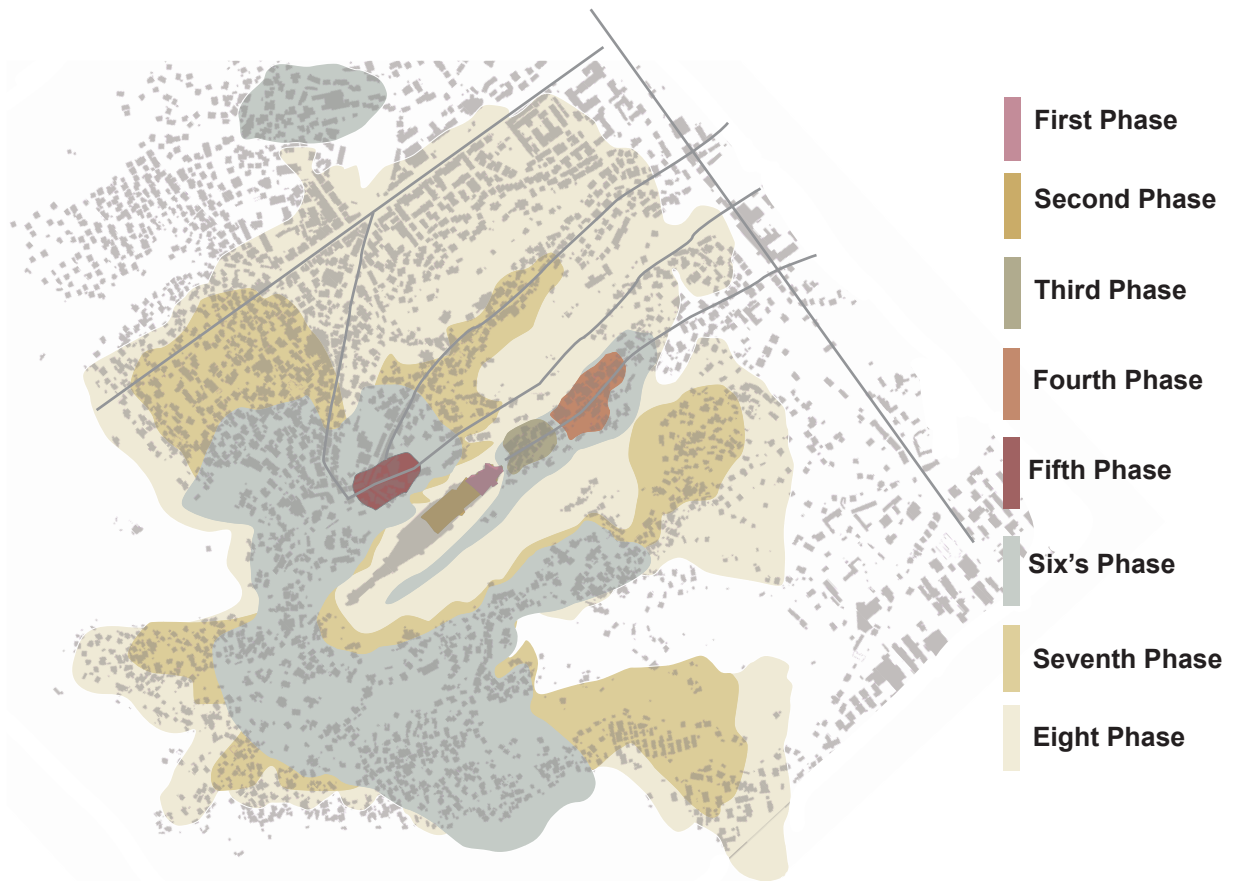
Map.1 *"Development phases of Gjirokastra".* Source: Sonia Jojic

- Six Phase: Period when the city was visited from Evliya Çelebi in 1667. Expansion of the city during Memi Pasha during the 17th century.
- Seventh Phase: Gjirokastra during Ali Pasha rule. During this period 1810 – 1813 Ali Pasha added an extension to the castle and build up an Aquaded. From the time that Evlya Celebi visited Gjirokastra all the neighbourhoods extended but there is no evidence of new one

Figure. 13. *"Illustration depicting Gjirokastra_1" by Edward Lear"* Source: Courtesy Alket Islami, Chris Hassle & GCDO, http://archive.archaeology.org/online/features/gjirokastra/

Figure. 14 *"Illustration depicting Gjirokastra_2" by Thomas Allon*. Source: Courtesy Alket Islami, Chris Hassle & GCDO, http://archive.archaeology.org/online/features/gjirokastra/

- Eight Phase: Period after independence -1912 until the end of the Second World War in 1944 During this period there is some construction of a more European style. During King Zog regime there is the construction of "Asim Zeneli" High School, Municipality of Gjirokastra, Prefecture of Gjirokastra, Prison inside the Castle. Extension of the existing neighbourhoods of Varosh and Palorto
- Ninth Phase: Period after Second World Two 1944 - until 1992.

Gjirokastra unique typology is not only valued today as a World Heritage Site, but also during the 19th century were two well-known artist such as Edward Lear and Thomas Allon, were astonished with the unique landscape of Gjirokastra and its Ottoman houses on steeply hills, in which they perfectly documented as a valid material in evaluating furthermore its development. Gjirokastra holds on to a unique type of traditional buildings, created through the adaptation of the changing terrain. Internal feuding at the time influenced the city's morphology and building typology until the fall of the Ottoman Empire, when the construction of traditional houses was discontinued. The value of Gjirokastra as a unique example of its kind stands due to the coexistence between the natural environment and the human creation. Also mentioned by the Albanian writer Ismail Kadare in his book Chronicle in Stone:

> *It was a slanted city, set at a sharper angle than perhaps any*
> *other city on earth, and it defied the laws of architecture and*
> *city planning. The top of one house might graze the founda-*
> *tion of another, and it was surely the only place in the world*
> *where if you slipped and fell in the street, you might well land*
> *on the roof of a house… Ismail KADARE*

The most important urban and visual elements by which the city is made up are the citadel, traditional stone buildings, the new bazaar, religious buildings, cobblestone paths (sokaks). According to Emin Riza's research "Museum City of Gjirokastra" in 1980, he underlines the development of Gjirokastra bazed on Celebis account about the development of the neighbourhoods outside the walls of the citadel (Pl-lake, Teqe, Palorto, Hazmurat, Dunavat, Cfake, Manalat, Mecite, Varosh, Pazar i Vjeter) in regard with the creation of the New Bazaar. Moreover, the importance of Gjirokastra stands on its value as an potential centre for cultural tourism in southern part of Albania and not only, also worldwide for its uniqueness, benefiting from the natural and archaeological resources of the surrounding Drino Valley.

Many houses in Gjirokastra hold on to very distinctive local style's which has earned the city the nickname "City of Stone", due to the flat stones used on the roofs of the old houses around the protected area of the city. Similarities of this technique are also found in the Pelion district of Greece. After the 1990 turmoils Gjirokastra along with Berat city endured many intervention to their unique image of the city. Because of thier importance both cities were among the few Albanian cities preserved during the 1960s and 1970s from modernizing building programs at the time, were later on inscription to UNESCO World Heritage sites as "museum town" was achieved.
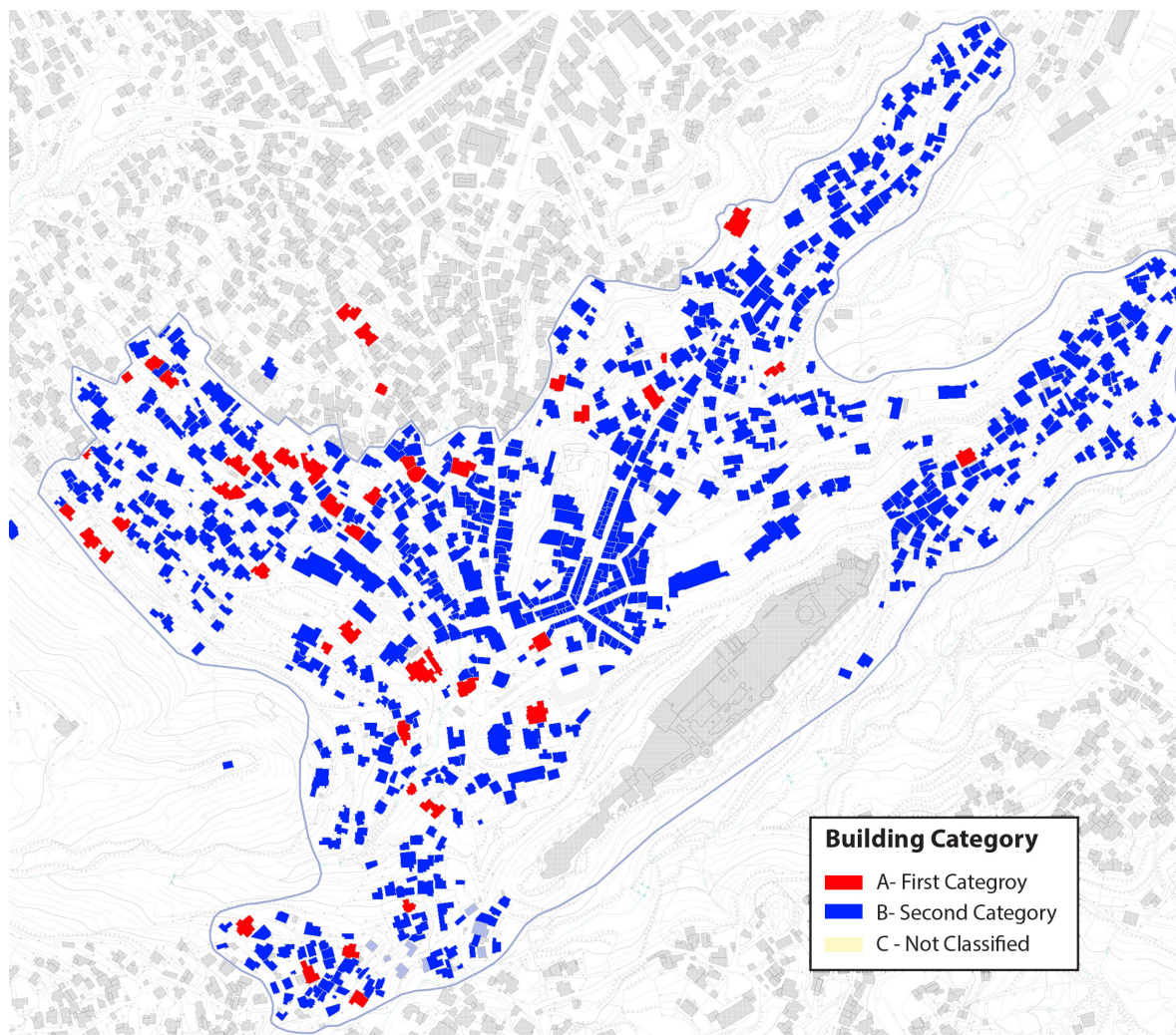
Map.2 *"Building Category of Gjirokastra, within the UNESCO border".* Source: Sonia Jojic
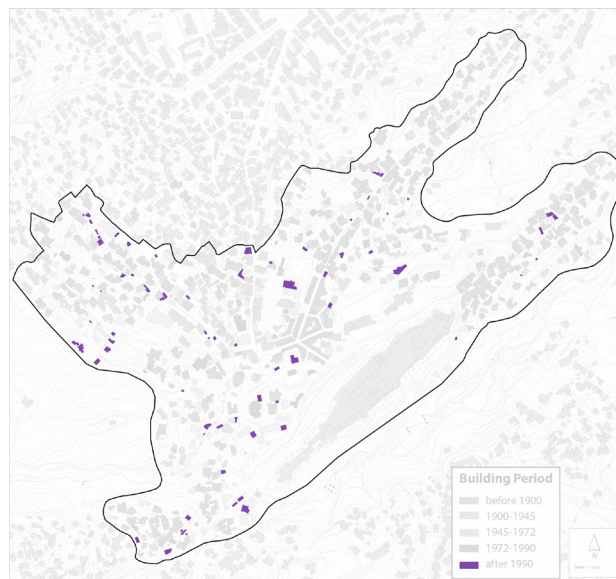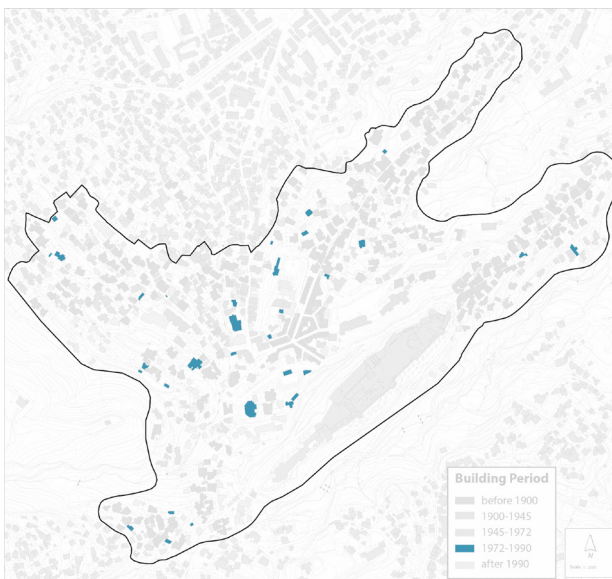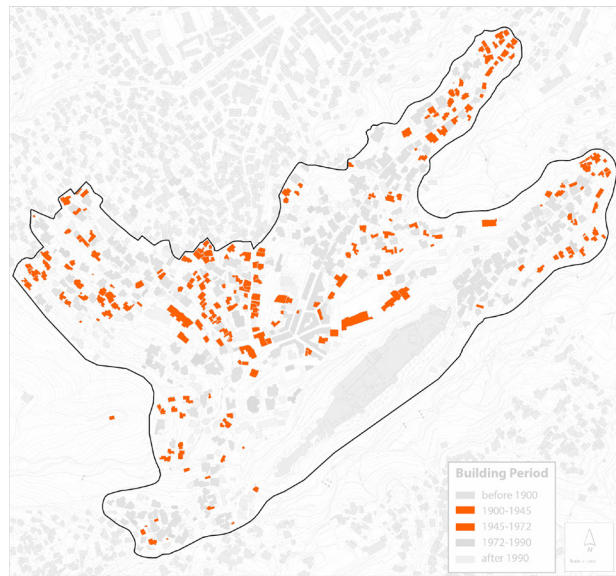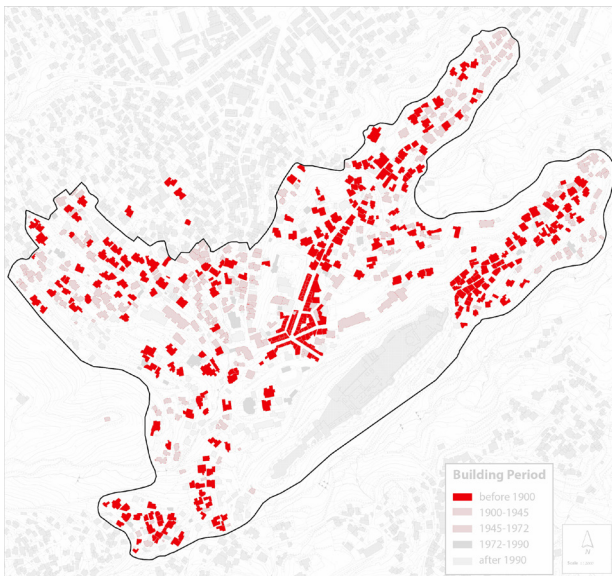
Map.3 *"Building Period of Gjirokastra, within the UNESCO border before 1900".* Source: Sonia Jojic

Map.4 *"Building Period of Gjirokastra, within the UNESCO border after 1900, until 1970".* Source: Sonia Jojic

Map.5 *"Building Period of Gjirokastra, within the UNESCO border 1972 - 1990".* Source: Sonia Jojic

Map.6 *"Building Period of Gjirokastra, within the UNESCO border after 1990".* Source: Sonia Jojic

As seen in the following maps, Gjirokastra intervention within the protected area by UNESCO, few intervention have been taking place. Referring to Map. 1 most of the expansion of the city took place along the **Eight Phase** and **Nine Phase.** Nevertheless, a great mass of building were constructed before the 1900 until 1970 were Gjirokastra was claimed "Museum City".

Nevertheless, beside Gjirokastra rich history regarding its development through centuries, its rich and distinctive cultural and natural heritage of the city, but also of the county, Gjirokastra remains one of the most visited cities in Albania. Beside all the

natural and cultural resources, tourism trends in Gjirokastra is spread over a very short period of stay; 1-2 days and only during the spring -summer season. Mainly happening due to the poor service of tourism industry, lack of infrastructure, lack of information about cultural and natural heritage in the county and city, and lastly lack of coordination in developing a tourism product for the city and county. This research has highlighted that the main attractions for this region happen only in the city of

Elements / Sources	AKT Albanian National Tourism Agency	Albanian Tourism Directory	Lonely Planet	Gjirokastra Conserva-tion and Development Organization	Total
Gjirokastra Castle	X	X	X	X	4
The Bazaar of Gjirokastra	x	x	x	x	4
The Residence Zenaja of Zekatëve	x	x	x	x	4
The Ancient ruins of Antigonea	x	x		x	3
Museum of Weapons in Gjirokastra		x	x	x	3
Ethnographic Museum		x	x	x	2
Hadrianopolis	X	X			2
Cold War Tunnel			x	x	2
The Church of Saint Mary	x	x			2
Mosque Bazaar		X		x	2
Natural Heritage / Parks		x		x	2
Near by Villages		x		x	2
National Folk Festival		x			1
Other Traditional Houses			x		1
Tepelena Castle	x				1
Gastronomy		x			1
Tekke's in the County					
Churches in the County					

Table 9: "*Key elements sources visited in Gjirokastra Country and City*" Source: Sonia Jojic

Gjirokastra, focused in very few cultural heritage buildings and one archeological site (Antigonea). The surrounding villages who also hold a great potential especially for cultural tourism have been left in total deterioration due to migration and lack of political and economical support, lack of policies and also lack of organization and coordination in fostering tourism in this region. Nevertheless, the data shown (table 9) shows that according to 4 websites suggestions of what to visit in Gjirokastra, the Castle of Gjirokastra, Old Bazaar of Gjirokastra, and Zakate Traditional house are among the most suggested. This shows that both the assigned entities of the Albanian Government and two international independent organization promote only specific sites, living out of the attention the true potentials of the county and city. This has also created a concentrated tourism flow in the city of Gjirokastra, leaving under the shadow many of the true cultural and natural heritage as true potential in

National Folk Festival

Near by Village
in Gjirokastra

Traditional Houses

Hadrianopolis

Churches in the County
of Gjirokastra

National Folk Festival

Interior of Traditional
Houses in Gjirokastra

The Bazaar
of Gjirokastra

developing the tourism sector and territory (Apendix.1). If referred to some of the most authentic elements that compose the image of the city and county of Gjirokastra beside the morphology of the city and its developments, as far as naming some of the **famous personalities** associated with the region and city of Gjirokastra are as followed:

- **Ali Pasha of Tepelna** (took over Gjirokastra in 1811)
- **Evliya Çelebi** (Ottoman official who travelled all over the Empire on behalf of the Sultan in the 17th century)
- **Edward Lear** (The English landscape painter)
- **Lord Byron** (Poet, peer, politician, and a leading figure in the Romantic movement)

Regarding the **visual compositional element of the city**, which identify Gjirokastra:

- **The castle** which served as both the palace of the ruler and a military fortification
- **The bazaar** as the area for crafts and commerce
- **Religious buildings** (churches, mosques and tekke)
- **Residential quarters**.

On the other hand, there are many more small towns throughout the Western Balkan region influenced by the Ottoman Empire which still hold on to similar visual elements. Such examples to compare Gjirokastra to are Berati (Albania); Ohrid (Macedonia); Prizren (Kosovo); Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ioanina (Greece).

Fig. 15 "Western Balkan region influenced by the Ottoman Empire". Source: Sonia Jojic

Mostar, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Prizren, KOSOVO

Ohrid, MACEDONIA

Berat, ALBANIA
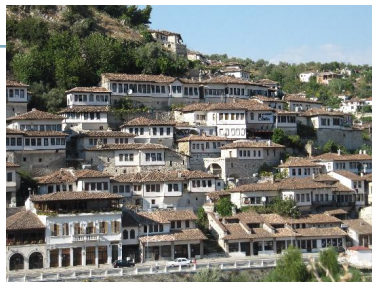
Ioannina, GREECE

3.3 Economy

One of the most important commercial centres of the southwest of Albania, Gjirokastra has the capacity to foster many industries focused in manufacturing and trading, due also to the proximity with Ioanina, Greece. Nevertheless, wood working, agriculture, apparel and footwear production for the foreign market, industry of stone processing are the main sectors of the economy, hence agriculture is the main driving economical force for the region. Tourism is seen as the main potential in restoring the future economic development of the city, based on the unique cultural heritage, historical and architectural potentials, yet very little has been done in this regard. As part of promoting furthermore cultural tourism in this area and maintaining the city identity, many traditional houses have been reconstructed for owners to come back, thus slightly revitalizing tourism. However, many of the traditional houses and cultural objects in the old city of Gjirokastra continue to degrade due to lack of investments, abandonment or inappropriate renovations as very few local craftsmen are available for such projects. Following the Greek economic crisis back in 2010, the city and country of Gjirokastra was one of the first areas in Albania to suffer from it, since many Albanian emigrants in Greece became unemployed.

3.4 Demographics

According to INSTAT and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC publication of "Albania Population Projections 2011 - 2031" the regionalized medium growth scenarios foreseen for 2031, analysing the sensitivity of the projections results to the assumed trends of a) fertility, b) migration, and c) mortality. The majority of prefectures will experience loos in population – except Tirana, Durrës and Vlorë (Figure 15). Nevertheless, the report highlights that the strongest depopulation projection of -30% drop will occur in the North, Dibër and Kukës until 2031, (according

to the medium internal migration scenario), Gjirokastra will face as well a drop in population by at least -20% (INSTAT, 2014). As far as for the working age population, decline is foreseen at a slightly faster pace than the total population: by more than 18% in almost all prefectures (Figure 16), except those of gaining population through migration (Tirana, Vlorë and Durrës). Tirana is stated to be the only prefecture which will experience a significant increase in the potential labour force (by 20% by 2031, according to the medium scenario with constant out-migration and geographic distribution). In the case of Gjirokastra, Berat and Diber will suffer the
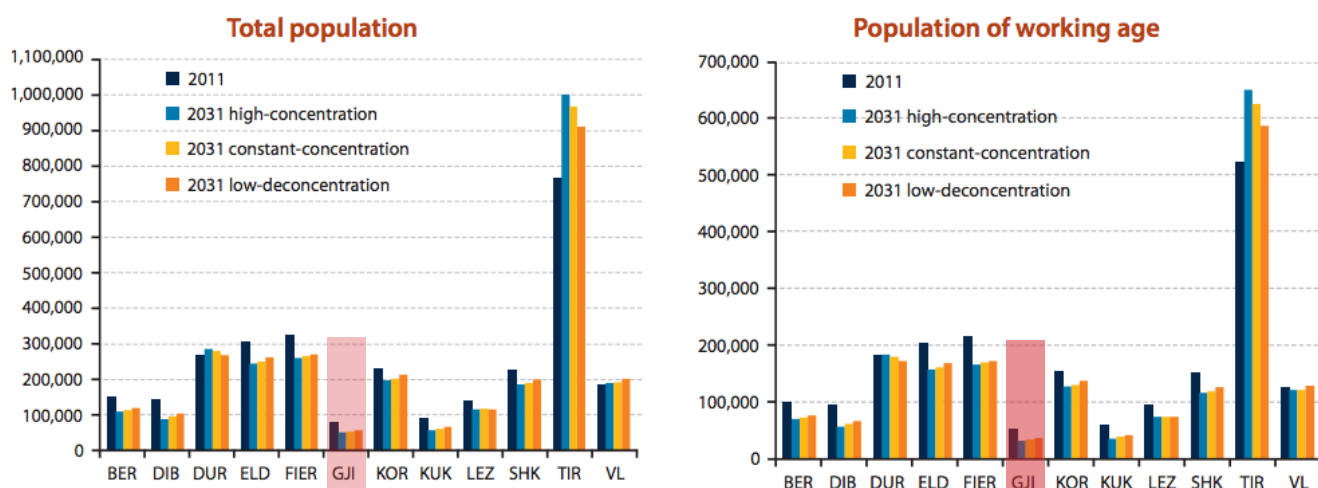
Note: Regionalized medium growth scenarios with different levels of internal out-migration and different degrees of spatial concentration of in-migrants.

Fig. 16 *"Evolution of total and working age (aged 15-64) population according to three scenarios of internal migration, Prefectures of Albania, 2011-2031".* Source: INSTAT, 2014
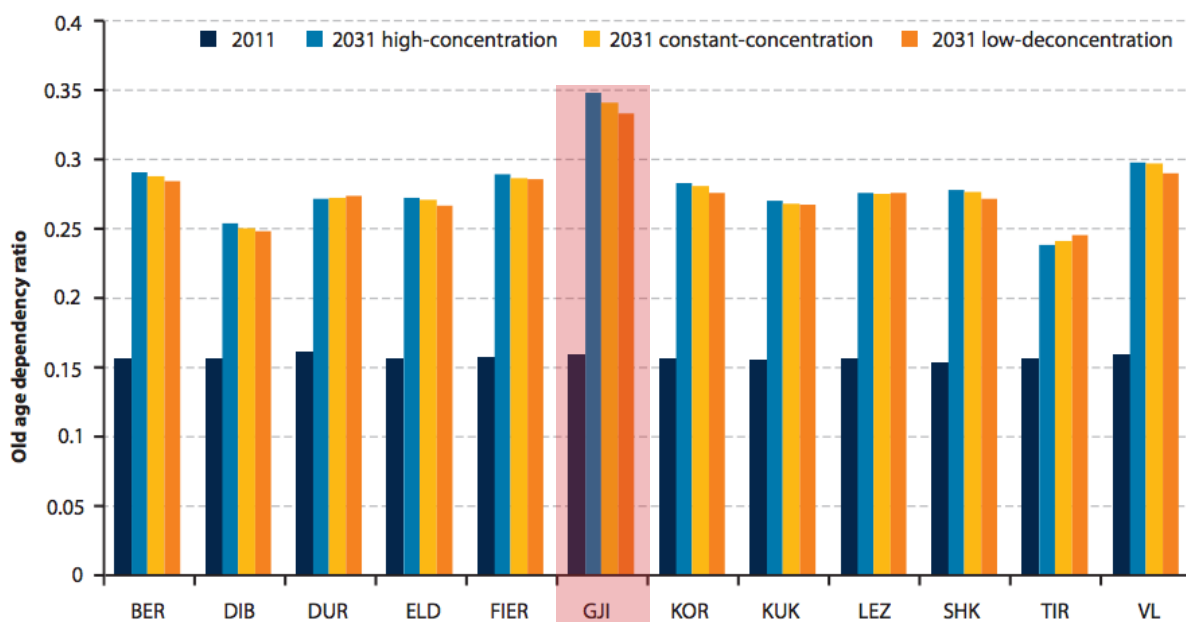
Note: Regionalized medium growth scenarios with different levels of internal out-migration and different degrees of spatial concentration of in-migrants.

Fig.17 *"Old age dependency ratio according to three scenarios of internal migration, Prefecture of Albania, 2011-2031, in (%)1".* Source: INSTAT, 2014

strongest decline in potential labour force by -43% for Gjirokastra, and at least -30% for Berat and Dibra. INSTAT argues that if the level of internal migration increases alongside with the decline in emigration, and if diversification of domestic destinations happens, the labour force will shrink to a lesser extent – especially for those prefectures where an increasing a attractiveness for migrants was assumed (Korçë, Gjirokastër, Elbasan, Berat, Lezhë. Nevertheless, the report states that demographic ageing will progress more rapidly in the South, with small differences between the scenarios (Figure 17). In Gjirokastër the ratio is foreseen to increase up to 34, representing twice the current level. In the report, Gjirokastra is distinguished based on the equal importance of negative natural increase and negative net internal and international migrations in the demographic decline (INSTAT, 2014). INSTAT data's related to disability in Albania show that the percentage of population 65 and over with at least one disability on population 65 years and over in the entire country is 22.9 % of the total population. The percentage of women over 15 years and over with at least one disability on female population 15 years and over 6.7% and percentage of men 15 years and over with at least one disability on male population over 15 years and over is 5.7%.

3.5 Feasibility

In regards to development projects, the county of Gjirokastra has been attracting the attention of many donors and projects, with focus on the Municipalities of Gjirokaster and Permet. The country of Gjirokastra has been benefiting over the past 10-15 years from a number of donor projects mainly funded by: UNESCO, UNDP, AADF, TIKA, SN, IADSA, CESVI, EU IPA CBC, etc., In addition to all this projects, in 2013 the county of Gjirokastra has also benefited from projects focusing on urban revival (infrastructure-focused) projects, namely in Gjirokaster, Permet, Kelcyre, and Tepelenë. Nevertheless, the most recent projects related to tourism and job creation focused on:

(1) Stone and Wood: Enhancement and Promotion of Traditional Architecture in the Areas of Ioannina and Gjirokaster (EU funded, focus on infrastructure)

(2) Rehabilitation of Infrastructure in Vlore, Fier And Gjirokaster Qarks in Albania (EU funded) Milieukontakt International Albania is implementing the project: "Rural Inclusive Social & Economic Opportunities - RISE-OP" (EU funded, focus on infrastructure)

(3) TID Gjirokaster, funded by AADF – The potential TID in Gjirokaster is located in the Old Bazaar at the heart of the historical part of the city. This project includes the preparation phase of the full restoration design from the Old Bazaar as well as Cerciz Topulli square. The revitalization and commercialization of the historic city centre of Gjirokastra, thought to directly impact the development of the communities

and businesses in the area. Their quality of life will be directly improved. (AADF, 3.2 million USD, 2016-2017, focus on tourism both infrastructure and soft development) (AADF, 2016).

4) Approved IPA projects for Gjirokastra County according to annual implementation report 2013 of IPA Cross-Border Programme Greece-Albania 2007-2013: VAEcoM; AGROMETEOROLOGY; SSMNature; STONEWOOD; BrandINode

3.6 Research and Innovation

According to IPA cross-border cooperation report, as far as research and innovation at an national level, Albania experienced significant progress in strategic and operational management of research and technological development programmes, highlighted also through the number of project - proposals submitted by Albanian research institutions to EU and international programmes. However, the report concludes that the level of investment in research and technological development is still very low, private sector research & development is very limited, and University-Industry collaboration is among the lowest ranked in the world. In addition, due to the lack of reliable statistics, it remains difficult to either establish the level of investment in research & development as a share of Gross Domestic Product (which is around 0.35% of Gross Domestic Product) or to document its regional incidence/characteristics (IPA, 2015). Despite the general result of IPA report, and in accordance with the aim of this research regarding the development of sustainable tourism in Gjirokastra, as far as research for this county, the University of Gjirokastra (Eqrem Cabej) specializes only in Social and Pedagogical Sciences and Natural Sciences. Furthermore (INSTAT, 2016).

In order to validate the aim of this research, for future possibilities of fostering sustainable tourism for the county of Gjirokastra as a potential tool in branding the city but also the county, a SWOT analyses was conducted relying also to IPA data's from past cross-border projects. The SWOT analyses, tackled a) Demography and migration; b) Geography and Environment c) Economy; d) Tourism and Culture; e) Education; f) Labour Market g) Accessibility and Market.

SWOT	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Demography and migration	Vibrant urban centres concentrating economic activities.	-Decreasing population and unfavourable demographic trends for the county of Gjirokastra, especially for inland and remote areas. -Internal migration followed by external immigration.	-Significant trends of emigrants returning back -Advantages of new possibilities for the future development in the county and city of Gjirokastra.	Population decline - Population ageing creating social problems and decline of labour market.

SWOT	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Geography and Environment	Large habitats and areas of outstanding natural beauty. Rich water resources	-Lack of environmental infrastructure and inadequate implementation of environmental protection policies -Inadequate policies/systems	Renewable energy sources (RES) University of Gjirokastra engagement in research for natural sciences. Utilization of the area geographical and natural resources.	Bad impacts of the natural environment, created by the ongoing deterioration.

SWOT	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
ECONOMY	- The Albanian cross border area - Existence of sectors with strong potential for development of sustainable tourism	Ongoing economic crisis based on population decline -Considerable disparities in the region in respect to the economic development level and labour productivity -Insufficient professional capacity into bringing investments or funds from outside sources -Lack of a common goal and vision in transforming tourism as the main economical source	- Cultural and natural resources becoming the main source of economical growth through the idea of sustainable tourism - Providing adequate resources and job supply in establishing economical stability which would lead to retaining professional in the region -Similar productive systems connected with sustainable tourism development with potential for cross-border linkages.	-Economical Crises on neighbouring countries (Greece - Italy) -Slow global and regional economic growth - Intense competition in relation to globalization Political instability in the country and region. Lack of regulation

SWOT	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Tourism and Culture	Important cultural heritage / UNESCO Monuments. -Rich and pristine natural areas -Variety of landscapes -Significant inland undeveloped potential (traditional villages,etc) -Common cultural elements in the cross-border area	Inadequate planning & management in the tourism sector - Missing action plans for tourist development (lack of proper branding, lack of information; lack of infrastructure in reaching this touristic destinations, etc.	- Cultural and natural resources becoming the main source of economical growth - Recent growth trends in Mediterranean tourism - Recent increased cruise traffic in the area (positive force aiding in increased traffic is also the port of Saranda)	Inadequate planning/management capacity of natural habitats and tourist attractions -On going degradation and lack of support -Natural disasters.

SWOT	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Education	Established University. Further research based on management and collaboration with UNESCO. CHwB organization participation on restoration projects	-Although seen as one of the most educated regions, there is loss of professionals. -Lack of professional schools focusing in tourism development and craftsmanship etc.	Professional Specialization Strategies seen as opportunity in linking education to the most dynamic parts of the local economy	Lack of politics and regulations as well as missing coordination in managing UNESCO world heritage sites

SWOT	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Labour Market	-One of the most educated regions after Tirana.	-Although one of the most educated regions, has the highest rate of professional loss due to migration and emigration -Lack of job opportunities in the tourism sector for the Gjirokastra country -Low rates of employment -High rates of unemployment, youth and women unemployment	-Professional Specialization seen as opportunity in linking education and labour in the tourism sector, craftsmanship etc. as a dynamic part of the local economy EU policies for increasing labour mobility	-Limited job opportunities due to prolonged recession.
SWOT	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Accessibility and transport	-Improved infracture connecting with the capital and other major cities -Proximity to Saranda Port, which now allows anchoring cruise ships. Proximity to important Greek cities such as Corfu and Ioanina	-Deficiencies in the secondary road network, connecting to many other important location of the county -Main accessibility still provided by the regional road network. -Missing air and rail transport in Gjirokastra region infrastructure (crucial for the development of tourism). Lack of accessibility and organization of information to touristic sites	-Professional Specialization seen as opportunity in linking education and labour in the tourism sector, craftsmanship etc. as a dynamic part of the local economy EU policies for increasing labour mobility	-Limited job opportunities due to prolonged recession.

3.7 Market Research

The Albanian government has recognized tourism is a very promising industry which has been increasing (based in international arrivals) each year. TO deepen the value of this research, reliable data for developing tourism strategy have been realized in focus of creating a visitors profile. In 2007, a visitor survey was done in Gjirokastra by the Gjirokastra Foundation "Seasonal tourism survey report about important cultural and natural sites – Summer 2007" (Albania & UNDP, 2007). This survey included 207 questionnaires for a period of time from June 5th to September 20. Back in August of 2011, an additional 300 visitors were interviewed. The results of the fist survey concluded that the typical visitors profile to visit Gjirokastra were young well educated middle-class European adults (UNDP, 2011). Means of travel were by car or bus, and had a stay of one or two days as a part of a tour which included other

Albanian sites. Most of the visitors were first time visitors and their most common reason for visiting was out of interest and low prices. Most of the survey concluded that the visitors in Gjirokastra were generally satisfied with the trip. However, due to insufficient things and materials do to in Gjirokastra, more likely they would not return due to the fact of a low amount of activities that were available; most of them only went to the museums and walked around in the city. Nevertheless, some of the positive factors of Gjirokastra related to as a tourism destination were the architectural heritage, natural and cultural heritage and friendly people. Poor tourism information, pollution, and infrastructure were identified as main issues concerning the tourism product that Gjirokastra offers. (Albania & UNDP, 2007). Also in the report of 2011 the issues were still apparent. Some of the common conclusion from bot reports, were the adaptable changes that had to be made to prolong visitors stay in the area. (UNDP & Gjirokastra, 2011).

In enriching more this research, visitor interview were conducted in Gjirokastra back in the summer of 2014, interviewing 20 visitors located in the old bazaar (see appendix). The time period for conducting this interview was intentionally done in the summer, were Gjirokastra has potentials in attracting many. 20 answers were seen as the enough form to come up will a synthesis generalizations of visitors profile, as most of the visitors were travelling alone (75 percent) and with a time frame of three nights as a part of a trip around Albania (approximately 10 days of stay). 85 percent of this visitors were over the 40 years old (at this time of the season). In addition, the travel pattern that this travellers profile conducted while being in Albania consisted of visiting Tirana as the first stop, Berat (UNESCO word heritage city). Durres, Saranda, Dhermi, Ioannina, were mentioned as visited during this trip. As the questioners results show (appendix 1) none of the interviewed purchased a package tour. The main used sources consisted of retrieving information be the lonely planet, trip advisor and other online information to guide them around. Most of the tourists interviewed stated the difficulties of finding additional sources (80 percent) of information regarding their trip to Albania, but especially Gjirokastra, also emphasising the need of displaying a website related to Gjirokastra county. On of the helping benefits while thier were visiting Albania and Gjirokastra was the fact that mostly everyone in Albania could speak English. Many of the visitors found is helpful of using city maps available at some hotels. As in the previous survey in 2007 and 2011 highlighted that the visitors activity was mostly based on walking around in the town, sightseeing and visiting museums, an increase interest in exploring the natural and cultural heritage in the Gjirokastra county was spotted. However this alternatives of activities exploring also the villages around the county, were impossible due to insufficient information, guidance, accessibility, infrastructure, although of the high appreciation that the interviewed had for Gjirokastra and its region. As stated by one

of the interviewed, about exploring the landscape of Gjirokastra and surroundings:

> *"You simply don't walk around alone in the wilderness at my age – you need tour guides because for many reason related to information, safety, etc. And plus there are no trails or signs or maps at the hotels. But then again there isn't even a tourism office here so not much can be expected"*
> *(Man 58 years old)*

Another issue arisen during the research was in regards of the cities abandoned houses, which left out a bitter perception of the overall image of Gjirokastra.

3.8 Tourism Stakeholders

In the branding of cities literature review, stakeholders were one of the most important enhancer of developing a branding image for places. In the case of Gjirokastra's tourism development, many are identified in terms of social (hierarchy and interests) and geographical (new and old time). The highest level of identified stakeholders consists of the assigned government in Tirana regarding tourism, Ministry of Tourism, and Culture, assigned of governmental issues regarding new and old laws on tourism, cultural heritage; assigned NGOs affecting Gjirokastras tourism development.

Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship(Ministry of Tourism). The main role of the sector in this ministry is to support, protect, develop and promote tourism resources of cultural and natural heritage, material and spiritual in accordance with the action plan and in cooperation with other institutions of central government, local government sector and civil society.

Albanian National Tourism Agency A public entity under the jurisdiction of the Minister responsible for tourism in Albania. The main roles of the Albanian National Tourism Agency are to perform and conduct main functions related to tourism promotion and marketing, as well as other functions prescribed by the Albanian law: in promoting, support and facilitate the possibility of funds for individuals and companies involved or which intend to deal with tourist activities

Tourist Assistance Office, in 2010 in each of the 12 regions of Albania, Regional Tourist Assistance Offices have been established to facilitate information of tourism to visitors.

3.9 Concluding Remarks

Although the county of Gjirokastra is full in natural and cultural resources, the research shows that it is greatly under-utilized, left forgotten to deteriorate of its potentials in a daily basis. Apart from the most prominent industry such as agricultural, the county of Gjirokastra offers many tourism derived potentials. Although tourism is seen as the main potential in restoring the future economic development of the city, based on the unique cultural heritage, historical and architectural potentials, yet very little has been done in this regard. In regards to development projects, the county of Gjirokastra has been attracting the attention of many donors and projects, with focus on the Municipalities of Gjirokaster and Permet. As far as economical development of the county, INSTAT demographics show that the majority of prefectures will experience loos in population – except Tirana, Durrës and Vlorë, where Gjirokastra will face as well a drop in population by at least -20%. In the case of labour force, Gjirokastra, is amongst the counties that will suffer the strongest decline in potential labour force by -43%, due to migration and immigration by 2031. Although, Gjirokastra houses the University of Eqerem Cabej, the assigned specialization focus only in Social and Pedagogical Sciences and Natural Sciences, not utilizing the possibility of developing other specialization aiding to the tourism industry.

Based on the SWOT Analyses above, the research done so far emphasises the need of creating sustainable tourism as the right tool in fostering a sustainable image of the city, economy, environment, and social development. This is also seen as a potential branding tool for the right image construction for the county and especially the city of Gjirokastra in attracting not only visitors, but also future residents and businesses. Nevertheless, relating to the tourism industry, the data from (Table. 9) showed that the current promotion that is being done in the county by the assigned entities of what to visit in Gjirokastra, only three cultural heritage objects were noted from the whole county and city, living out of the attention the true potentials of the county and city's near by attractions, creating a concentrated tourism flow in the historic centre of Gjirokastra, thus not allowing the true comportment of the county such as the landscape, traditions, and furthermore to be valorized further more.

Chapter 4
Introduction

This chapter explores the general concept of branding, where further on focuses in banding cities, places, destinations literature in creating an overall idea of how do city branders and managers foster the image perception of tourist about certain places. This chapter also overviews the relationship between branding cities and the tourist gaze, residents and research based on the built environment, hallmark events and famous personalities as acupuncture points of attracting tourists.

4.1 City Branding

City Branding itself is the process of distinguishing and diversification, where local tourism organizations, cultural and arts facilities, museums, historic preservation groups join and construct a place images, helping in producing tourist sites with the common aim to attract consumers and investment to a particular local area. This process involves in two main components, 1. Place making or city building,(the process which makes a specific place more attractive) and 2. Place or city branding (the process of promoting a place), (Anholt, 2008), (Avraham and Ketter, 2008), (Kavaratzis, 2004). The main goals of city branding is to re-image a city perception, depending on its place identities and of course understanding the local culture of the place. Still, city branding is more than the promotion of a place and its marketing, its about constructing and reshaping the cities image from its historical architecture and street plans, the images of the city heard or read, the art produced by its residents etc, thus attracting the desirable consumers and maximizing consumers spending. Therefore, City Branding aims to:

1. Develop new ways of communicating the city's image
2. Achieve competitive advantages
3. Strengthen the reputation of a city, improving also its economical importance.

Building a good city image is an important mixture of activity and structure. Because successful brands give benefit beyond the physical aspects of cities, there is a big necessity to process the visual image into a unique brand image through clear strategies. As Unsworth states, ''City branding should be associated to the main things that people should know about a place''. Thus, the process of creating a brand requires media-generated imagery; branding of the urban projects; city life, historical buildings, important signature architecture, and the overall form of the city, should follow in accordance with main target focus on how to develop the brand (tourism, investments, actracting new residents)

4.1.1 City Branding comparable to corporate branding

While researching if branding is whether beneficial for cities or not, the first is to define branding. The American Marketing Association defines 'brand' as 'a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors'. On the other hand, Hankinson (2004) also emphasise the distinctive character of the branded product which is the result of the positioning efforts in relation to competition and unique combination of attributes and values. Paul Biedermann defines brand as the essence of one's own unique story. Moreover, De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley (1998) define brand is a multidimensional construct of values facilitated by the producers and recognized by the consumers of the product. This is a two – way process of communication between the owners of the brand and the consumers who perceive it. It is more than a name or a slogan promoting a certain product, as it integrates a number of different qualities associated with that specific product. A brand differentiates a product from its competitors by these attributes and values, forming a unique combination. Thus, a brand carries values, bonding's and loyalness in relation to the customer (Stigel and Frimann, 2006).

Nevertheless, a distinction is necessary to be made between product or service brands and corporate brands. Corporate brands different from product brand have a slightly different aim. The targets are not only the customers, like in the case of product brands, but different stakeholder groups. Therefore their complexity ought to involve the company's mission, values, beliefs, communication and culture. (Simoes and Dibb, 2001). As defined by Simoeas and Dibb, a corporate brand is a continuous expression of the distinctive business model of an organization through the verbal, visual and behavioural means.

4.1.2 The concept of "brand" and "branding"

In addition of the comparison of city branding and corporate branding, distinction should be made also between the concepts of brand and branding, which are not equal. As described by the Business Dictionary term "Branding" involves the entire process of creating a unique name and image for a product or company in the minds of consumers and other stakeholders. (businesdictionary.com). On the other hand, the term "Brand" is an overall image or set of perceptions and associations in people's perception of the brand. Hence, "Branding", emphasis on establishing and maintaining this brand. (Stigel and Frimann, 2006). However, branding does involve promotion, most importantly, it goes beyond it. The aim of branding is to establish a significant and distinguished presence in the market that attracts and retains loyal

customers. Indeed, the aim of branding is not only to distinguish a product or a service from others, it consists also in the representations of values and beliefs that will influence the behaviour of customers (Tasci and Kozak, 2006). After all branding is about altering or refining an image. Thus, it should be treated as a complete and continuous process, which all other marketing activities are subject. (Kavaratzis, 2004). In fact when it comes to places, they are very complex and can be still treated as a single product, however the functions of this product should be treated as a combination of various services, associations, etc. In his book "How to Brand Nations, Cities and Destinations" Rainisto (2003) states that place brands are more similar to corporate umbrella brands than they are to product brands, and therefore a place's image is a value a place can benefit from. While referring corporate branding the company itself is the main focus and not the products or services it offers, is the company's mission, vision and culture that are the main elements of branding. It can be believed that the same applies to places, as place branding is not about the single products the city offers, it is about the larger picture of branding the city as a whole entity. Thus, the main goal of place branding is in using the place's values that are associated with its local products, which can promote the place itself. Similar to corporate branding, place branding is about attributing certain qualities to the entire combination of place products, as every single one of these products can then befit from the place brand as a whole.

In addition, Merrilees, Miller and Herington (2009) define place branding "as the ways in which communities, cities, regions and countries market their entity". Thus, defining City branding as a part of place branding which applies to single cities rather than whole regions or countries. On the other hand, if a city's efforts focus on attracting tourists, then city branding can be expected to be a part of destination branding. Since destination branding applies to the tourism market, its primary aim is to attract visitors to a given destination. Therefore, city branding can be considered as both place branding and destination branding for an urban region. "Cities have always been brands in the truest sense of the word". (Anholt, 2008). Anholt reinforces the idea that governmental attempts have been made to create place identity and to promote it to its either external or internal consumers, have long taken place before the name 'city brand' started to be used. (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Thus, city branding in its essence is similar to corporate branding, both of them aim to attract attention of multiple stakeholders and not single customer groups. Furthermore, both city branding and corporate branding have multidisciplinary roots, they both have a high level of intangibility and complexity, which need to take into account also social responsibility, both dealing with multiple identities and need a long – term development. (Anholt, 2008) In fact, Hankinson (2007) claims that city brands are comparable to corporate brands and consequently concludes that place branding

needs leadership, a brand-oriented organisational culture, coordination of different departments influencing the "brand", constant and consistent communication and strong partnerships. Hence, methods and techniques applied previously to corporate branding can now be used for building strong city brands. (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005). After all, the idea behind branding is to persuade the customer, in which the city is able to fulfil his needs better than the competition. Michalis Kavaratzis states in his article "From city marketing to city branding: Towards a theoretical framework for developing city brands", that city branding and city brand management aim at influencing spatial behaviour of people and companies by putting the city on their mental maps and enforcing the positive perception of it, whether it relates to living, visiting or investing.(Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005). On the past years the aim of city branding has changed, from attracting outsiders, nowadays it focuses more on the current and potential residents rather than just visitors. It has become more important to keep its residents, and thus keeping business in the city, thus resulting in sustainability. In conclusion, we can define place branding as the planning and execution of the entire process of creating, managing and/or improving the perceptions of a existing city, its potential customers and other stakeholders, which aim to influence the spatial behaviour of customers, being beneficial for the city's sustainability and development, and focuses on the values of a city as a whole.

4.1.3 Effects of branding cities

The success of city branding can be evaluated in relations with the strength of the brand. Nevertheless, if city authority is to invest its time and resources in the construction and maintenance of a high-ranking brand, of course it has to get a return on that investment. With this said, it is essential to know what the benefits of having a strong city brand will be and what disadvantages and issues can a weak brand cause. In today's globalized world, cities compete with each other to attract investment and business, capital, consumers, tourists, attention, and respect. (Anholt, 2008). As definited by Kavaratzis (2007) in his article, "Cities and their brands: Lessons from corporate branding", he defines that corporate brands should be seen as the foundation for a long-term firm and organization to succeed. (Kavaratzis,2004). As reviewed earlier, city brands can be treated similarly as corporate brands, based on the long-term sustainability and development, always depending on the strength of the brand. Branding gives cities a distinctive identity, so to say, distinguishing cities from each other. Building up a strong brand means being able to distinguish your brand from competitors, related to investment, business, residents and visitors. The positive impact of a strong brand is all the awareness raised of an existing place. On the other hand, city's potential customers perceive its qualities better than those of its competitors. Most importantly, a strong brand consents in controlling

how the city's products are being used (Kavaratzis, Ashworth, 2004). Anholt argues that decisions made by people about where to live, holidays, business or where to invest are partially rational but partially emotional too. (Anholt, 2006). Thus the idea of branding is to pull these emotions in ones favour.

4.1.4 Branding strategies for cities

City image can be projected into the international market place very fast, where the chances of attracting tourist, companies, will certainly improve the urban vitality of the city. Importance of city branding focuses in the empowerment of local knowledge and creativity which can be used in a more efficient approach to public planning and urban development of the city, thus using city branding as an essential tool in urban regeneration. On the other hand, city branding can also be treated as segment of destination branding when concerning tourism. Tourism is the main backbone for political and economic progress and social restructuring, helping in exposing domestic enterprises to the international market, but also encourages interaction between host populations with outsiders. Nevertheless, the value of place branding and destination branding is in the importance of attracting visitors, with a highly potential of helping the economical aspect of the city. Branding can bring positive and profitable associations. However, in creating a positive city image a set of clear values should be defined with the brand. Branding is not just about logos and slogans, but the "ACTUAL IDENTITY" of the brand itself that takes in consideration different groups of stakeholders. Nonetheless, branding should be based on a clear set of values and beliefs with a clear purpose for the strategy to be effective and in return beneficial for the city. In order to be successful and have a long-term impact, branding should be accompanied with actual visual changes within the city. Undoubtedly, marketing campaigns have a slightly impact in helping to 'sell' the city as a tourist destination, investment location by improving the perceptions of people about the city. Moreover, the role of branding should also focus in policy change. In his article "Place branding: Is it marketing or isn't it?. Anholt, claims that strategy consists about the knowledge of the authorities of the current situation of the city, what is the actual desired position of the city and how to get and manage it. In addition, "Substance" is stated as the implementation of the strategy in different forms, such as economic, political, and cultural activities which take place in the city. In conclusion, 'Symbolic' is seen as the action that will be communicating the actual changes in the city. (Anholt, 2008). Most of the time, people believe that the image of a city improves with excessive marketing or advertising tools, however it is the actual change that is being communicated and used as a marketing tool. Definitely branding is important, still alone it cannot achieve much. It has to be strengthened by positive visible evidence in the city.

4.1.5 The 4d place branding model

Branding itself is a major trait of contemporary postindustrial society. As mentioned before, Kavaratzis (2009) claims that the concept and techniques of product and corporate branding are now also employed in a variety of different ways, including place branding (Kavaratzis, 2009). Through recent years, there have been many attempts in branding Albania, on the international public eye. However, through past observation, the government, many city leaders, public and private institutions do not fully understand the philosophy, on how to brand their cities, resulting in a lot of false projection of money in such projects. As a result, the many attempts done in the past have resulted not appropriate in regards of the city , place, image of some of the regions in Albania. Thomas Gad's 4D Place Branding Model consists in conducting in more in-depth research as a framework for destination marketing projects. This also encompasses further communication process that helps establish the brand and its message with regards to the target audiences. The 4D Place Branding Model, thus also focuses on communicating a created image. This reflects the essential role assigned to image formulation and image communication in theoretical discussions (Kavaratzis, 2004). Thomas Gad's 4D Place Branding Model consists of four phases: 1. Discover, 2.Define, 3.Design (re-Design) and 4.Deliver. The model was designed for general application of place branding. Moreover, place branding can be treated as a new image created by distinctive characteristics of a place as well as preexistent images.

Discover: The first phase where primary research takes place, consisting of five constitutive parts, including questionnaires, workshops conducted by NGO, interviews, research on materials and analysis. Gupta, A. (2010), in her publication "Branding a nation: Framework for building favourable country-image", claims that "discovering" and identifying the image of a place is thought to be the preliminary aspect in the theory of branding (Gupta, 2010). Moreover, Gertner and Kotler state that the image of a place influences the brand response to its residents, visitors and investors (Gertner and Kotler, 2004). Still, Kotler emphasizes that the image of a place is a sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of a place (Gertner and Kotler, 2004). In addition, cultural heritage often incorporates traditional and cultural values of certain regions or places, hereby including beliefs, ideas, traditions, architecture and foods, which can be used in creating or identifying the image of a place. The focus of Discover as the first component of the 4D Place Branding Model is to gather all the significant and available resources for creating the underlying themes of the brand image. These underlying themes can focus on distinct cultural and heritage values, historical stories, local values or natural resources of the place. Morgan (2006) argues in her publication "How has place branding developed

during the year that place branding has been in publication, Place Branding." that the process of branding focuses in two main phases: 1. Internally, all the gathered information of cultural and historic artefacts help in identifying the preferred and suitable image of the city; 2. Externally, focusing in discovering the citizens' perception of the cities. Nevertheless, both these two phases have a reciprocal process, thus underlying that the direction and themes of the place branding strategy are determined through the Discover process. **Define:** The second phase of the 4D Place Branding Model is Define, aiming to identify a simple definition and clear solution for the brand positioning, reflecting the uniqueness of the concept of brand identity in theories of branding, which indicates the way in which the branding theme wants the brand to be preserved (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006). The process of Define starts by extracting a word or creating a slogan, a memorable phrase, that defines a place. Description occurs in a concise form, which can be in a length of a paragraph or in a statement in comprehensive scale.

Design / re-Design: Design (re-Design), the third phase in which the process of created or present images are transformed into tangential branding resources. This is described by Kavaratzis (2004) as the core part in branding places, were re-image or re-inventing of a place is done. This phase falls right after the of developing a brand through its branding positions from the previous stage of Define. As Kotler (1999) describes in his book "Marketing Places Europe", there are four distinct areas used as the core for creating competitiveness in place branding: 1. Design (character), 2. Infrastructure (fixed environment), 3. Basic services (service provider) and 4. Attractions (entertainment and recreation), proposing on how to enhance the attractiveness of a destination through practical design. The Design (re-Design) phase from the 4D Place Branding Model also includes a range of different strategies for brand positioning, such as cultural heritage and physical design. There are general qualities that make up the physical design related to the landscape, urban space, architecture and infrastructure, which reveal's the place brand and uniqueness of the destination. Cultural exhibition features the distinctive cultural heritage in the form of paintings, relics, traditional songs and performances, food making, local customs and ceremonies. Since the presentation of the cultural heritage elements contributes to communicating the brand and its messages to the people on a more direct level, it is reflected both in the process of image formulation and communication. Nowadays, succeeding in attracting wider recognition is part of the development agenda of contemporary cities, faced with the need to differentiate and compete against one another. However, city branding plays an important role in this struggle of recognition. On the other hand Cultural Heritage, tangible or intangible can potentially become a striving force in creating an identity and a city brand for Gjirokastra. Thus, some of the assets of branding Gjirokastra can rely on creating

a link with the city's historical identity, not only for Albania but also as a model to be used in the Western Balkan Countries.

Deliver: The fourth phase of Tomas Gads branding model is Deliver. This step of the process aims to communicate the brand and designated messages to the intended target audiences. This phase is set to work constantly to strengthen the image of the situated brand by communicating through multiple channels (marketing means of communication).

4.2 Theory of city branding

For the past ten years the topic of city branding has gained a significant interest to both academics and policy makers. Nowadays, many cities tend to compete globally in attracting tourism, investment and talents, as well as achieving many other objectives, the concepts of brand strategy has been increasingly adopted from the commercial and applied to the urban development, regeneration and quality of life of cities. Nevertheless, much of the published research regarding city branding originates from the disciplines of marketing and urban studies, two fields that have tended to follow parallel rather than interdisciplinary paths.

Interest in city branding may be seen as part of a wider recognition in which places of all kinds benefit from implementing coherent strategies, regarding management of their resources, reputation and image. Many recent publications on city branding, nations and regions include those by Anholt (2007), Avraham and Ketter (2008), Govers and Go (2009) and Moilanen and Rainisto (2008). Whereas these books encompass the branding of nations and regions as well as cities, a more specific and singular focus on cities can be found in a growing body of journal articles that explore the nature of city branding (Kavaratzis, 2004).

Moreover, many scholars have drawn close parallelism between city branding and corporate branding, by which they note that the branding of cities and corporations share similarities in terms of their complexity and range of stakeholders (Hankinson, 2007; Kavaratzis, 2009; Parkerson and Saunders, 2005; Trueman et al., 2004). Part of the complexity of city brands is determined from their accountability to address the needs of a wide spectrum of different target groups. Target groups may vary, from tourists (Bickford-Smith, 2009), sports fans (Chalip and Costa, 2005), fashion consumers and residents (Greenberg, 2000). Nevertheless, research has also shown that techniques of marketing and branding may also be used in order to tackle existing negative perceptions of a city (Paddison, 1993).

Many authors of city branding literature, particularly in the urban and regional studies, have been focusing on the concept of creative city[1] (Bayliss, 2007; Ooi, 2008). However, the popularization of the concept of creative city possess much to the work of Florida (2003, 2005), who recommends that city policy makers attempt to attract 'the creative class' as residents in order to enhance local economies (Dinnie, 2006). The creative class group which Florida highlights include scientists, architects, writers, artists and others who create new ideas, technology and creative content. In contrary, Scott (2006) challenges Florida's view and questions whether the existence of a creative class within a city will automatically lead toward the development of local economy. Regardless of the relative arguments of Florida's and Scott's upon the creative class regarding the city's economic performance, talent attraction remains one of the key objective's for many city branding campaigns. Vibrant cultural life on the other hand is seen as one of the prerequisite in branding a city to appeal the creative class and several cities have made efforts to revitalize their cultural life in this respect (Chang, 2000; Peel and Lloyd, 2008).

4.2.1 The concept of brand architecture

The concept of brand architecture is well established in the branding literature (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000)[2]. In addition, in the context of corporate brands, Devlin and Mcechnie (2008: 654) define brand architecture as 'an organisation's approach to the design and management of its brand portfolio'. The concept of brand architecture[3] has been applied to the branding of places by Dooley and Bowie (2005) and Dinnie (2008), who examine and explain the different ways in which a place brand organizes its 'sub-brands' in a similar way which corporations manage their portfolio of product or service brands.

MONOLITHIC   ENDORSED   PLURALISTIC

BRAND   BRAND   BRAND
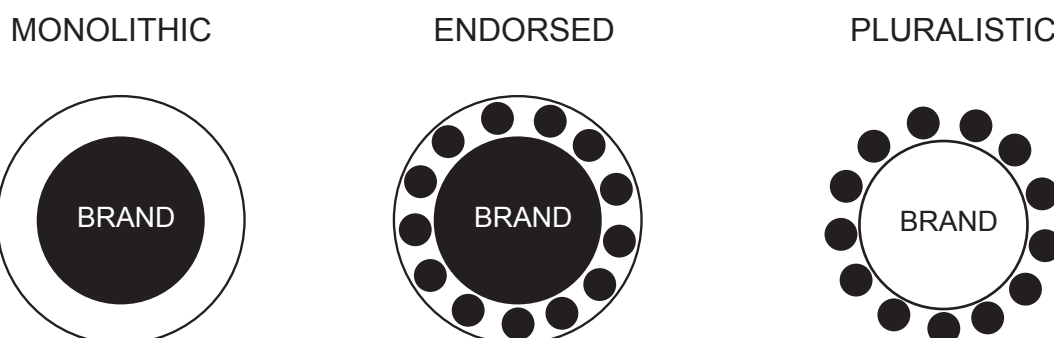
1   The concept of creative city was developed by David Yencken in 1988 and has since become a global movement reflecting a new planning paradigm for cities. It was first described in his article 'The Creative City', published in the literary journal Meanjin. In this article Yencken argues that while cities must be efficient and fair, a creative city must also be one that is committed to fostering creativity among its citizens and to providing emotionally satisfying places and experiences for them.

2   Aaker, D. and Joachimsthaler, E. (2000), Brand Leadership, The Free Press, New York, United States.

3   Brand architecture falls under one of three categories: monolithic, endorsed, and pluralistic. Monolithic brand architecture (the type we implemented for MOSAIC) features one master brand with subordinate iterations, while endorsed and pluralistic architectures feature parent brands with differing relationships to the divisions they oversee

The key challenge for a city brand revolves around the issue of how to develop a strong 'umbrella' brand that is coherent across a range of different areas of activity with different target audiences. Moreover, target audiences are as diverse as a city's residents, potential investors, tourists and stakeholders. Often there is an important relationship between the city brand and the nation brand of a country in which the city is located. In order to create and develop a strong brand, policy makers and experts need to identify a clear set of brand attributes that the city possesses and which can form the basis for kindle positive perceptions of the city across multiple target groups. Such attributes are those that the city brand would wish to see evoked when relevant target groups are asked the question, 'What comes to your mind when you think of this city?' Thus, the process of identifying and agreeing upon a relevant set of city brand attributes requires stakeholder engagement rather than top-down coercion. Nevertheless, many authors about city branding argue that there is e necessity of stakeholders which should evoke imagination and open mindset in the identification and selection of the appropriate brand attributes of a city or place that powerfully express the unique character of the city. Inspiration may be found in food or culture or a city's commitment in managing its environment responsibly. Whatever attributes are selected, they should be communicated effectively not only through traditional channels but also through the use of digital media available nowadays evermore to the wide public.

4.2.2 Cities and the tourist gaze

Nowadays, urban tourism is one of the most fastest growing segments of worldwide tourism market. Thanks to a number of low cost transport carriers, city trips have become increasingly popular. Planning a city trip has become more than easy more than half of European consumers arrange their holidays on their personal computer. Clearly, competition between cities for tourists has increased (Selby, 2004). Due to this phenomenon, more cities try to invest in city branding. In their Research Report of the Nordic Innovation Centre in Oslo, *"Image of the City: Urban Branding as Constructed Capabilities in Nordic City Regions"* Jason and Power, state that the usual branding strategies employed are usually twofold (Jansson and Power, 2006):

1. Cities either emphasize the material characteristics of the place such as buildings and events, or its

2. Immaterial aspects, for example, stories, slogans and logos. In this way, cities hope to differentiate themselves from the competition and attract tourists. Certainly, city branding can be a useful tool in building a touristic image. But in fact how does this image building work? What can cities really do to attract attention? Why is, for

instance, Rome, Paris, or Venice are tourist magnet? To better understand the phenomenon of why tourist prefer some cities instead of other ones, which might be of the same historical value, the theory of the "tourist gaze" by Urry (1990), will be explored.

4.2.3 John Urry, cities and the tourist gaze

The British sociologist, John Urry, in his book The Tourist Gaze (1990), developed a theory on why people travel for leisure and why they visit certain places (Urry, 1990). The author, emphasises that tourism is a process that involves the act of going away to search for visual experiences that people normally do not see at home or at work. The main activities/objective of tourists are 'gazing at signs'. Signs regarding the particular features of a place, such as a famous cathedral, beautiful landscape or many other attraction that a city might have. For instance, tourist visiting New York will definitely visit the Statue of Liberty, or gaze through Wall Street or Little Italy. Different form a place inhabitants, tourists usually look for different things in a place, thus adopt a 'tourist gaze'. However, places which are gazed upon are not randomly chosen. Urry argues that the tourist gaze varies by society and is always socially constructed (Urry, 1990). According to Forbes, Chinese tourists prefer to gaze upon the city of Frankfurt, New York, gazing upon the skyscrapers. In addition, American tourists would not prefer to visit the small historic towns in Italy of their own adherence. Urry, explain that this happens due to the manipulation that happens by a variety of media channels constructing that gaze about a certain place. Advertising, television documentaries, websites and blogs, social media channels, travel guides, and newspaper articles, enable people to form an image of what to expect when visiting a place. Thus, in Urry's view, both tourists and attractions are manipulated: the gaze falls upon those features of a place that are already anticipated. Or, as Urry (2002: 3) puts it: '*When tourists see two people kissing in Paris what they are gazing upon is "timeless, romantic Paris"*'.

Urry's theory is highly affirmed by the rise of mass tourism[4] since the second half of the 19th century. Nevertheless, since from its invention, photography started to accompany tourism, right at the same time that organized tours arose. In fact, the growth of tourism had a high impact in the future development of photography. Mac-Cannell, D. (1999), states in his publication "The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class", "*that taking pictures of places that were no longer used, 'sites' were turned into 'sights': tourists started to visit churches, not to pray, but to photograph them*" (MacCannell, 1999). Peter D. Osborne views this phenomenon as a '*site*

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4   Mass Tourism is a form of tourism that involves tens of thousands of people going to the same resort often at the same time of year. It is the most popular form of tourism as it is often the cheapest way to holiday, and is often sold as a package deal. Source: www.geocoops.com/mass-tourism.html

sacralisation[5]' which has become the engine behind tourism, in an attempt of become what places are expected to be, the tourist industry thus has produced a lot of '*pseudoauthentic attractions*' (Osborne, 2000). Similarly, most Dutch cities reinforce the stereotypes of 'Dutchness' by inventing spots, events and souvenirs encouraging to tourists that they have found "the real Dutch culture". Urry (1995), notes that not all tourists are the same type, tourists with a 'collective' gaze tend to feel safe, thus aiming in following organized trips to visit tourist magnets[6] . On the contrary, more tourists are developing an individual, 'adventure', 'romantic' gaze, searching for authenticity in the cities or places they decide to visit[7].

Although a sociologist, Urry theory of "tourist gaze" did not develop in the context of city branding. However, the notion of the tourist gaze, is much of relevance towards cities that want to build an image and attract tourists. Hence, if people visit places mainly because of photographic images, then city branding itself can help in providing and distributing these pictures. That sad, city branding can be a powerful tool in constructing a positive a trustful tourist gaze based in providing an experience that resembles the images used in their branding. Although a pragmatically view, regarding historical and social-cultural reasons (Morgan, 2004), city branding can offers hope and possibility for every place, small cities, towns, villages, localities that suffer from offering nothing special. **Examples: Wallander detective television series** "Wallander" detective television series takes place in the city of Ystad in the south of Sweden: The example highlights how the "Wallander" detective television series is taken as an advantage from the city to organize Wallander tours.
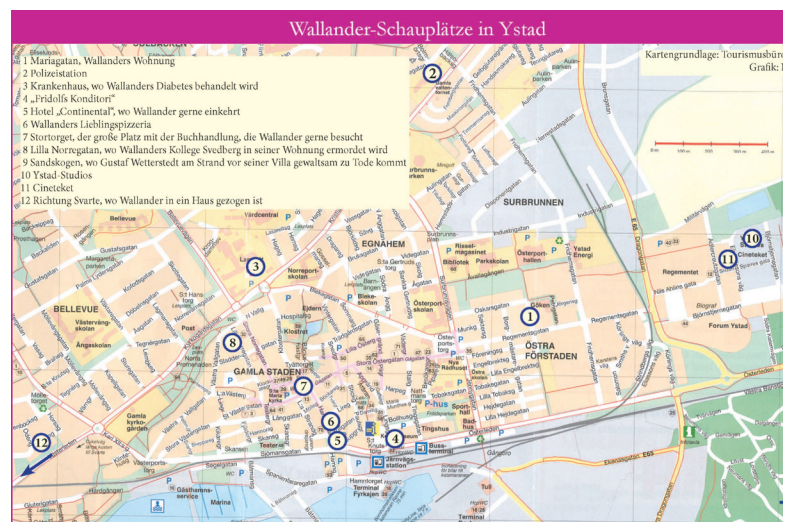
Fig. 18 *"Wallander detective television series City Tours"*. Sourse: Ystad Commune, http://www.ystad.se/filmlocations

5   Essays on photography regarding the relation to art; space, identity and landscape; travel and mobility. Book: Travelling Light – photography, travel and visual culture
6   Attractions
7   www.spottedbylocals.com

67

Fig. 19 *"La Tomatina" festival, Buñol Spain*".Source: La Tomatina Tours http://www.latomatinatours.com

"Tomatino festival" Buñol, Spain. Spanish village of Buñol has developed a reputation with a photogenic attraction: at the annual Tomatino festival the villagers throw tomatoes at each other – colouring the streets of Buñol entirely red purely for entertainment purposes.

4.2.4 City's image

Upon John Urry theory of "touristic gaze", Kevin Lynch theory is based on his empirical research of the built environment noting that individuals perceive a city predominantly based on a set of built objects. Nevertheless, OECD(2005), and Ashworth (2009), base their theory of "touristic gaze" in regards of hallmark events, and famous personalities.

Kevin Lynch	Built Environment	Coliseum (Rome)
OECD	Famous Personalities	Spot where President Kennedy was murdered (Dallas)
Ashworth	Hallmark Events	Oktober Fest (Mynich)

Table. 10 Examples of "*Touristic Gaze*" models. Source: Sonia Jojic

Regarding Lynch observations, he argues that tourists visit a city to gaze upon objects in the built environment. Lynch (1960) notes that in many American and European cities, most individuals perceive a city predominantly as a set of built objects (Lynch, 1960), particularly, five physical elements, developing people's image of a city:

PATHS	NODE	LANDMARK	EDGE	DISTRICT

- Streets,
- Rail lines,
- Trails.

Berlin's Kurfürsten-damm; Champs-Elysées in Paris

- Strategic meeting points,
- Squares,
- Junctions or
- Train stations.

Dam in Amsterdam ; Plaza Mayor in Madrid.

- Physical objects serve as public reference points,

Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum
Malmö's Turning Torso

- Clear transition zones and linear boundaries, water-fronts
- Green zones

- Quarters,
- Neighbourhoods
- Other sections of the city with dis-tinctive character,

London's Soho ;
Toronto's Chinatown;
Little Italy

Fig. 20 Kevin Lynch diagram of the *"Five Physical Elements"*. Source: Sonia Jojic

Lynch, with the concept of 'imageability', noted that some part of a city create a strong mental impression on people minds. Edges and Landmarks, particularly for tourist, function as image carriers, because they are easily identified, recognized and remembered. Nevertheless, tourists also direct their gaze towards hallmark events taking place in a certain city, in a certain time of the year. A city can not only be identified with certain activities organized during events (music, art or sports), but also its organizing capacity by hosting it. The Organisation for Economic Co-opera-tion and Development (OECD), argue that although the benefits of hallmark events for the local economy are mostly overestimated, the impact on the local image of a city can be considerable (OECD, 2005). Referring as a good examples of mega-events that contributed to image building is the example of the Summer Olympics of Barcelona (1992).

Fig. 21 Summer Olympics of Barcelona (1992). Source: Visit Barcelona http://www.welcome-to-barcelona.com/

In addition, tourists tend to visit a city due to the association with a personality, such as a famous painters, musicians or writers, where very often, the affiliation of a place with a named individual might tend to be the result of city branding. Ashworth (2009) calls this branding technique the 'Gaudí gambit' after the successful personality branding of Barcelona with the architect and designer Gaudí. Nevertheless, painters, musicians, writers, scientist are suitable icons for a city, even if they might not be linked to the place(examples: Vermeer (Delft), Mackintosh (Glasgow), The Beatles (Liverpool). Clearly, some cities might hold on to more image carriers than the three types mentioned above. Certain cities or places, tend to be in the public imagination due to important position in history (Athens (antiquity)). Hence certain places hold on to reputation related to the aspect of the local economy, 'city of- origin effect' Wolfsburg (Volkswagen). Hospers (2009) notes that for city branders, tourists are an attractive target group, especially in regards with urban and cultural tourism, seen as a growing market, where tourist are quite responsive to their branding technique (Hospers, 2009). Urry's theory of the tourist gaze indicates that people visit a city to 'gaze at signs', looking for certain features in the urban landscape that are already presented to them by pictures (Urry, 1995). This theory explain the self-reinforcing 'Matthew effect' in tourism magnet cities, such as Venice, Paris, New York, etc, imageable cities already in the public eye which attract even more attention for the fact that are famous for being famous. However many other cases in city branding such as the case of Barcelona, Budapest, Slovenia, etc, are examples that highlight that cities can easily identify their image carriers, trace and possibly construct new ones through the improvement of the imageability of the place. Nevertheless, cities that do not hold the "Matthew effect", should prevent the emergence of a visual overload for the tourist gaze, building a stronger touristic image through new means of tourism (Hosper, 2009).
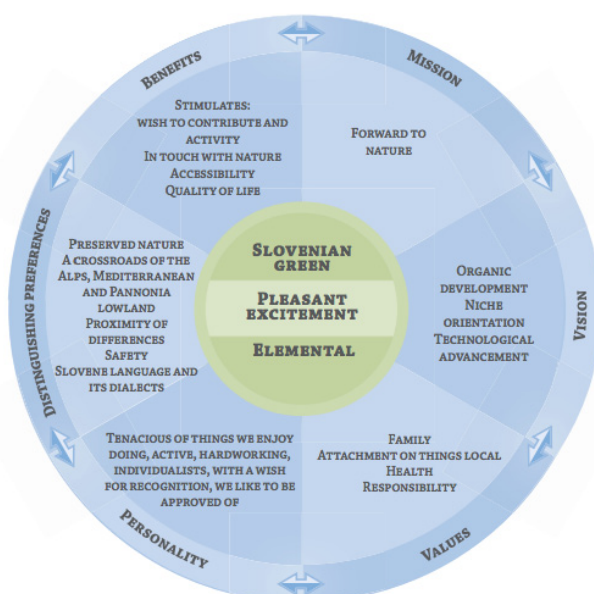
Fig. 22 Slovenia Branding Model, "*I Feel Slovenia*", Logo. Source: Government Communication Office, Republic of Slovenia.

4.2.5 City branding and residents

In the urge of creating a city brand, many city authorities tend to underpin the importance of its residents, where this group most of the time is neglected in the process of building the city brand. Underestimating the essential value that residents have in shaping and enhancing a city's brand, can weaken the aims and intentions of a city's brand strategy. Although it might be unrealistic to satisfy the demands and desires of all residents, they are crucial point in building the city brand, as they 'live and breathe' the city's brand identity. The perception of tourists in directly influenced by the residents' attitudes and attachment to the city where they live, work and play. Residents' talents and skills, also contributes to the city's and region's growth. This way, residents can possibly add value to the brand equity[8] of the city in which they live. Aside from the economic advantages, cities also offer their residents many social and emotional benefits, opportunities to share information, social bonds, and engagement in a range of activities which match their interests.

Similar to the objectives of a product or service brand, the ultimate objective focuses in creating preferences and loyalty to the city among various segments which cities serve. Nevertheless, the number of stakeholder groups with an interest in the city are potentially unlimited. However, in the race to build a brand which has to be admired by tourists and other short-term visitors, in most cases residents are overlooked, despite their important role as loyal supporters and the true ambassadors of the city brand. Residents personify a city's local culture, defined as the "Genius Loci", they represent the personality of the place. Residents and other stakeholders should aim in preserving the aspects of their city they value, making their cities appealing and viable places to live. Moreover, a city's diversity and richness used as source of inspiration for its branding strategy, may also present challenges, where the approach of "one-size-fits all" might be misguided and impractical. Referring to the cities diversity and richness, scale, personality, history, values, residential composition and urban assets are defined as a multiplex system, where its components overlap with each other reflecting the image of that place (Lynch, 1960). Thus, residents should be considered as the key factor in building an identity for city branding, an identity that is credible, compelling and sustainable in the minds of the stakeholders.

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8   The commercial value that derives from consumer perception of the brand name of a particular product or service, rather than from the product or service itself.

4.3 Concluding Remarks

City's branding helps in increasing the status of the a place as touristic destination, residential, or business location. As mentioned above, branding itself is associated primary with economic value. On the other hand, branding also holds symbolic values, since it constitutes a strategy to provide places, cities, towns, an image and its cultural meaning. Branding indicates the need for individuality and emotional connection with the environment in the contexts of globalization, thus giving cities depth and originality, its distinctive character. However, a strong city brand should not only be seen as a potential tool in attracting visitors, business, investment, but most importantly should be used as a strategy to retain its residents and attract new resident. The image of a city has a powerful factor in persuading all of the above in different ways. However, authorities should be more than responsible in giving proper consideration to a strong brand, seen more as a tool of improvement regarding the urban development of the city, thus allowing branding in contributing with the construction of local identity of a place.

Nevertheless, city branding itself is seen as the process of distinguishing and diversification, where local tourism organizations, cultural and arts facilities, museums, historic preservation groups join to construct a place images, helping in producing tourist sites with the common aim to attract consumers and investment to a particular local area. This process involves in two main components, 1. Place making or city building,(the process which makes a specific place more attractive) and 2. Place or city branding (the process of promoting a place), (Anholt, 2007), (Avraham and Ketter, 2008), (Kavaratzis, 2004). As stated before one of the main goals of city branding is to re-image a city perception, depending on its place identities by understading the local culture of the place. Seen more than promotion of the place and its marketing, city branding stands in constructing and reshaping the cities image from its historical architecture and street plans, the images of the city heard or read, the art produced by its residents etc, thus attracting the desirable consumers and maximizing consumers spending.
Therefore, City Branding aims to:
1. Develop new ways of communicating the city's image
2. Achieve competitive advantages
3. Strengthen the reputation of a city, improving also its economical importance.

As stated before in section 4.2, for many yearsnow the topic of city branding has gained a significant interest in both the academics and policy makers specified fields. As many cities tend to compete globally in attracting tourism, investment or talents, the concepts of brand strategy has been increasingly adopted from the commercial

filed and has been applied to the urban development, regeneration and quality of life of cities. Previously published research regarding city branding tend to originate from the disciplines of marketing and urban studies, two which have tended to follow parallel directions rather than interdisciplinary paths.

The close parallelism drawn between city branding and corporate branding has gained the attention of many scholars in terms of their complexity and range of stakeholders. Here the complexity of city brands is determined from their account-ability to address the needs of a wide spectrum of different target groups, which may vary, from tourists, sports fans, fashion consumers and residents. Nevertheless, research has also shown that techniques of marketing and branding may also be used in order to tackle existing negative perceptions of a city.

Thus one of the key challenges for branding cities stand and revolves around the issue of how to develop a strong 'umbrella' brand which could be coherent across a range of different areas of activity with different target audiences. Moreover, target audiences are as diverse as a city's residents, potential investors, tourists and stakeholders.

Chapter 5
Introduction

As chapters 2 and 3 set the overall state of Albania and Gjirokastra situation in regards to tourism development, and chapter 4 creates the basis of branding, chapter 5 consists in exploring the main principles of sustainable tourism. Although sustainable tourism is a very wide subject, three sustainable tourism trends are elaborated in this chapter as means of being used as a branding methodology for Gjirokastra. As the main three principles of sustainable tourism stand in three main pillars of environmental sustainability, economical and social sustainability, cultural routes are seen as enhancer of environmental sustainability; creative tourism as enhancer of economical sustainability, and tourism for all as an enhancer for social sustainability. For each identified sustainable tourism trends, specific case studies are given and taken as a potential reference for Gjirokastra. Identified upon cultural and natural heritage potentials that the area of Gjirokastra has, cultural routes are the first component elaborated as a direct product of cultural tourism. Included in this part of the chapter, specific approach on how cultural routes are created, elaborated and applied are portrayed. In terms of economical development, creative tourism approaches, components and application are portrayed. Tourism for all, seen as an enhancer of social sustainability, is elaborated and followed with specific case studies implemented in the recent years. For each of these components, final remarks are made out and taken into account in developing sustainable approach in branding Gjirokastra as a sustainable touristic destination.

5.1 Sustainable tourism

Needless to say the aim of sustainable tourism development stands in the concept of maximizing positive effects while minimizing the negative ones (Hall, 2010). Perhaps one of the most noticeable positive tourism impact stands in the revival of culture through increased societal self esteem. Nevertheless, revenue can boost or bring back lost or declining cultural objects and activities and at the same time create job opportunities, regional income growth and tax revenue. Sustainable tourism can be defined as "T*ourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities*" (UNWTO, 2016; UNESCO, 2010).

5.1.1 Conceptual definition

Expert agree that sustainable tourism development and management practices should focus and applied to every category of tourism depending on the types of

destinations, foreseeing mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments (UN-WTO, 2016; Richards, 2011). Noted by many authors (Maffesoli, 1994; Matarosso & Landry, 1999; Timothy, 2011; Calvo et al., 2014 Richards, 2011; R. J.S Beeton, 2002); and organizations (UNWTO, 2016; UNESCO, 2011), sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, establishing a suitable balance between these three dimensions in fostering long-term sustainability. As noted by UNEP and UNWTO, 2005, "A Guide for Policy Makers", sustainable tourism should: *1) Create optimal use of environmental resources prioritising key elements in tourism development, helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity. 2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.3) Ensure long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation* (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005). Nevertheless, the development of sustainable tourism requires that participators of all relevant stakeholders, as well as the right political entities should ensure a wide participation and consensus in building this capacities, with constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary corrective measures whenever necessary. Thus, sustainable tourism should be applied in terms of the trends, maintaining a high level of tourist satisfaction, ensuring a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them (UNEP and UNTWO, 2005).

Moreover, UNEP and UNTWO, 2005, identified 12 aims regarding sustainable tourism.

1 ECONOMIC VIABILITY: To ensure the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises, so that they are able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term.

2 LOCAL PROSPERITY: To maximize the contribution of tourism to the prosperity of the host destination, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally.

3 EMPLOYMENT QUALITY: To strengthen the number and quality of local jobs created and supported by tourism, including the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways.

4 SOCIAL EQUITY: To seek a widespread distribution of economic and social benefits from tourism throughout the recipient community, including improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor.

5 VISITOR FULFILMENT: To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other

ways.

6 LOCAL CONTROL: To engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of tourism in their area, in consultation with other stakeholders.

7 COMMUNITY WELLBEING: To maintain and strengthen the quality of life in local communities, including social structures and access to resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation.

8 CULTURAL RICHNESS: To respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of host communities.

9 PHYSICAL INTEGRITY: To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes, both urban and rural, and avoid the physical and visual degradation of the environment

10 BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: To support the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife, and minimize damage to them.

11 RESOURCE EFFICIENCY: To minimize the use of scarce and non-renewable resources in the development and operation of tourism facilities and services.

12 ENVIRONMENTAL PURITY: To minimize the pollution of air, water and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors (UNEP and UNTWO, 2005).

Nevertheless,the European Commission in accordance with UNWTO foreseen the need to develop a guidebook concerning the development of sustainable tourism, in terms to enhance common understanding and commitment to Sustainable Tourism. Some of the new trends highlighted where focused in a) cultural routes as a product of cultural tourism; b) creative tourism; and c) tourism for all (UNWTO, 2013). Thus this following trends of sustainable tourism will be investigated in terms of finding a connecting point through different case studies to be further adapted to a potentially strategy for branding the Ionian region (B.Aliaj; E.Janku; A.Allkja. S.Dhamo, 2014).

World Heritage and Tourism

As time has passed, world heritage list has expanded and with it a global awareness, interests, recognition and appeal of these sites, tourism has rapidly grown with high numbers of tourists visiting this sites. Nevertheless, tourism is also recognized at the same time as an opportunity and challenge, enhancing economic growth, when benefits towards the sites and local population are spent on preservation, revitalization and reinforcing the heritage of the place. On the other hand when management and regulations are not at hand tourism can severely threaten the heritage, the economic development and the local culture.

Hence, with the expandement of tourism, UNESCO has recognized the need for sustainable approach for planning and managing these sites in accordance with the sites capacity, visitor needs and the local population´s needs (UNESCO, 2006). The main mission stated by UNESCO stands in the increasement of awareness, capacity and participation, creating a balance between conservation and visitor experience. To realize this elements and objective and action lists have been created. In terms of anchoring the world heritage value through the national and local societal hierarchies, the tourism sector and the visitors themselves done by integrating sustainable tourism in the convention itself.

- Integrate sustainable tourism principles into the mechanisms of the World Heritage Convention
- Strengthen the enabling environment by advocating policies, strategies, frameworks and tools that support sustainable tourism as an important vehicle for protecting and managing cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)
- Promote broad stakeholder engagement in the planning, development and management of sustainable tourism that follows a destination approach to heritage conservation and focuses on empowering local communities
- Provide World Heritage stakeholders with the capacity and the tools to manage tourism efficiently, responsibly and sustainable based on the local context and needs
- Promote quality tourism products and services that encourage responsible behaviour among all stakeholders and foster understanding and appreciation of the concept of OUV and protection of World Heritage(UNESCO, 2006).

Thus, sustainable tourism should be applied in terms of the trends, maintaining a high level of tourist satisfaction, ensuring a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them adapted also in World Heritage sites.

5.2 Tourism Trends
Cultural Tourism / Cultural Routes as a potential

In recent years, cultural tourism has experienced unprecedented growth over recent years. UNWTO has foreseen that in 2020, international tourist arrivals are expected to exceed 1.6 billion. Nevertheless, Cultural Tourism´s popularity is continuously increasing on a faster pace than most of the other tourism segments, faster than the growth rate of tourism worldwide (UNWTO, 2001). Culture itself is a key tourism asset; inspiring millions of tourists to visit new destinations each year. If managed sustainable, tourism can become a considerable force for the promotion and safe-guarding of the tangible and intangible heritage which relies on, while encouraging the development of arts, crafts and other creative activities. Such development parallel with the concept of cultural tourism represents an extensive opportunity for destinations in fostering economic growth, inclusive social development and heritage preservation (UNTWO, 2015). Benefits tagged to cultural tourism are many, however the most important ones relate creation of job employment opportunities, generation of income for investment, represses rural migration, preserves heritage, develops cultural understanding and nurtures the sense of pride and self-esteem among host communities. Nevertheless, safeguarding of sustainable cultural tourism is crucial, parallel with cross-border and multi-stakeholder approach. As noted by UNTWO, 2015, the concept of culture and tourism should be mutually supportive of each other in creating sustainable relationship, with full cooperation of the public and private sector, working with local communities (UNWTO, 2015). In addition, cultural routes, as a type of the cultural tourism product, encourage widespread communities to participate in cultural activities, whereby raising awareness of a common cultural heritage. As reported by the Council of Europe, 2015 and UNTWO, 2015, a number of cultural routes have already begun to co-operate with various key players from both the public and private sectors with a view in providing better services and enhancing the tourists´ experience along the route.

5.2.1 Cultural Routes as a type of cultural tourism

Routes, used for centuries for the purpose of transport of goods and people have certainly created an important linear assemble of cultural properties. The dominant national states since the beginning of the 19th century has undoubtedly established national borders, fragmenting territorial entities by breaking the socioeconomic relationships that allowed the function and reproduction of theses processes. Nevertheless, the development of the cultural routes within historical corridors can provide a new vision for the cultural heritage in Albania and the Balkan territory as a common value, which requires transnational affords for its sustainable management. In accordance with this, the cultural routes can possibly define a common space for

dialogue, where culture plays the primordial role (Cultural Corridors of South East Europe, 2007; ICOMOS, 2014, Varna Declaration on Cultural Corridors in South-East Europe, 2013). The presented argument on the importance of cultural routes in Albanian territory and Gjirokastra comprises the suggestion of cultural routes as a mode to associate and interconnect cultural goods within the framework of the modern concepts. Nevertheless, through cultural routes, the individual tangible and intangible cultural goods are integrated in a common territorial and operational system where the relations between them are distinguished; their study and management is promoted, leading to a multilevel knowledge (Audrerie D, 1997). Cultural routes aim to amplify local identity by highlighting historical and geographical characteristics. This function of the cultural routes has an important effect in the coherence and cohesion for the local societies.

5.2.2 Council of Europe - The Cultural Routes Programme

Cultural tourism is essentially about journeys. Not just because tourists by definition travel to experience culture, but also because culture itself is a journey – a voyage of discovery and self-realization. Cultural Tourism searches for and uses the local and defining elements of a place which enables visitors not only to see or experience a place, but to live and dwell in the culture itself. Not only does cultural tourism develop a narrative of the place in which both locals and tourists dwell, but it also develops narratives about the individual tourists who go through and experience intercultural in those places. The narrative of tourism therefore links place and journey, local and global, dwelling and mobility, host and guest. (UNWTO, 2014). In 1987, the Council of Europe launched The Cultural Routes programme. Its objectives were to demonstrate how the heritage of different countries and cultures of Europe contributes to a shared cultural heritage, putting into practice the fundamental principles of the Council of Europe: human rights, cultural democracy, cultural diversity and identity, dialogue, mutual exchange and enrichment across boundaries and centuries. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution CM/Res(2010) in December 2010, establishing an Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) to enable closer co-operation between states mostly interested in the development of Cultural Routes. (Council of Europe, 2015). The representatives taking part in this Committee were the Ministers of Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia and Spain, outlined the Policy-making and standard setting of the established EPA (Khovanova-Rubicondo, 2013) The EPA states that: the expertise of the European Cultural Routes Institute shall provide advice and expert assistance for the development, implementation, evaluation and promotion of Cultural Routes. This involved expertise on: - setting up and functioning of project networks and organizations and

the development of co-operation agreements;

- research on the historical background of the routes and the development of the cultural and educational content and activities of the Cultural Routes;
- development of a sustainable tourist offer based on the Cultural Routes, thus contributing to the economic well-being of regions;
- preparation and implementation of financing and promotion strategies;
- training and capacity building for Cultural Routes operators, in particular in relation to the Council of Europe and other international standards in the field of heritage and culture, as well as standards of professional practice in the field of
- tourism;
- promotion, visibility and all other aspects related to compliance with the Council of

Europe standards. Furthermore, the EPA is obliged to support networking and exchange between Cultural Routes operators and other partners in the field of cultural tourism, specifically:

- the development of a common vision and strategy for cultural routes as touristic products;
- the development of partnerships to increase the resources available for cultural tourism in Europe;
- the identification and dissemination of good practice.
- EPA shall develop further methodologies for the promotion of cross border cultural tourism5.

In September 2010, the European Commission and the Council of Europe launched a study focusing on European Cultural Routes impact on SMEs innovation, competitiveness, and clustering. The aim of the study was to provide insights on the effects produced by the CoE Cultural Routes Programme on SMEs performance, network and cluster development. Moreover, the study also sought to observe the potentials of the Cultural Routes in promoting sustainable and quality tourism in Europe, increase European identity, disseminating the richness of European cultures and promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. (KhovanovaRubcondo, 2013). Of particular importance for Albania is that the study analyses how much the Cultural Routes networks can affect and benefit SMEs, especially in less-known destinations, where the local culture and heritage are the main resource for development, and how SMEs' clusters can create a solid basis for promoting the region as "the world's No 1 tourist destination".7 Thus the idea of cultural routes for Albania, but especially for the Ionian Region can create potential clusters and co-operation for the entire region of the Balkans. This will give more potential in controlled development and stable economy growth for tourism in Albania.

5.2.3 Adriatic – Ionian Basin States involved in Cultural Routes programme

Promotion of cultural tourism is a logical next step in developing Cultural Routes. For years now, the European Commission has especially focused on encouraging countries in fostering Cultural Routes for a more sustainable tourism. The uniqueness of this type of tourism builds on the individuality and authenticity of remote destinations, local knowledge, skills, heritage and traditions. Over the past years most of the South Eastern states in the Adriatic – Ionian Basin have been and are still participating in the Cultural Routes programmes. These countries include Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and Greece. However, in all the different cultural routes that the majority of these countries partake in Albania is involved in only one of them "The Routes of the Olive Tree", which does not fall under the category of cultural routes, but that of gastronomic tourism. If we take a look at all the Cultural Routes from the previously listed states, we can ascertain that; **Slovenia is currently participating in the following Cultural Routes activities and present projects:**

- Saint Martin de Tours: a great European figure, a symbol of sharing
- The Routes of the Olive Tree
- Transromanica

Croatia Council of Europe Cultural Routes:

- Saint Martin de Tours: a great European figure, a symbol of sharing
- The Jewish Heritage Routes
- The Routes of the Olive Tree

Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Europe
Cultural Routes:

- The Routes of the Olive Tree

Montenegro Council of Europe Cultural
Routes: None

Albania Council of Europe Cultural Routes:

- The Routes of the Olive Tree

Greece Council of Europe Cultural Route:

- The European Route of Jewish Heritage
- European Cemeteries Route
- The Routes of the Olive Tree
- The Phoenicians' Routes

- The Iter Vitis Route

While Slovenia, Croatia and Greece are more developed countries in terms of tourism, Bosnia Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania fall short in terms of their participation in the Cultural Routes programme. (Council of Europe, 2014). According to the European Commission's concept of Cultural Routes in Europe, the most urgent issues that countries like Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia Herzegovina need to address includes the development of better:

- transnational connectivity of the Cultural Routes network;
- co-ordination of the development and promotional strategies of the Cultural

Routes at a European level;

- brand image and marketing strategies;
- quality and sustainable tourism standards development/implementation;
- human and financial resources of the Routes;
- expertise in the management of the networks;
- exchange of good practices; and
- network management and performance evaluation tools, all issues that at this stage Albania is lacking, and especially the Ionian Region where there is a crucial need to develop a proper strategic plan in branding the area through sustainable tourism. (Khovanova-Rubicondo, 2013)

Developing cultural routes should be fostered to further develop and explored as a highly possibility in developing a branding image for a places and cities. In-depth analysis of the available resources and the targeted communities involved, as well as the preparation of an action plan that focuses on generating both significant and unique experiences through cultural routes should be seen as the main strategies in developing tourism and branding the area. UNWTO, 2015, has recently developed a methodology on how organizations and institutions should develop and implement cultural routes as a tourism product (UNWTO, 2015).

5.2.4 Tourism trends: opportunities to produce cultural routes

The field of tourism is constantly changing not even economically but also socially and culturally. During the past ten years, tourism dynamics have been radically altered. Cuzzia & Rizzo, 2011, see globalization and the generalised use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), the progress in transportation infrastructures in changes of clients' habits and preferences, and their huge power as opinion leaders on social networks are changing the dynamics of supply and demand within the tourism market (Cuzzia & Rizzo, 2011). This has led to the implementation of active

strategies to segment the tourism offering, generate experiences related to tourism destinations, incorporate ICTs in all areas of a tourist trip, and other developments (Coll & Seguí, 2014). All of these trend are taking place within the social context characterised by post-modern and post-industrial societies (Hall, 2010) in which the growth and the consolidation of the welfare and leisure society are providing large sections of the population with time, income and requirements which consequently increase the demands for certain types of holidays, experiences, areas and leisure time, totally different demands from holidaymakers preferred during the 1970s and the 1990s, mostly featuring the sun and beach products. Nevertheless, there tends to be some consensus between specialists in defining "Post-Fordist" tourism trend, with the "New Tourism" (Urry, 1990; Majdoub, 2015). This involves an increasingly segmented market, with specific varied interest and needs. Hence, this also urges the need to find a solution to these new demands in established tourist destinations, by resulting in constant adaptation and flexibility, which is particularly true for mature destinations. On the other hand, many experts note that new tourism trend are also characterised by a division of holidays; trips are taken more often during the year, but are shorter in duration (Majdoub, 2015).

As noted by Majdoub, 2015, there is the emergence of a new profile of tourist, which seeks experiences focused on relaxation, discovery, enjoyment, and knowledge. It is later noted that these new profile of tourist have a higher level of environmental and cultural awareness, meaning, as a result of the generalisation of ICTs and social networks, they are more demanding, more able to influence, and have their say on the products that they consume. Some of the key outcomes derived directly from these new changes complemented also by ICTs and new trends in tourism are service improvement, client interaction, and product comparison based on critical reviews (Majdoub, 2015).

The increased use of the Internet to plan holidays has been substantiated to such extent that it has now become the main source of information on destinations, tourism products, prices, availability, among many other information, increasing its importance in the booking process (Buhalis & O'Connor, 2005). Many expert Matarosso & Landry, 1999; Timothy, 2011; Calvo et al., 2014; note that, In addition to these tourism trends, reflected in the Western society of the twenty-first century, two more general processes explain the growing interest in cultural tourism, as it has recently become one of the fastest-growing tourism trends. This is highlighted in the sensitivity to the environment and the need to protect it has increased, termed as "ecologisation" of the world (Matarosso & Landry, 1999). Nevertheless, Matarosso & Laundry, 1999, note the, an increase interest in the past and, in the awareness of historic and artistic heritage has also taken place, reflected in a rise of cultural

activities in recent decades and social longing for culture and heritage. This has been called the democratisation of culture, a phenomenon that is intimately connected with higher economic, educational and cultural levels of the average population (Matarosso & Landry, 1999). As a result, Timothy, 2011 and Calvo et al., 2014 note that cultural attractions are considered as one of the tourist areas with the most potential for new products development (Timothy, 2011; Calvo et al., 2014). Thus, the tourism products related to cultural routes, cultural cities and cultural must-do's, highly connected to popular culture, arts; the search for authenticity of destinations and local cultures, are the core elements in forming the basis of the new scenario of worldwide cultural tourism (UNWTO, 2015).

5.2.5 UNTWO approach in developing and expanding Cultural Routes

As noted by the Council of Europe and UNWTO, there are a variety of cultural routes. In a recent research conducted by UNWTO, cultural routes are grouped in variables in order to obtain a proposal for cultural routes as a tourism product functional as possible. Consequently, UNWTO proposes five categories of classification of cultural routes.

- Classification of routes based on their design and structure
- Classification of cultural routes based on their theme
- Classification of cultural routes based on their territory
- Classification of cultural routes based on their historic origin or their current reconfiguration
- Classification of cultural routes based on their visitor infrastructure

Classification of routes based on their design and structure

As noted by UNWTO report on cultural routes (UNWTO, 2015), the first category includes two cultural route models, the linear models based on one or several start points and one end point and those that have arisen based on an archipelago of points. The cultural routes that are based on a linear pattern have a sequenced discourse, from one or more start points to the final stage. This involves organizing all the aspects of a route consecutively, from creating stages to designing and presenting visitor infrastructures, and including the presentation of the natural and cultural heritage of the route, or implementing sales and marketing strategies. The second category is the designs of network routes. In this model, the route and its various elements form an archipelago of points but are not necessarily connected sequentially or physically, helping in solving the physical fragmentation of the region or an absence of routes based on historic events; their cohesion is mainly determined by themes rather than territorial continuity (UNWTO, 2015)

Classification of cultural routes based on their theme

The second classification of cultural routes in accordance with UNWTO is based in two main groups. Cultural routes articulated around a main theme and cultural routes which include several topics, with the route itself being the essential theme. Thus, the first theme might include the entire natural, heritage, historic and identity resources located near the route or the archipelago of points forming it, or cultural itineraries based on one theme (architecture, music, art) (UNWTO, 2015).

Classification of cultural routes based on their territory

Four types of routes are identified in this classification, namely as local, regional, national and transnational. Each of these categories involves using different organisational structures and strategies to promote them and make them more visible (UNWTO,2015).

Classification of cultural routes based on their historic origin or their current re-configuration

The idea of classification of cultural route based on their historic origin or current re-configuration, is to differentiate routes that have fully grounded strict basis and are also constructed on routes derived from actual historic situations, from routes that are the result of associations made in the present based on a theme or a common narrative, rather than the strict, solid historic fact required. Such examples are "The Camino de Santiago" and the route of "Saint Olaf" are examples of routes where there is historic evidence of their use, while the European route of thermal heritage and thermal towns, the "Routes of the Olive Tree" and the "Transromanica network: itineraries of Romanesque art in Europe"; are defined as examples of routes resulting from an association with a strong historic basis that have been redesigned in the present (UNWTO, 2015).

Classification of cultural routes based on their visitor infrastructure

The last and most necessity part on how cultural routes are classified, is based on visitors infrastructure, important to tourism organizations. This category classifies routes based on the number and type of overnight stays necessary to visit them. Consequently, UNWTO classifies routes based on: routes for which overnight stays are not necessary, routes that can be visited with only one overnight stay, and, finally routes involving an overnight stay in several places, which inherently requires the visitor to plan and be constantly on the move (UNWTO,2015).

Cultural Route Criteria	Based on				
	Design and Structure	Theme	Territory	Origin	Overnight Stay
Camino de Santiago	Linear	Cross-country pilgrimage route	Transnational	Historic	Several overnight stays
The Inca Trail	Linear	Historic	Transnational	Historic	Several overnight stays
Transromanica network	Archipelago of points	Art	Transnational	Redesigned in the present	Several overnight stays
European itineraries of Jewish Heritage	Archipelago of points	Art/Identity	Transnational	Redesigned in the present	Several overnight stays
The European route of thermal heritage and thermal cities	Archipelago of points	Themed. Historic thermal tourism	Transnational	Redesigned in the present	Several overnight stays

Table.11 Categories and examples grouping the wide variety of current cultural routes stated by UNWTO, Source: UNWTO, 2015, Sonia Jojic

5.2.6 The benefit of cultural routes

The benefit of involving cultural route as main strategies of branding regions, places, cities have a wide range of possibilities, including the advance of new tourism strategies, local development and the improvement of network actions. Firstly, cultural routes hold great potential for generating new tourism products in accordance with new tourism trends (UNWTO, 2013). Producing new cultural tourism products from existing resources is one of the most effective strategies to make a destination standout, which is a key aspect in a globalized market saturated with supply, this including heritage resources of the tourism industries and offers of a destination, creating original experiences built on the specific historic developments of the place in question, where their essence incorporates authenticity as one of the most appreciated values (Richards 2007). Moreover, this profile of cultural tourism products can be a highly useful in means of encouraging tourists in trying in combining unique experiences that combine fun, knowledge and discovery, the mainstays of their decision-making in the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, on of the main benefits in developing tourism new trends through cultural routes is the broad diversity of cultural traces that can form them and the extensive variety of ways of addressing them. Fluidity and flexibility are highly attractive traits, since they make it possible to develop a range of products targeted at specific, yet at the same time, quite large, consumer segments. One of the most important and key beneficial of developing cultural routes as tourism product has to be the development of the local communities visited, since the core theme of cultural routes has to be based on the landscape and history of the places where local communities lead their lives. As a final remark, cultural routes can also be seen as another highly potential attractive

means of improving the so-called mature destinations, especially those focusing mainly on sun and beach tourism, category where Albanian has been developing for the past ten years their tourism development. This newly introduced tourism product to the Albanian realm can diversify new tourism segments; making it possible to spread demand across seasons, since cultural tourism can be consumed at different times throughout the year; strengthen the branding of the destination; and they can complement previously consolidated products, thus improving and expanding travellers' experiences.

Economic benefits

Another important set of built-in advantages of cultural routes as a tourism product lies in the ability to increase the economic efficiency of the heritage resources. Although many sectors of the society focus on developing and investing in health and education, especially during a worldwide recession, such as the one affecting us at the moment. Nevertheless, by successfully implementing cultural tourism products, specifically cultural routes based on a region's cultural heritage can increase its financial efficiency by tapping into previously unused resources to broaden and diversify the tourism offering, which, in turn, makes the experience more satisfactory for potential tourists. Still, the significant financial return from them can improve the economic welfare of the communities that invest in them. Thus, developing cultural routes as tourism products is, therefore, associated with benefits for both the cultural heritage and the economy of the local communities visited. Moreover, cultural routes advantages stand on the ability to generate synergies with other existing resources, which can form the basis of new tourist attractions. One of the main strategies of cultural routes also involves establishing networks between several heritage resources, creating a product, which, as a whole, is better than the sum of the elements it comprises. For instance, a humble archaeological site in the Albanian territory, a humble rural church, or an interpretation centre in a small town such as Gjirokastra might not have enough pulling power on their own respect in order to generate a profitable and attractive tourism product. However, when they are put together into a larger cultural route, can create a far more powerful and effective product, profitable by means of a common dialogue, with shared strategies, human resources and management infrastructures.

Local communities

Cultural routes as a specific product to cultural tourism possess great potential in improving the welfare of local communities. When considering the development of a cultural route as product, actors involved in developing the model should be aware

of the impact of some tourism development models (especially mass tourism) often causing problems to local communities. Some of these problematic aspects are: land and environmental degradation, an increase in social inequality and the loss of cultural diversity, among others. These undesired impacts also place the entire tourism sector at risk, since the host communities can develop a negative impression of visitors, decreasing the quality of the latter's experience. Investigating the relationship of tourist and the local communities, it encourages the conservation of the environment and cultural heritage of the destination as it taps into heritage as a first-class economic and tourism resource. Nevertheless the UNTWO, 2013 clarifies that the active use of cultural routes allows balanced management of the region, ensuring greater flexibility in either increasing or reducing the number of visitors to the nodes forming the routes (UNWTO, 2013). As noted by Berti el a, 2015, cultural routes can possibly lead to profound and satisfactory relationship between the resident and tourist communities involved, since the former will observe how their cultural idiosyncrasy is recognised and valued, and the latter will not only have their needs met, especially in relation to having unique and authentic experiences, but will also feel more welcomed by residents (Berti et al. 2015). Finally, cultural routes have considerable potentials in promoting social equality in the places where they are implemented.

5.2.7 Case Studies_Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

In 2016, The Council of Europe has counted 32 Cultural Routes focusing on different themes aiming to illustrate the European memory, history and heritage and contribute to an interpretation of the diversity of present-day Europe. One of the main benefits on being part of the Cultural Routes programme consist in the engagement of different projects aiming to involve project managers, researchers and students, with the cooperating of different Universities in Europe and beyond (Council of Europe, 2016). As case studies relative to the development of cultural routes in terms of developing sustainable tourism, 3 case studies of cultural routes from the Council of Europe will be reviewed in highlighting their benefits of developing cultural routes as a product of Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Cultural Development[9]. Each identified cultural route offers it sub-categories or proposed practices which they tend to focus. The 3 identified case studies of cultural routes are the a) European Route of Jewish Heritage; b) The Via Francigena[10]; c) Via Regia[11].

Cs1_The European Route of Jewish Heritage proposed practice in regards of sustainable tourism focuses in the "EUROPEAN DAY OF JEWISH CULTURE", aiming to work on the route proposal based on digital support, and on the organisation

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9   More information can be found at http://culture-routes.net/sites/default/files/files/GOOD_PRAC-TICES_ATLAS.pdf
10   The Via Francigena cultural route has two proposed practice
11   Via Regia cultural route proposes two practices also.

and structuring of the proposed cultural territory related to Jewish heritage and culture, thus allowing visitors to create their own personalized route. The program in regard of the theme of routes, has started to highlight Jewish quarters in different countries throughout Europe were later own will be joint as interesting point to visit, reflected in both web-site and mobile application in creating a joined platform. Some of the strong point of this routes stand on the involvement of different organizations and institutions[12]. Nevertheless, the diversity of the institutions involved in the route, has opened up interesting work paths and collaboration, focusing both in contents and methodology, with regards to the European Cultural Routes. Although seen as a good practice difficulties are found in the lack of economic resources for required staff to further promote and develop the theme of this cultural route within every country involved (Council of Europe, 2016).

Cs_2. The Via Francigena, the first proposed practice in regards of sustainable tourism is involves two practices, the VIA FRANCIGENA Festival Collective Project and the Magazine "Via Francigena and the European Cultural Routes"(Council of Europe, 2016). The first proposed practice focuses on the organisation of the Festival "Collective Project" (in collaboration with CIVITA Association), aiming to promote events taking place in the territories crossed by the Via Francigena, from the Kent to Puglia Region along 2500 km (Council of Europe, 2016). Some of the strong points[13] related to The Via Francigena focus on the joint project issues related to this route, such as culture, hiking, nature, spirituality, food and wine, tourism, local identities in creating sustainability within the territory where the routes takes place, reinforcement of public-private cooperation and partnership; and awareness in the local areas of Via Francigena, in term of developing sustainable tourism (Council of Europe, 2016). Some of the difficulties identified from the first proposed practice of this route, relate to maintains of a strong and unique brand identity while hosting different kind of events, also at finding international partners interested in promoting Festival. The second proposed practice of the route focuses published magazine of "Via Francigena and the European Cultural Routes" aiming in promoting the association related to this route through related activities, projects, events offering a great opportunity in promoting this route on international level, focusing on specific areas of the route from Canterbury to Puglia. The main difficulty related to the second pro-

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12   B'nai B'rith Europe, Red de Juderías de España, Unione delle Comunità Ebraiche d'Italia, Rede de Judiarias de Portugal, Fonds Social Juif Unifié, and European Council of Jewish Communities.

13   Strong points related to the Via Francigena focus on A)a strong connotation thanks to the label of the Festival; B) an amplification effect (due to the large number of events and to their joint communication); C) a thematic grouping of events, according to the desires of the users; E) press office dedicated; F) Cross-marketing activities composed of: - On-line catalogue of the scheduled events, available on the specific website: www.festival.viefrancigene.org; - social networks campaign and preparation of a dedicated monthly newsletter; - dedicated article within the magazine " Via Francigena and the European Cultural Routes" - participation in the Press conference in Rome and Puglia Region; - promotion of each event through the preparation of personalized posters to be sent to the events' organizers; Source: http://culture-routes.net/sites/default/files/files/GOOD_PRACTICES_ATLAS.pdf

posed practice of this route focuses on the large scale distribution of the magazine as an important tool in further marketing this route (Council of Europe, 2016). of the route from Canterbury to Puglia. The main difficulty related to the second proposed practice of this route focuses on the large scale distribution of the magazine as an important tool in further marketing this route (Council of Europe, 2016).

Cs_3. VIA REGIA, same as the second route has two proposed practices, focusing on "*Adventure bikeway from VIA REGIA from Frankfurt/ M. to Kraków*" and "*Tourism for all – VIA REGIA: a time travel through German Culture and History*"(Council of Europe, 2016). The first proposed practice focuses in preparing and experiencing this route through a bike path, "*aiming in linking regional cycling paths within the VIA REGIA EDC III corridor in Germany and Poland*" in creating a common transnational adventure through the cycling path of VIA REGIA[14], realised by 36 touristical organisations in both Germany and Poland and is financed by NETRREG 4 B "VIA REGIA plus" (Council of Europe, 2016). This first proposed practice also aims in establishing transregional / international cooperation also with Eastern European partners in fields of tourism, creating one touristic concepts of the respective places and paths (Council of Europe, 2016). The second proposed practice of the VIA REGIA focuses on the theme of tourism for all, promoted and marketed through universal accessibility of the Route "VIA REGIA – Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" between Frankfurt/ Main and Leipzig combining 8 destinations (Council of Europe, 2016). The aim of this project focuses on developing tourism packages accessible for all in terms of reducing different barriers that prevent people with special need from travelling and experiencing cultural tourism promoting equal opportunity and social inclusion by the adaptation of the VIA REGIA as a cultural tourism product (Council of Europe, 2016). One of the main positive aspect of this practice stands on the different kinds of network that members are involved, creating interdisciplinary work through the involvement of different SME[15] in accordance with the trend of accessible tourism. Moreover, the project is designed by 12 VIA REGIA network members such as point of contact, administrations, tourism associations, and external partners to better interchange collaboration and experience (Council of Europe, 2016).

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14   Information obtained from the Council of Europe website: http://culture-routes.net/sites/default/files/files/GOOD_PRACTICES_ATLAS.pdf
15   SME- Small and Medium sized enterprises.

5.2.8 Concluding Remarks

The aim of sustainable tourism development stands in the concept of maximizing positive effects while minimizing the negative ones of a place (Hall, 2008). Perhaps one of the most noticeable positive tourism impact stands in the revival of culture through increased societal self esteem. One of the highlighted trends of sustainable tourism through cultural tourism, where cultural heritage is part of, thus taking in consideration also UNESCO world heritage sites, where also the use of branding a region, city, town through the use of cultural routes as product of cultural tourism.

The importance of cultural routes in Albanian territory and Gjirokastra comprises the suggestion of cultural routes as a mode to associate and interconnect cultural goods within the framework of the modern concepts. Nevertheless, through cultural routes, the individual tangible and intangible cultural goods are integrated in a common territorial and operational system where the relations between them are distinguished; their study and management is promoted, leading to a multilevel knowledge (Audrerie D, 1997). Cultural routes aim to amplify local identity by highlighting historical and geographical characteristics. This function of the cultural routes has an important effect in the coherence and cohesion for the local societies. Cultural routes are seen as a branding strategy for regions, places, cities have a wide range of possibilities, including the advance of new tourism strategies, local development and the improvement of network actions. Firstly, cultural routes hold great potential for generating new tourism products in accordance with new tourism trends (UNWTO, 2015). Producing new cultural tourism products from existing resources is one of the most effective strategies to make a destination standout, which is a key aspect in a globalized market saturated with supply, this including heritage resources of the tourism industries and offers of a destination, creating original experiences built on the specific historic developments of the place in question, where their essence incorporates authenticity as one of the most appreciated values (Richards 2007). Cultural routes as a specific product to cultural tourism possess great potential in improving the welfare of local communities. When considering the development of a cultural route as product, actors involved in developing the model should be aware of the impact of some tourism development models (especially mass tourism) often causing problems to local communities. Nevertheless, the development of cultural routes allows other segment of sustainable tourism to be part of, thus creating an interchange experiences between more categories of tourism, taking in consideration the development of sustainable tourism rather than creating attraction point for mass tourism trends.

5.3 Creative Tourism

Creative tourism has been seen as a new form derived from cultural tourism. The aim of it is in creating new touristic alternative experiences, providing new opportunities in developing a touristic destinations. Marques (2012) describes creative tourism as an aspect of the renewed interest in creativity, where creativity is achieved in a wide range of different fields (economic, social, political and cultural). These trends show a phenomenon in which creativity has become embedded in many fields, ranging from innovation to urban regeneration and tourism development (Richards, 2011). The 6 regional identities, highlighted in the publication "Albania 2030" by B.Aliaj (2014), highlight their rich cultural heritage and tradition, possibly creating the base which could respond to the trends of creative tourism. In these terms, it is important to understand how existing resources can be developed into creative products, offering new experiences for tourists and opportunities for the local community.

Since the introduction of the concept by Richards & Raymond in 2000, various definitions of creative tourism have appeared (e.g. Richards, 2005; UNESCO, 2006; Raymond, 2007; Rudan, 2014). Even though all definitions have slight difference, common elements can be identified (Table 12). The most common element of creative tourism identified is the active participation of tourists (Richards & Marques, 2012). Nevertheless, other mentioned elements of creative tourism aim towards activities connected to the destination, opportunity to develop one's creative potential, developing new skills/learning and meaningful contact between hosts and guests.

Elements / Sources	Richards & Raymond 2000	Richards 2000	UNESCO 2006	Raymond 2007	Volic 2010	Rudan 2012	Total
Active participation	X	X	X	X		X	5
Activities connected to destination	X	X	X			X	4
Opportunity to develop creativity	X				X	X	3
Develop new skill/ learning	X	X	X			X	4
Meaningful contact to hosts and guest		X	X	X			3
Arts / Crafts / Heritage			X			X	2
Self -development of tourist		X					1
Revenue for Communities		X					1
Sustainable				X			1
Individual Creation of experience					X		1
Nature						X	1

Table. 12 Key elements of creative tourism based on definition in academic literature. Source: Sonia Jojic

5.3 Creative tourism concept

Relatively a new notion, creative tourism originated during the mid-1990's from EU-ROTEX, an European project intending to support local enterprises through marketing their craft production to tourists (Richards, 2005). The project encouraged dialogue between the local producers and tourists, thus resulting in the development of craft experiences involving the visitors in the process, either by seeing or learning. As a term, Creative Tourism was defined for the first time by Richards and Raymond (2000, p. 18) as "*Tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken*". Nevertheless, UNESCO (2006, p. 3), adopted the definition of Creative Tourism as "*Travel directed toward an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place, providing a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture*". As a part of cultural tourism, creative tourism is attributed to local's culture of living and cultural heritage, involving a wide range of a region's potentials. The difference between this two fields of tourism, although very linked to each other, is found on the process of 'experiencing' rather than 'contemplating[16]' (visiting museums, galleries, concerts, performances and the like), hence the mutual interest of both, the local community and tourists, is considered (Pine and Gilmore 1999). Tourist preferences are at a fast pace of change, from conventional tourism based on just visiting cultural sites and package tours to more experience-based tourism. Richardson (2007), notes that using tourism to support the identity of the destination and to stimulate the consumption of local culture and creativity, is continuously increasing (Richards and Wilson, 2007). Nevertheless, creativity as a contemporary demand, is growing among not only creative professionals but also among developed societies in general, offering stimulating experiences as well as enabling participants to develop themselves through those experiences (Richards, 2009). Richards notes that this new movement aims towards a society with 'skilled consumption', including education, self-development and creative activities, which depend on developing individual skills and creativity. Rudan (2012), defines creative tourism as a special form of tourism, which creates a new dimension that meets the modern traveller's needs for creativity[17] (participation in various workshops, educational programs) and a variety of creative activities (arts, heritage, nature, the destination's peculiarities), creating a true, authentic experience of the destination.

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16   To spend time considering a possible future action, or to consider one particular thing for a long time

17   Creativity in this case related to Creative tourism offers the opportunity to participate in a broad array of activities connected to the destination in fields such as music, visual arts, drama, sports, gastronomy, spiritual activities, languages, art-workshops or writing. Interactions between hosts and guests that develop creative potential and new skills are experienced by both, the tourists as well as the locals, as meaningful.

5.3.1 Creative Tourism Development Approaches

The economic benefits of culture and creativity as instruments for innovation and social integration as well as accommodating the needs of tourists, are becoming prominent in todays globalized world. In todays world urging tourism markets, differentiation from others is keen in becoming a place of attraction based on creativity and culture. In the creative tourism field, creative networks are constantly trying to build up networks between the tourists and locals (Richards and Marques, 2012). Every touristic region tries to adapt to new tourist demands and stands out through the development of innovative products (Rudan, 2010). A creative destination is able to generate profits from innovation, culture, research and artistic production, and thus strengthen its own distinctiveness (Sepe and Di Trapani, 2010). According to Rudan (2012), the following facts have a direct impact on the development of creative tourism of a region: a) the destination stakeholders' own creativity is essential for creative tourism; b) the development of tourism must not destroy the cultural and natural values and resources, i.e. the development must have a sustainable basis; c) even destinations that do not have enough cultural resources can develop creative tourism; and d) this form of tourism is an upgrade of the destination's existing touristic product (Rudan, 2012).

Richards (2009) describes the following factors which support creative tourism based on consumption and production:

- The now increased skilled consumption society is highly driven towards 'skilled consumption', including here self-development, education and creative activities, viewed as interesting and directly practiced, rather than just meeting basic needs and offers
- The experience economy - where competition based on producing goods or services has been replaced by competition to produce experiences, which will allow the consumer to use their own creativity;
- Shifting to intangible tourism resources - such as the image, stories or atmosphere of the places, where creativity is needed to turn these resources into experiences and products for the tourists.

The growth of creative tourism is related to the potential of services and products that the touristic region offers, hence different models of tourism provide frameworks for sustainable tourism development. Ohridska-Olson and Ivanov (2010) have developed a Model of Creative Tourism Business, which claims a community's local economy improvement by stimulating creative industries. The model presents key demand and supply factors which support a sustainable development of creative

tourism, providing tourism benefits through products and services toward the growth of local economy and prosperity. Five groups of elements (demand and supply factors, tangible and intangible benefits, and financial results) provide the strategies for developing creative tourism products that should come from the tourism business rather than EU or governmental policies (Ohridska-Olson and Ivanov, 2010). The importance of this business model resides in the fact that it provides possibilities of profit from creative tourism of any cultural tourism destination. Therefore, the 6 potential regions of Albania, but most importantly the Ionian region possesses great assets in developing creative tourism.

5.3.2 Creative Tourism Destinations

Many researchers highlight the fact that destinations have a lot of possibilities to be creative (Rudan, 2014) and that creative tourism is found both in urban and rural environments (Richards, 2011) in every destination. Nevertheless, when reviewing the literature, it was noted that the most frequently mentioned examples and case studies are European cities such as Barcelona (Ooi, 2007; Richards, 2011; Stipanovic & Rudan, 2014), Paris (Richards & Marques, 2012; Stipanovic & Rudan, 2014), Dubrovnik and Zagreb (Jelincic & Zuvela, 2012), or other destinations in developed countries like Singapore (Ooi, 2007; Richards, 2011). On the contrary, few publications are available focusing in Albania mainly Gjirokastra in English literature (B. Aliaj, E.Janku, A. Allkja, S. Dhamo, 2014; M. Kotullaku, 2015; D. Qiqi & L. Rova, 2015). Hence, there is a geographical gap in research on creative tourism in developing countries of the Western Balkan region, apparent also in the Creative Tourism Network, an organization with the aim to foster creative tourism around the world, doesn't have any creative destination listed for the region, nevertheless Albania. (ICTN, 2016).

5.3.3 Creative tourism examples

Nowadays, there are many destinations which have been focusing on developing new tourism products, such as creative tourism as a new experience, seeking in finding new ways to apply the concept of creative tourism as new competitive advantage over other destinations. Some of the creative tourism experiences highlighted by Campbell (2010) in his article "*Creative Tourism Providing a Competitive Edge*" lists many destinations which offer this kind of experience: a) New Zealand creative tourism: Bone Carving with Maori tutoring; b) Barcelona Gastronomic: workshops in the city of Barcelona; c) Santa Fé to Ceòlas Native American pottery workshops; d) South Uist, Scotland: Music and dance summer school (Campbell, 2010). Nevertheless, there have been many efforts urging more the concept of creative

torusim, such as the Fundació Societat i Cultura, ADC, EP from Barcelona and the Osservatorio, from Rome, which have created the International Creative Tourism Network ICTN (ICTN, 2016). Many other destination that have been trying to develop creative tourism[18] strategy follow as such:

- **Barcelona, Spain – Barcelona Tourisme Creatiu**: Their aim focuses in promoting and offering visitors opportunities to discover the city of Barcelona and especially the city surroundings in an creative way, engaging more interaction with the local people, aiming in creating a larger network of creative tourism , to foster mobility among the travellers.

- **Austria – Creative Tourism Austria**, including the creative tourism offer of some cities such as Vienna, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, Burgenland, Styria and Tyrol. Creativity in this case is spread all over the country promoting three main themes: Art&Culture; Craft&Traditions; Food&Gourmet.

- **Galicia, Spain - Creative Tourism Galícia,** gives visitors an opportunity to discover the city by its culture, taking part in artistic with local people. Such activities include: Natural cosmetic courses, cooking and clothing classes, visits to artists' workshops and factories, wine tourism, photographic routes.

- **Santa Fe, New Mexico – Creative Tourism Santa Fe**, focuses in many categories such as a) History and Culture; b) Cuisine; c) Outdoors; d)Visual Arts; e) Performing Arts.

5.3.4 Concluding Remarks

As noted earlier in the texts the benefit of fostering creative tourism aims towards economic benefits of culture and creativity as instruments for innovation and social integration as well as accommodating the needs of tourists, which are becoming prominent in todays globalized world. In todays world urging tourism markets, differentiation from others is keen in becoming a place of attraction based on creativity and culture. In the creative tourism field, creative networks are constantly trying to build up networks between the tourists and locals (Richards and Marques, 2012). Some of the key beneficiaries of creative tourism focus on :

(a) active participation - creative visitors are actively engaged in the process of creation in which they interact with locals and their culture;
(b) distinctive experiences creative activities can be practiced anywhere but what is important is to connect them with the unique characteristics of culture and creativity in the destination; and

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18   Websites of the following destinatons for futher information about creative toursim, http://www. barcelonacreativa.info/principal.asp; http://www.kreativreisen.at/en; http://creativetourismgaliciapcat. blogspot.pt/; http://santafecreativetourism.org/.

(c) co-creation which includes joint creation of experiences by consumers and producers; and encouraging the creative potential tourists to enhance their creativity and return from the travel with something far more than just souvenirs or photos; and

(d) encouraging the creative potential tourists to enhance their creativity and return from the travel with something far more than just souvenirs or photos, all beneficiaries which if implemented to Gjirokastra could possibly function in developing a future brand for the city, region, hence enhancing future collaboration between the Western Ballkan countries.

Also as Richards (2009) describes furthermore the benefits of creative tourism, other factors supporting this new approach to the branding of the cities/places/region based on the consumption and production are based on:

- The increasing skilled consumption of the society which is highly driven towards 'skilled consumption', including self-development, education and creative activities, viewed as interesting and directly practiced, rather than just meeting basic needs and offers
- The experience economy - where competition based on producing goods or services has been replaced by competition to produce experiences, which will allow the consumer to use their own creativity;
- Shifting to intangible tourism resources - such as the image, stories or atmosphere of the places, where creativity is needed to turn these resources into experiences and products for the tourists

5.4 Tourism for All

"Tourism for all – promoting universal accessibility" was the chosen theme by the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) for World Tourism Day 2016. This new initiative has been of the latest trends in the tourism industry, arising awareness of the great importance that this tourism has, as well as the challenges and opportunities that creates. In recent decades, the number of persons enjoying the opportunity of vacation time has increased. According to the recent statistics from 2015 of the World Tourism Organisation, there were 1,184 billion arrivals of international tourists in the world: a number, which – according to predictions – will reach 2 billion in 2030. To this number, one must add the number of tourists arriving at a local level (UNWTO, 2015). Nevertheless, reality demonstrates that tourism for many direct and indirect factors is not available to all, where many people continue to be excluded from executing this right. In many developing countries, where basic needs still need to be guaranteed, the right to tourism appears to be something very distant. Still, even in well-developed nations, there are significant portions of society that do not have easy access to tourism. Thus, the concept of "tourism for all" integrates the ideas of "accessible tourism", "sustainable tourism" and "social tourism".

• The term "accessible tourism"[19], one intends the effort made up in guaranteeing that tourist destinations and services are accessible to all, regardless the person's cultural profile, their permanent or temporary limitations (physical, mental or sensory), or special needs required by them (e.g.: the needs of children or the elderly) (ENAT, 2015; UNWTO, 2015). Nevertheless, the concept of "sustainable tourism" includes commitment in obtaining quality of tourism respectful of the cultural and environmental diversity of the place (UNWTO, 2015). The term "social tourism", on its part, demands that no one should be excluded on the basis of different culture, lack of resources, or due to living in less-developed regions, such as young persons, families with many children, special needs persons and elderly, as stated in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, 2015. Therefore, the need in applying the concept of "tourism for all" should be seen as a potential in future development of tourism strategies, such as the case of Albania. Nevertheless, The World Health Organization estimates that 15% of the global population, roughly 1 billion people, live with some form of disability, thus with populations ageing rapidly, the number of persons experiencing obstacles will only rise (WHO, 2015). EU study (2014), on "Economic Impact and Travel Patterns of Accessible Tourism in Europe" estimated that the accessible touristic market of Europe will be approximately 27% of the total population and 12% of the tourism market[20]. These figures reflect the large propor-

19   "Accessible Tourism" (also known as "Access Tourism", "Universal Tourism", "Inclusive Tourism" and in some countries such as in Japan "Barrier-free Tourism")
20   Estimate based on EU Study (2014) "Economic Impact and Travel Patterns of Accessible Tourism in Europe" Downloaded 17 July 2016

tion of senior travellers, (people over 60 years of age will constitute 22% of the global population in 2050)[21], people with disabilities and families with small children (WHO, 2016). As noted by UNWTO, the tourism market should focus on this new gap in developing future opportunities for destinations that are ready to receive these visitors, since they prefer and have the tendency to travel more frequently during the low season, accompanied or in groups, prolonging their visit (UNWTO, 2015). Everyone must have the right to travel, be able to explore new places, and certainly accessible tourism makes this more possible, giving to those with accessibility needs, as well as their travelling companions, options to choose from. As this concept is becoming more accepted in many European countries (Spain, Italy, Norway,etc), in the Balkan and Albanian reality this concept of tourism should start to be applied in new destinations, hotels, and tour operators which should aim in including accessible tourism into their offerings. According to The World Tourism Organization some beneficiaries towards "Tourism for All" focuses on:

- Accessible environments and services contribute in improving the quality of the tourism product, thus increasing the overall competitiveness of the tourism destinations.
- By incorporating accessibility, it tend in naturally developing sustainable tourism policies and strategies.
- Regions and destinations further develop forward-thinking tourism policies and practical measures, taking in account the diversity of the human condition in terms of age, mobility, sensory and intellectual impairments or health condition.
- Combining socially inclusive policies, Universal Design techniques and the use of new technologies and information tools, destination managers and tourism providers are able to cater effectively for visitors who need "good access" (UN-WTO, 2016).

5.4.1 Beneficiaries of Accessible Tourism

While researching for new tourism trends and especially for accessible tourism, many perceived that by aiming in developing accessible tourism it only benefited people with different disabilities. However, there are numerous population profiles that can benefit from the development of Accessible Tourism such as:

- Persons with disabilities
- Elderly People
- Local residents of a certain destination
- Foreigners
- Other (Persons with injuries; people accompanying persons with disabilities; Children; people with temporary disability etc).

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21   World Health Statistics 2016: Monitoring health for the SDGs (WHO)

First and most important group benefiting in this tourism segment are people with disabilities[22]. From the standpoint of the social model, disability should not be seen as individual problem but rather as the limitations on a person caused by society, where the obstacles and inequality situations arise (ENAT, 2015). On a traditional point of view, disability has been classified in accordance of the human areas affected. Hence, in 2001 The World Health Organization presented a new classification instrument called ICF (International Classification of Functioning of Disability and Health) attempting to "provide a standard language and framework for the description of health and health-related states."(WHO, 2001). WHO classification highlights the initial distinctions between a human being's capacities (physical, sensory and intellectual) and illnesses (of the body and mind) (WHO, 2001).
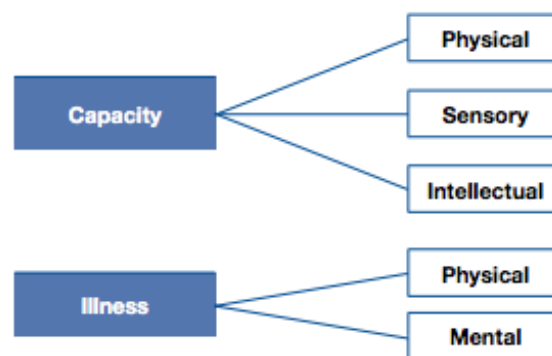
Fig. 23 Classification of capacities and illnesses ICF. Source: World Health Organization, 2001

Nevertheless, targeting and identifying tourist with disabilities as a single market segment it is far from accurate given the fact that disability varies in its causes, nature, severity and impact on daily functioning, across demographic groups by age, geography, social class and other variables (UNTWO, 2016). There are persons with disabilities in all age groups and social classes with different interests and characteristics. When it comes to reasons to why people with disabilities in developed countries have a better quality of life, thus finding it more easier to engage in leisure and tourism activities a) Higher income levels for persons with disabilities; b) Pension stability; c) Technological improvements; d) Beneficiaries of social schemes; e) More availability for travel; f) Interest in engaging in tourism activities. Nevertheless, other population groups such as elderly people, categorized as senior tourists are seen as the real economic blessing for tourism destinations, due to spending more time when travelling, stay longer and can take two or three holidays during the year (J. Sniadek, 2006). Sniadek also notes that this type of tourist prefer to stay closer to home while choosing a destination to visit.

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22   The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes that disability is complex, dynamic, multidimensional and contested. Over the years, theories have been constructed about its meaning and the term underwent significant evolution with the change from an individual, medical perspective to a structural and social perspective. This has been described as a shift from a "medical model" to a "social model" in which people are viewed as being disabled by society rather than by their bodies.
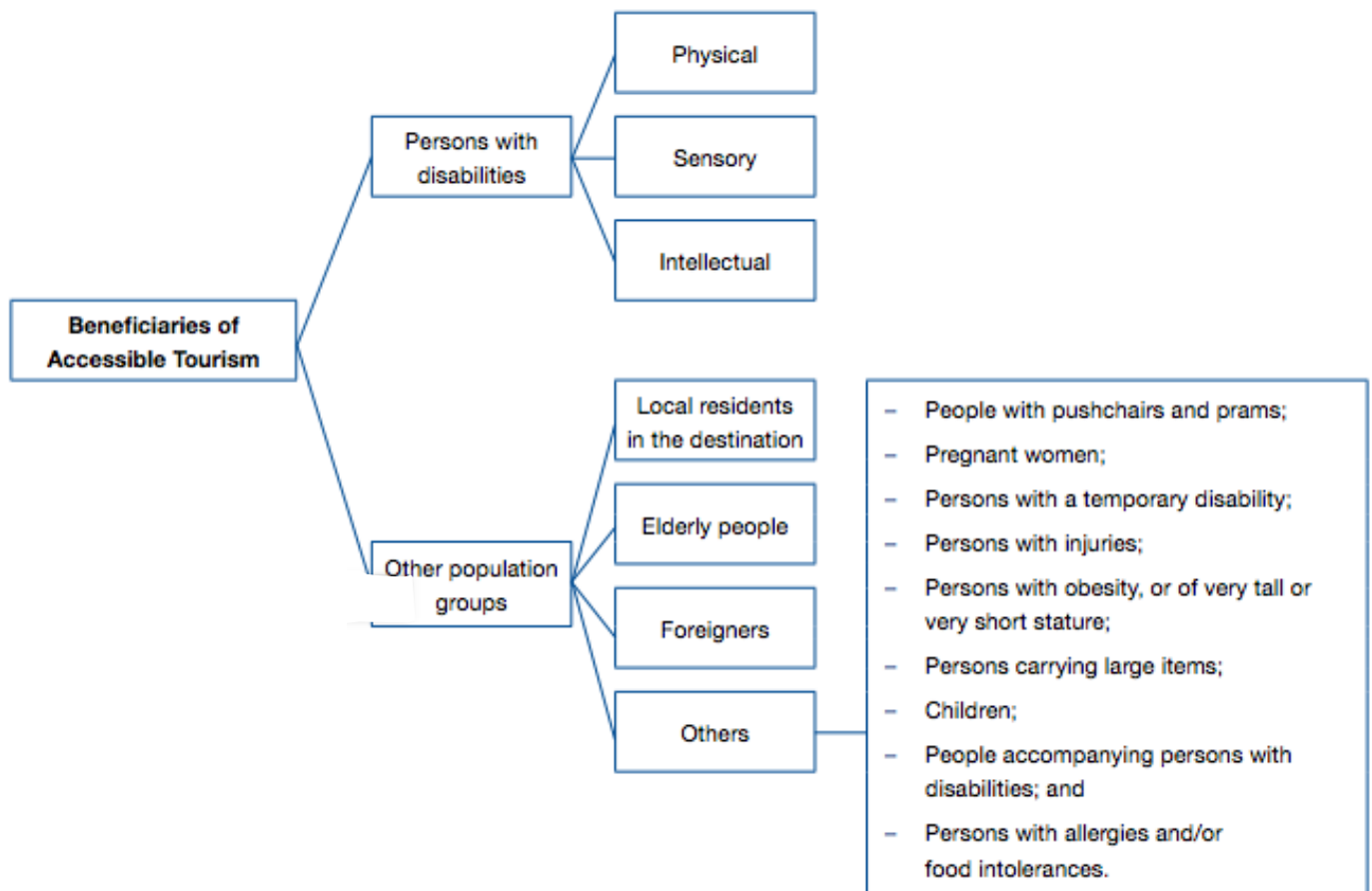
Fig. 24 Beneficiaries of accessibility in tourism . Source: Adapted from Vía Libre (2012)

5.4.2 Barrier in Accessible Tourism

Achieving in implementing accessible tourism as a potential in creating sustainable tourism for a destination is very hard, as far as everyone has their own individual differences in capacity. Everyone, depending on their functional and mental capacities encounters barriers in mobility and information. Difficulties encountered and prevention of use and enjoyment of environments and services offered, are found in different spheres of our daily life. However when in comes to barriers related to tourism regardless someone's limitation, two main categories are defined, environmental and social barriers (UNWTO, 2016).

Environmental barriers

Barriers related to users/clients and the environment around them (transportation barriers, architectural barriers, communication barriers, among others). In many cases they prevent access and enjoyment of tourism infrastructures and services. UNWTO, 2015 report on accessible tourism mark several examples in regards of difficulties that can be found, such as:

Planning and booking: One of the major factors in travel and tourism is accessibility to information, Web connection. The Internet connections offers opportunity to search for, find and book travel and tourism experiences, also making as analyses of the product information in detail and comparing prices. This is currently seen as an activity from which older people and people with disabilities may easily be excluded due to what is known as the "digital divide" UNWTO, 2015. Some of the main problems involving information on the Internet identified by UNWTO experts are:
- Inaccurate information;
- Information that is not detailed enough;
- Disability is not contemplated comprehensively, as a need for all;
- Obsolete information; and
- Inaccessible websites.

Infrastructure and transportation: Upon means of transportation towards a destination which should be updated to create a barrier free experience, local transportation options at the designated place may constitute a further barrier, thus no-accessible transportation enhances limited touristic experience.

Buildings: Lacking the proper measurement in creating barrier free environments in buildings is also highlighted as an issue and obstacle by UNTWO expert, in leisure accommodation.

Communication: Communication barriers[23] arise when information is not offered in accessible or alternative formats[24]. Hence, existence of barriers also are encountered where there no adequate signage system enabling people to find their way independently and safely, visiting towns, cities, or cultural buildings.

Activities involving the destination: Relative to this research on of the most important points is set on activities involving destination. UNWTO expert note that when a destination environment is only conceived for certain population profiles without taking in consideration diversity, the destinations lacks in offering possibilities or alternatives for all types of people, considered a bad practice in tourism[25] (UNWTO, 2015). Small towns, cities throughout the Balkan Region and Albania are seen as essential locations for a visitor's experience in further enhancing the tourism industry, with their appeal often related to their historic nature, with elements remained unchanged throughout the years, even for centuries. Attractions and sightseeing

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23   Additional communication barrier for many tourists with disabilities arise towards language barrier between themselves and their hosts,

24   Messages are not clear and concise, and when there is not sufficient information coverage

25   Certain cities, towns or parks have many obstacles restricting the free movement of people with reduced mobility, people with visual impairments, older people, children, and any tourist in general.

activities at tourist spots create many accessibility problems for people with reduced mobility, deaf, blind, visually impaired, children and adults with learning difficulties, due to the fact that every sight is unique. Consequently, limiting accessibility to cultural sight, small town or cities has an impacts not only to the limitations of people with disabilities, but also to other groups of people having temporal limitation and people accompanying them (UNWTO, 2015).

Social barriers

The second barrier acknowledged (WHO, 2001; World Bank, 2004; European Commission, 2004, UNWTO, 2015) stand on that of social barriers. Social barrier are described in the involvement of factors linked to the society and how society treats disability and accessibility-related issues (UNWTO, 2015). Noted in being more difficult to overcome linked to society's consideration of accessibility, thus impacting in the necessary political, social and economic changes to make it possible (European Commission, 2004). Difficulties encountered in the concept of social barrier in regards of the tourism industry, is a) **Lack of training in tourism-related businesses:** Seen as the direct interaction with persons with disabilities and specific access requirements, where the tourism sector employees are not prepared for different demands, thus training should be incorporated not only as a right towards people with disability, but also in terms of enhancement of the quality of service to possibly broaden the market.; b) **Lack of awareness about accessibility issues**: The lack of awareness about accessibility-related is seen with the relation of staff-public, also in the absence of national policies and strategies aimed in fostering accessibility in tourism services in the world but especially in Albania. Experts of UNWTO related to such issues highlight the lack of research and material related to accessibility in touristic destination.

Other reason why these barriers have not been eliminated stand also in the absence of political and financial investment in this sector, as accessibility is percepted as a cost rather than as an opportunity for improvement, returning the investment and guaranteeing profitability.

5.4.3 Benefits of Accessible Tourism

Destination managers and travel agencies around the world are aware of the fact that for tourism to survive and prosper it has to adapt continuously with its products and services. Thus, tourism is a filed that is constantly changing in order to adapt to visitors preferences, at the same time anticipating and adapting to sociological and

geopolitical changes, technology and innovation, and new business opportunities. Tourists that need accessibility and wish to have accessibility when they travel has been seen and taken into account as a niche in the market of tourism, offering considerable benefits for destinations and businesses (UNWTO,2015). Not new as a market but highly neglected from the tourism industry, which didn't build up means of exploring it, thus negatively impacting this poorly explored sector in means of research and development. Nevertheless, as noted by many organizations (UNWTO,2015; ENAT, 2016, UNESCO, 2016), Accessible Tourism market offers many benefits such as

a) **Travel, both international and domestic, is rising steadily** positioning the tourism sector one of the world's most important economic activities. In relevance to accessible tourism benefits the more people travel, the greater the demand for accessibility will be, thus placing accessibility as a necessity in competing on the global market, where tourism providers should respond to visitors' diverse needs, offering accessible services for everyone;

b) **Multiplication of customers,** many studies in Europe and Australia have shown that many people with disabilities tend to travel accompanied[26], resulting in creating/ adapting a more creative and appealing destination, since travelling might include larger families or groups (European Commission, 2014)

c) **Reduction of the seasonality phenomenon**, in attracting tourists, aiming for involving people with disabilities could help combat the seasonality phenomenon in certain destinations. As noted by UNWTO experts, considerable number of persons with disabilities have more possibilities to travel during low season in an destination providing also special offers (UNWTO, 2015).

d) **Accessibility must be part of all tourism products**, hence, specialised services for small number of visitors, taking in consideration their disability, transforming it in a business opportunity for new tourism products with high levels of accessibility and/or assistance;

e) **Accessible destinations can contribute to improving the standard of living of their residents**, providing additional benefits for communities in terms of higher quality service, sustainability and social inclusion (ENAT, 2016). Nevertheless, local non-governmental organizations should be important actors playing a key role in fostering and supporting Accessible Tourism initiatives in regions, cities and small towns;

f) **Increased market share**, seen in fostering and retaining loyalty of this market segment, thus increasing the profitability and strengthening the financial base of tourism businesses and destinations (UNWTO, 2015);

g) **Enhanced corporate image,** through addition to the financial benefits and security, brand image will be also enhanced, offering an differentiated image of desti-

26   European Commission (2014), Economic Impact and Travel Patterns of Accessible Travel in Europe – Final Report (online), available at: http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/5566/attachments/1/translations/en/renditions/native (15-12-2016)

nations, the businesses and services, important for retaining customer loyalty and attracting new visitors (UNWTO, 2015).

5.4.4 Case studies of Accessible Tourism

For the last five years, UNWTO, the European Network for Accessible Toursim (ENAT) and the Spanish ONCE Foundation for Social Inclusion of Person with Disabilities have been partnering and focusing on research and raising awareness regarding accessible tourism, producing specific recommendations and technical manuals for making destinations ever more accessible (UNWTO, 2016). Based on their data, six selected case studies were chosen to illustrate some of the key parts of the accessible tourism supply chain, relevant to the of accessible tourism provision; a) Accessible Heritage Tourism: Best Practices of Universal Accessibility in India; b) Exhibition of 3-D copies of Works of Art from the Prado Museum´s Collection, Spain; c) Everyone Belongs Outside: Push to Open Nature & the Alberta Parks Inclusion Plan, Canada; d) Barrier-free Tour Center, Japan; e) Lonely Planet Accessible Travel Guide; f) T-GUIDE: Guiding Visitors with Learning Difficulties. The listed examples above, specified also by expert of UNWTO, provide a small sample of possible solutions regarding accessibility, hopefully urging in taking steps towards the availability of accessible offers in tourist destinations around the world (UNWTO, 2016).

CS_1: Accessible Heritage Tourism, Universal Accessibility in India

About the project: India holding many UNESCO sites, generates important revenues from both domestic and international tourist. The case presented and highlighted by UNWTO and ENAT focuses on accessibility improvements in four UNESCO sites[27]. The accessibility challenges of this project included multi-plinth levels within monuments, stepped access to reach important areas of tourist interest, lack of accessible amenities and facilities and a resistance by the heritage conservation professionals to make changes in the built environment (UNWTO, 2016). One of the main challenges of the sites was in achieving a balance between the strict conservation norms and the needs of incorporating accessibility to make the sites "visitable" by all.

Partners of the project: The main partners of this initiative were the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) - which implemented & controlled the agency of Government of India, Svayam – a civil society organisation that conducted access audits and

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27   India has 32 UNESCO recognised World Heritage Sites (WHS), generating important revenues from large numbers of both domestic and international tourists. The case presented included four sites, Qutub Minar (New Delhi), Red Fort (New Delhi), Fatehpur Sikri Group of Monuments (Agra), and Taj Mahal (Agra), all under the control of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

advised by ASI on access improvements, NGOs who provided feedback on the access improvements.

Main objective: One of the main objectives of this project was in enhancing accessibility and diversity of visitors in WHS, considering the needs of not just visitors with mobility impairments, but also visual and other impairments were to be considered.

Results:

- Each project was designed based on the specific requirements of each individual site (ramps, handrails, accessible toilets and accessible signage).
- Braille signage was used alongside the text signage, providing information about the sites.
- The ramps put up at the selected sites are placed without any prior digging or damaging the character of the heritage site.
- The public conveniences are either assembled porta-cabins (Fatehpur Sikri) or permanent structures matching the aesthetics (Red Fort Delhi).
- Materials and colours used on the interventions do not stand out but match the site's character, thus striking balance between the access needs of diversity of visitors & the conservational concerns presenting a win-win situation for all.

Remaining Challenges: Areas of the WHS that couldn't be made accessible due to conservation issues, will remain their focus on providing reasonable accessibility. Regular maintenance has to be considered. ASI website accessibility required focus in providing information for all the target groups that may wish to visit the sites. Lastly, thier aim was based on improving accessibility issues to other monuments, not limited only to World Heritage Sites in India (UNWTO, 2016).

CS_2: Exhibition of 3-D copies of Works of Art from the Prado Museum´s Collection

About the project: Developed by the Prado's Museum Department of Education, with the support of AXA Foundation, ONCE (Spanish Organization of the Blind) and ONCE Foundation, and with the technical assistance provided by Durero Estudios SL, the exhibition of 3-D copies of Works of Art, aimed to present an innovative project selecting the most representative paintings of the Prado's Museum collection. The scope of the project was in producing 3D images of paintings which cloud be touched, thus allowing a new perspective, especially oriented to persons with visual impairments. At the same time, three of the works in the exhibition were displayed in real size, scale 1:1.

Partners of the project: The main partners of the project were the Prado's Museum Department of Education, with the support of AXA Foundation, ONCE (Spanish Organization of the Blind) and ONCE Foundation, and with the technical assistance provided by Durero Estudios SL.

Main Objective: Produce 3D copies of the most representative paintings of the Prado's Museum collection, aiming in involving and educating people with visual impairments.

Results:

- New initiative between The Prado Museum and visually-impaired professionals from ONCE;
- Prado Museum and AXA Foundation are exhibiting the 3D pieces in a road-show in six Spanish cities.
- With the impact of this project different cultural institutions in Spain, started proposing similar projects combining different senses, such as sight and hearing in concerts, poetry readings around pictorial compositions and sight and taste in gastronomy.

Challenges: The project aims to create future platform with focus education aiming in creating 'Prado for All' programme.

Fig. 25 3-D copies of Works of Art from the Prado Museum´s Collection. Source: Prado Museum

CS_3: Everyone Belongs Outside: Push to Open Nature & the Alberta Parks Inclusion Plan

About the project: In 2014, Alberta Park released its "Inclusion Plan, Everyone Belongs Outside", aiming in increasing accessibility, inviting participation, and building capacity for inclusion in all Provincial Park facilities, programs and experiences. Nevertheless, The Push to Open Nature programme focused on the inclusion of persons with disabilities (physical, visual, mental, emotional, learning, and temporary disabilities) and their caregivers.

Partners of the project: The main partners of the project were Alberta Provincial Human Services; with the collaboration of Mount Royal University School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Calgary, Parks Victoria, Australia, and Travability.

Main Objective: The main objective of the project focused on activating inclusion

plan by: improving access, inviting participation, increasing capacity of disability services and outdoor recreation groups, sharing information and best practices, encouraging dialogue to increase awareness of inclusion in nature parks (UNWTO, 2016).

Results:

- Improved and adapted outdoor recreation equipment design, community and volunteer engagement, staff diversity training and support, and partnerships with agencies serving people with disabilities.
- Increased environmental and recreational literacy among people of all abilities through adaptive nature challenges, volunteerism and special events that promoted storytelling, inclusive experiences.
- By Integrating research, Alberta Parks revealed and promoted the mental health and emotional benefits of inclusion in nature for persons with disabilities and their caregivers.
- Accessible campsites, comfort camping, and multi-sensory, barrier-free interpretive trails added a range of opportunities for all in the park.
- Smaller barrier-free experiences across the province (Peaceful Valley Day Lodge, accessible yurts at Pigeon Lake, and minibuses at Fish Creek)
- Funded the design of the innovative "Parks Explorer"[28] as an ongoing development through student design competitions in collaboration with staff, stakeholders, and volunteers.

Challenges: Continue in promoting natural parks as new opportunities for learning and social connection in diverse landscapes and facilities, regardless of age, ability, gender, cultural background, education level, or individual perspective of their visitors.

CS_4: Barrier-free Tour Center, Ise-Shima Region, Mie Prefecture, Japan

About the project: The Japan Accessible Tourism Center established the first inbound tourism service provider for Japanese tourists with disabilities, supporting establishment of similar regional centers.

Partners of the project: The Japan Accessible Tourism Center, non-profit organization

Main Objective: The Barrier-free Tour Center in Ise-Shima project aimed in providing advice for accommodation and sightseeing trips for tourists with disabilities, seniors and their families. The project conducted by a non-profit organization, with a budget from the government, local municipality, the local tourism association, donations and tour coordination fees.

Results:

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28   Adaptive wheelchair means people with limited mobility can manoeuvre on rougher terrain and, unlike chairs that require physically fit support-people, can be easily operated by families.

- Created an "all-people-friendly destination" launching a series of activities including: the wheelchair-friendly route map, accessible information on the Center's website, sports events (canoeing, cycling, sailing, marathon, etc.), consulting for traditional Japanese inns to make accessible rooms, awareness-raising at schools, seminars for the local tourism sector and free wheelchair rentals in the area (UNWTO, 2016).
- Following the example of Ise-Shima, some other Japanese cities are trying to establish accessible tourism centers.

Challenges:
- Charity is not enough to change society to become more accessible. Investment in accessible facilities and services for tourism business needs to come first.
- Accessible tourism products and services in urban destinations have to take into consideration the needs of both domestic and foreign visitors, whose cultural background may differ
- The main challenge of this project was based on the flexibly of assuring public funding for a long time, implying that these centers need their own sources of revenue (UNWTO, 2016).

CS_5: Accessible Travel Online Resources

About the project: The Lonely Planet's together with the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT), have created the "Accessible Travel Online Resources Guide" including not only individual destinations, suppliers and venues but also many "Accessibility Information Schemes" (AIS databases),

Partners of the project: The Lonely Planet's together and the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT)

Main Objective: The Accessible Travel Online Project aimed adding at the information gap and informing people with a disability which desire to travel, by either providing information directly or by introducing them to many others, via their website or personal blog (UNWTO, 2016)

Results:
- Lonely Planet has published the world's largest list of online resources for accessible travel;
- The project has attracted the interest of National Tourism Organisations expressing their interest in collaborating on future editions (UNWTO, 2015)

Challenges:
- Lack of information regarding certain destinations around the world, due to the lack of expertise from travel and tourism institutions.
- Tourism suppliers should ensure that information about the accessibility of their products and services are easy to find on their website and in all their marketing materials.

- Cooperation between regional and national tourism bodies in future contribution with Lonely Planet Guide of Accessible Travel Online Resources, in promoting their accessible tourism (UNWTO, 2016).

CS_6: T-GUIDE: Guiding Visitors with Learning Difficulties

About the project: The T-GUIDE, a project based on the outcomes of a Vocational and Educational Training (VET), project co-funded by the European Union "Leonardo" project. It is designed as a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) course for qualified tourist guides focusing in offering better services in interpreting the cultural and natural heritage of an area to a broader audience.

Partners of the project: European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (FEG) and the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT)

Main Objective: The main objective of the project focuses in offering training courses on Guiding Visitors with Learning Difficulties. Properly trained tours are more inclusive, thus opening new possibilities for people with intellectual disabilities, as well as their families and friends to enjoy cultural tours. As in regard with the course objective of this project, the trained tours guides will have to work with carers, understanding the learning difficulties by assessing and adjusting tourist guide services to a specific audience.

Results:
- The project developed partnerships from different disciplines, helping in overcoming barriers of social and cultural exclusion by engaging actively with individuals, families and groups of people with learning difficulties
- Proper training has given tourist guides the opportunity to enhance their professional skills and becoming more aware of the needs of people with learning difficulties and gaining knowledge of how to organise and prepare in terms guiding services. (UNWTO, 2016).

Challenges:
- The need of expanding the number of trainers, working in different languages and regions.
- Incorporating guiding materials and techniques by using videos and other digital information formats (UNWTO, 2016).

5.4.5 Concluding Remarks

Since the focus of this research has been the development of sustainable tourism as a methodology of branding Gjirokastra, focus in Chapters 2 and 3 set the overall state of Albania and Gjirokastra situation in regards to tourism development, whereas Chapter 4 created the basis methodologies and research regarding branding (city, places, destinations), Chapter 5 consisted in exploring sustainable trends of tourism in order to build a continuous approach from the conclusions derivered from Chapter 3, regarding branding strategy based on the main potentials of Gjirokastra. The conclusions drawn from Chapter 5 related to the fact that all of the three chosen tourism trends stand within the concept of maximizing positive effects towards the application of cultural routes, creative tourism and tourism for all, while minimizing the negative ones, related to the local economy of a place, socially development, and the build environment impact. Perhaps one of the most noticeable positive conclusion deals with the impact that this tourism trends have in revitalising culture through increased societal self esteem of the place. Additional conclusion from Chapter 5, consisted in the fact that if sustainable tourism is taken into account as a methodology to be followed in branding (cities, places, destinations), where revenues can boost or bring back lost or declining cultural objects and activities and at the same time create job opportunities, regional income growth and tax revenue. Nevertheless, common conclusion from both Chapter 4 and 5 consisted that both the branding process (branding cities, places, destinations) and the process of developing sustainable tourism required identification of participators of all relevant stakeholders, governmental entities, and potential ones, in order to ensure wide participation and consensus in building this capacities, constant monitoring of impacts and processes, corrective measures in maintaining the desirable image. Thus, both the approach of branding (cities, places, destinations), and sustainability in tourism should be applied in terms of the foreseen trends (socially, economically, demographics, etc), maintaining and requiring a high level of residents, future residents, tourist satisfaction, ensuring a meaningful experience to the tourists and sustainable life to the current residents, by raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them. However, the main conclusion from Chapter 5, although the methodology of investigating all the potential identified trends of sustainable tourism separately, the main conclusion derivered from this chapter consist in the fact that cultural routes apart from the great approach and aim in fostering sustainable tourism and branding a product (cities, places, destinations), would have a greater impact if they are developed by including both creative tourism and tourism for all as additive components to this new product of cultural tourism. Thus forming a chain of actions where each of this trends develop in accordance with each other.

Chapter_6

Introduction

Chapter 6 consists of the main methodology derived from chapter 4, and applied to the case scenarios of Gjirokastra. Actual input of how the three main enhancers of sustainable tourism could be applied is given through alternative schemes, where each of the elaborated sustainable tourism trends are integrated into forming actual suggestions.

6.1 Making the case

As reviewed in the literature of branding cities and regions, cultural and natural heritage, the build environment, hallmark events, and famous personalities with the uniqueness of the place, are seen as potential tools in branding. However, in places and cities where the local economy, environment, and social development lacks in supporting the bases for creating a brand, sustainable tourism in this research is seen as an introductory tool in fostering furthermore the branded image of a city or region in Albania.

Although sustainable tourism is a very wide subject affecting many areas of implementation, also based on the outcomes of the SWOT analyses and questioners, the research aimed at focusing in the Sustainable tourism categories of a) fostering Cultural Tourism through the use of Cultural Routes; b) Creative tourism; c) Accessible tourism for all. This categories of sustainable tourism thus were seen as part of the branding methodology that should be applied in cases like Gjirokastra which different from other destinations urges more for a selective tourism approach.

In the branding literature review, all the findings and research done before by many authors focused in highlighting case studies of well know attractions of bigger European cities, known as destinations of attracting mass tourism categories. All of the branding examples, belong to economically, politically and socially well developed countries facing and hosting mass tourism such as the case of Barcelona, Venice etc. Thus in terms with the expected result for this research the branding strategies reviewed in accordance with the above mentioned sustainable tourism trends, approach more selective tourism trend. Hence, the Build Environment (Keving Lynch); Hallmark event (OCED); and Famous personalities (Asworth), and inhabitants, are certainly the genius loci of every place, city or town. However, in terms of branding, each region, city or town, specific requirements are needed. Thus, fundamentals of branding literature for destination, region, and cities were taken in consideration to create the bases of what branding for destination, places, cities stands for, however

specific methodologies in achieving branding were illustrated by the above case studies.

In the case of Albania, particularity Gjirokastra, where mass tourism is not a subject, rather than striving in attracting tourism in accordance to the actual possibilities of building the tourism sector, selective tourism is seen as the appropriate solution, through the implementation of cultural routes; creative tourism; and tourism for all. Selective tourism characteristics is based on the selection of tourists with focus in shaping the tourist product, through dispersion and diversification of tourist supply, the tourist product adapts to smaller groups of tourists, ending up in stimulating regional development concepts. Thus, selective tourism disperses concentration of tourist demand by ensuring sustainable regional development where the local community benefits in an increasingly diversified demand. In accordance with branding methodologies for regions, cities etc, selective tourism different from mass tourism, is defined as a shift towards sustainable tourism, harmonized with the natural and social values of local communities, allowing its host and guests to create and enjoy a positive and valuable experience.

Cultural routes, creative tourism, and tourism for all, are seen as complementary parts of forming an unifying image of what sustainable tourism should be for the county of Gjirokastra. The strategy of how each of this tourism trends complement each other (Fig 26) will be bases on cultural routes as the main driving force of the touristic product with the two other components (creative tourism, and tourism for all) as complementary ingredients to potentially achieve sustainable tourism.

6.2 Potential cultural routes based on their theme.

The classification of cultural routes in accordance with UNWTO is based in two main groups. Cultural routes articulated around a main theme and cultural routes which include several topics, with the route itself being the essential theme. Thus, the first theme might include the entire natural, heritage, historic and identity resources located near the route or the archipelago of points forming it, or cultural itineraries based on one theme (architecture, music, art) (UNWTO, 2015).

a) **Cultural Routes,** In the case of Gjirokastra, branding the county and the city of Gjirokastra through cultural route is seen as the main driving force of creating sustainable tourism. The implementation of cultural routes would reactivate the local economy, promote rural development, improve the perception of the community's heritage, continued growth. All of the cultural routes proposed for the county of Gjirokastra were based on historical and cultural facts, involving also famous personalities as part of the branding methodology. Thus, the main cultural routes pro

Sustainable Tourism Development

City as the BRAND

Improve the perception of the community's heritage; Reactivate local economy

Promote rural development; Sustainable development

Tourism & Cultural Routes

Promote awareness ; Continued Growth

Change of Motivation; Establish value of cultural identity

Local creativity constant development.

continuous process of creation

Creative Tourism

small groups; individuals narrow niche interests

Creation of new cultural heritage

Inclusive approach to sustainable development

Valuable industry for employment

Tourism for All

Accessible Infrastructure; cultural activities

New planning and architectual policies

Sustainable Community

Fig. 26 *"Conceptual Scheme of Sustainable Tourism Development as a branding methodology".*
Source: Sonia Jojic

Branding Strategies

Analysis
- Identify stakeholders
- Paths network cataloguing
- Cultural resources cataloguing
- Natural resources cataloguing
- Analyze host capacity
- Analyze regional strategies

Design & Planning
- Route Theme Selction
- Points of interest selection
- Sustainability
- Adaptation to user's needs
- Accessibility
- Identify actions to be taken, training needs
- Define management mechanisms,work plan and budget

Execution
- Works in adapting the route and signposting should be performed, action taken to improve the quality of the route.
- Preservation of cultural heritage elements important to the route, restoring natural surroundings that have suffered deterioration.

Management & maintenance
- Maintenance works ensuring, services, infrastructure & heritage sites are well maintained.
- Creation of a citizen participation enabling incidents on the route, as well as suggestions for improvement.
- Creation of visitor communication channels, user satisfaction experience
- Systematic and periodic review of elements that make up the route.

Promotion
- Marketing strategy for: Differentiate with other destinations by an strategy based on its unique qualities, in particular those of its cultural heritage, the landscape and its environmental values.
- Positioned the route as a cultural product, for active tourism, nature and hiking.
- Orientate the route to potential markets.

Sustainable image of the city

Environment
- Balance natural system with human system
- Protect the environment during all construction phases

Aesthetic
- Celebrate the Genius Loci
- Design a Unique Image

Function
- Practice New Urban Principles
- Provide tools for resource management

Economy
- Year-round economic vitality
- Incorporate sustainable tourism ventures

Socio - Cultural
- Respect and celebrate local culture and history
- Integrate educational and training facilities

posed for the county of Gjirokastra, take into account the city of Gjirokastra and the surrounding villages with accordance of potential point of interest. The main themes identified were based on the a) Historical route, b) Cultural routes ,c) Naturalist routes. Additional themes were also identified for each main theme of the cultural routes. The historical route additional themes were based on a) religious route; b)

Historical Routes
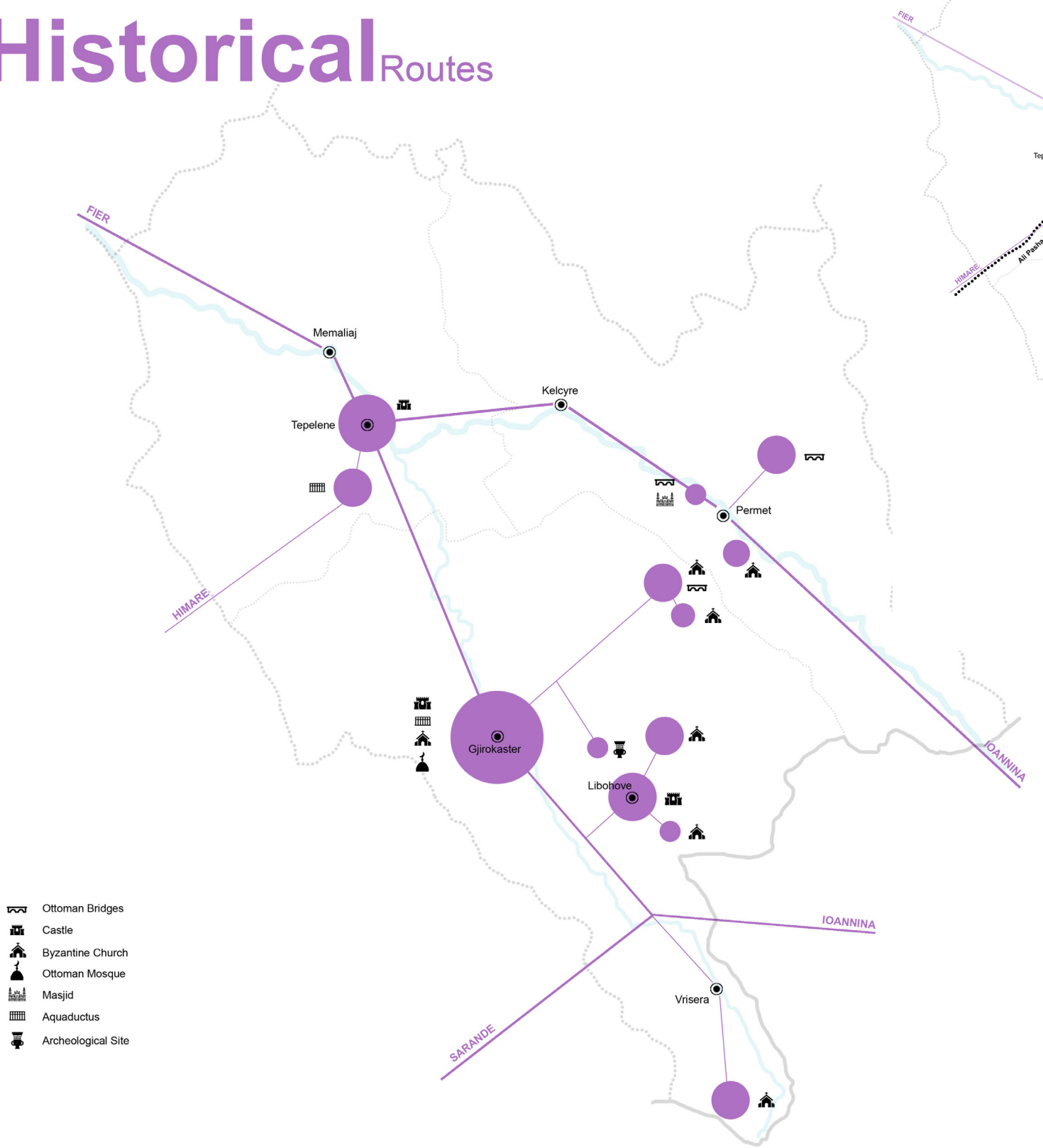
FIER

FIER

HIMARE

Ali Pasha

Memaliaj

Kelcyre

Tepelene

Permet

Gjirokaster

Libohove

IOANNINA

IOANNINA

Vrisera

SARANDE

- Ottoman Bridges
- Castle
- Byzantine Church
- Ottoman Mosque
- Masjid
- Aquaductus
- Archeological Site
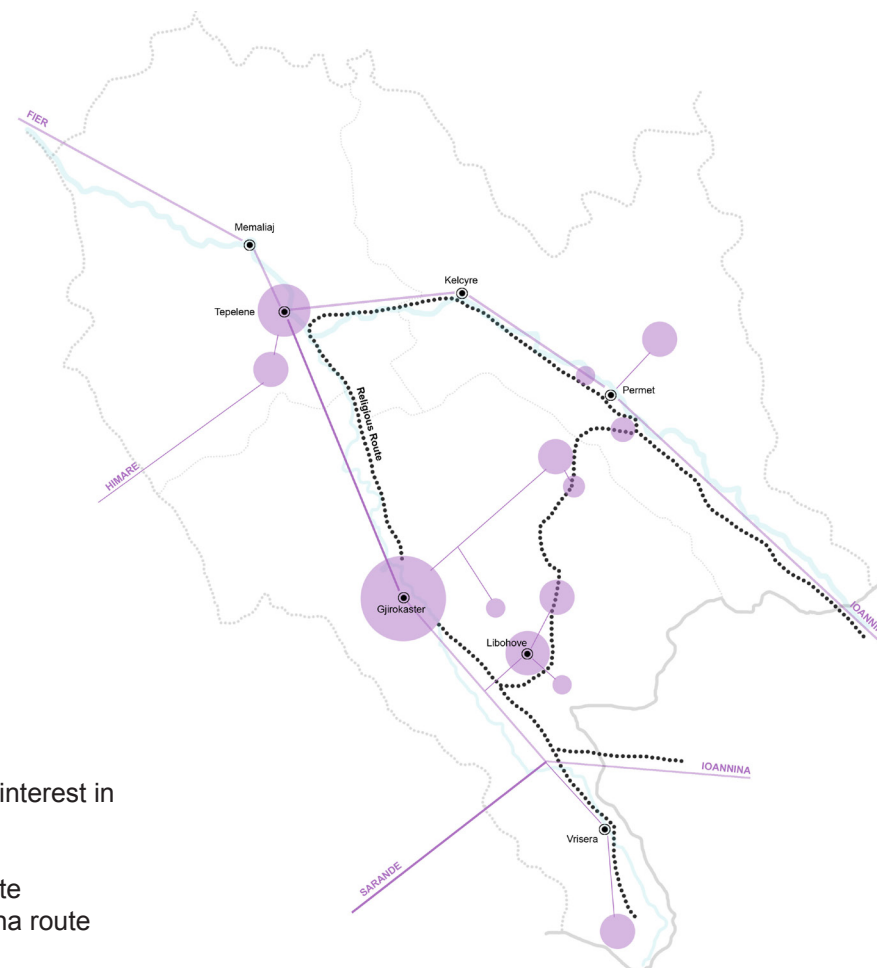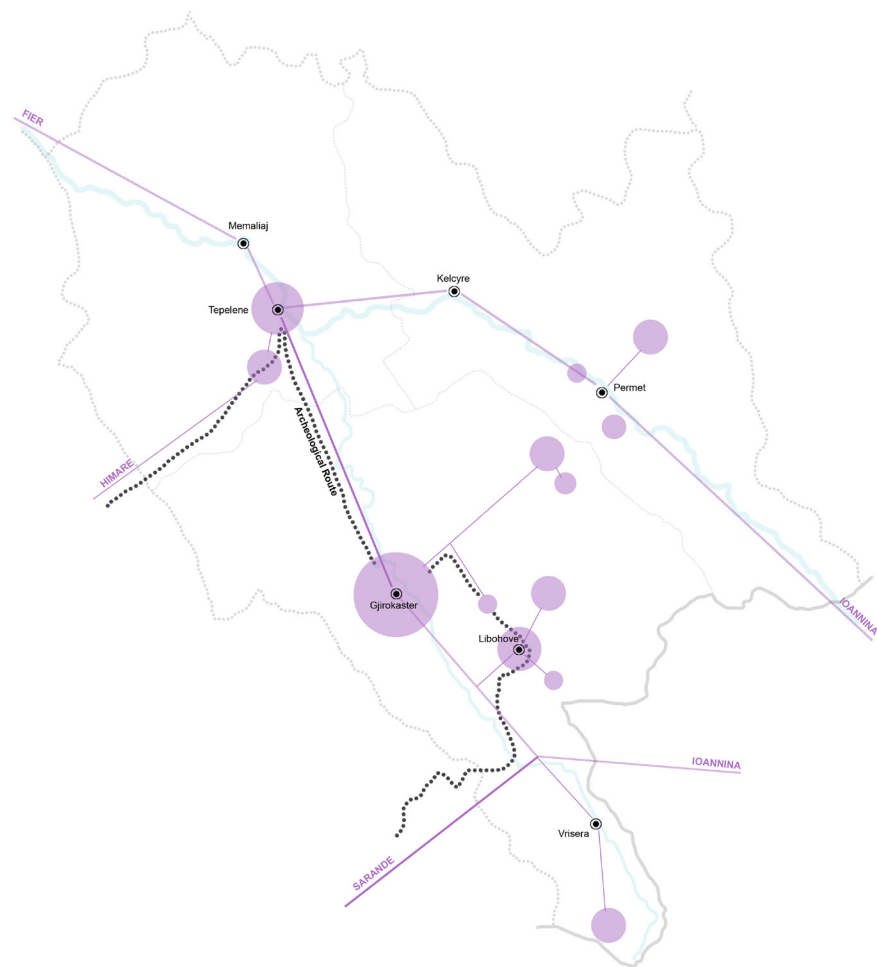
Map. 7 Identification of Historical points of interest in
the county of Gjirokastra
Map. 7.1 Identification of Religious route
Map. 7.2 Identification of archeological route
Map. 7.3 Identification of Ali Pashe Tepelena route

Cultural Routes

Legend:
- Poetry Heritage
- Museums
- Traditional Celebrations
- Ottoman Housing Architecture
- Fairs
- National Folk-Concert
- Traditional Rural Buildings
- Agro-tourism
- Farming
- Polyphony World Heritage
- City of flowers
- Traditional dishes
- Gliko - Tradition
- Ω Greek Minority
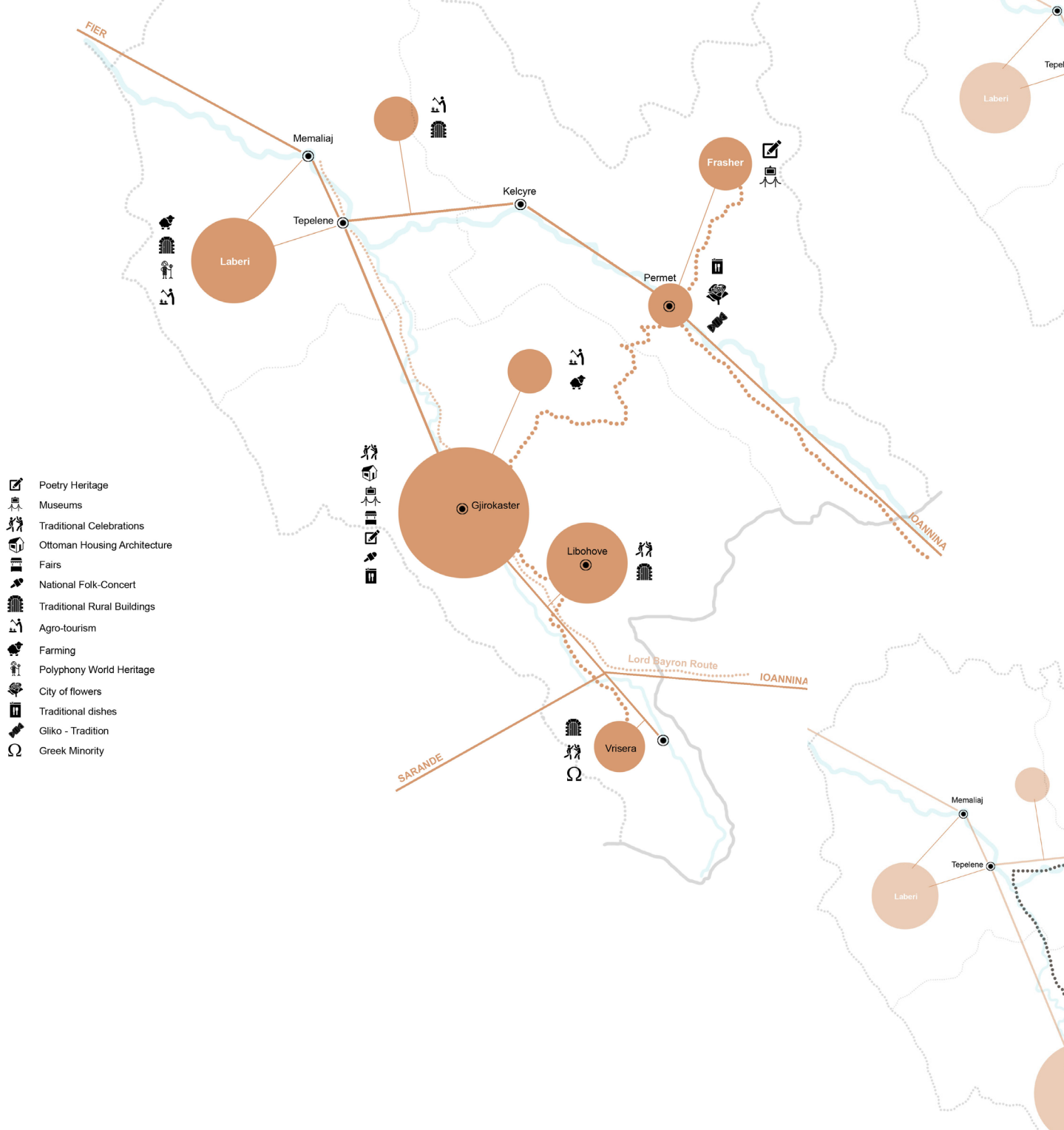
Map. 8 Identification of Cultural points of interest in the county of Gjirokastra
Map. 8.1 Identification of Lord Bayron and Edward Lear route
Map. 8.2 Identification of Culinary route
Map. 8.3 Identification of Artistic and Literature route
Map. 8.4 Identification of Architectural route

Lord Bayron Route

Frasher
Kelcyre
Permet
Gjirokaster
Libohove
Vrisera
IOANNINA
SARANDE
IOANNINA

Artistic Route

FIER
Memaliaj
Kelcyre
Tepelene
Frasher
Laberi
Permet
Gjirokaster
Libohove
Vrisera
IOANNINA
SARANDE
IOANNINA

Culinary Route

Kelcyre
Permet
Frasher
Gjirokaster
Libohove
Vrisera
IOANNINA
IOANNINA

Architecture Route

Memaliaj
Kelcyre
Tepelene
Frasher
Laberi
Permet
Gjirokaster
Libohove
Vrisera
IOANNINA
SARANDE
IOANNINA

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Natural Routes

Map. 9 Identification of Natural points of interest in
the county of Gjirokastra
Map. 9.1 Identification of Scenic route
Map. 9.2 Identification of Blue route
Map. 9.3 Identification of Cycling route

Legend:
- mountain landscape
- Wild forest
- Characteristic bridge
- Swimming opportunity
- Rowing opportunity
- Pic-nic zone
- Hiking
- Sun bathing
- Lookout
- Waterfall
- Canyons
- Hunting
- Winter tourism
- Diving
- Walking
- Park
- Cycling

Map labels:
FIER, Blue Route, Memaliaj, Tepelene, Kelcyre, Parku i Bredhit te Hotoves, Permet, Kanionet e Kurveleshit, Cajup, Parku natyror Skore-Polican, Libohove, Gjirokaster, Vrisera, Scenic Route, Cycling Route, IOANNINA, Bredhi i Sotires

Kelcyre
Parku i Bredhit te Hotoves
Permet
Cajup
Parku natyror Skore-Polican
Gjirokaster
Libohove
IOANNINA
Cycling Route
IOANNINA
Vrisera
Bredhi i Sotires

Memaliaj
Kelcyre
Tepelene
Parku i Bredhit te Hotoves
Permet
Kanionet e Kurveleshit
Cajup
Parku natyror Skore-Polican
Gjirokaster
Libohove
IOANNINA
Scenic Route
Vrisera
Bredhi i Sotires

FIER
Blue Route
Memaliaj
Tepelene
Kelcyre
Parku i Bredhit te Hotoves
Permet
Kanionet e Kurveleshit
Cajup
Parku natyror Skore-Polican
Gjirokaster
Libohove
IOANNINA
IOANNINA
Vrisera
Bredhi i Sotires

Historical Routes

Gjirokastra Tekke

Legend:
- Ottoman Bridges
- Castle
- Byzantine Church
- Ottoman Mosque
- Masjid
- Aquaductus
- Archeological Site

Gjirokastra Old Bazaar

Gjirokastra Hamam

Gjirokastra First Neighbourhood

Gjirokastra Mosque

Map. 7.4 Identification Cultural route in the city of Gjirokastra based on the Historic Theme

Cultural Routes
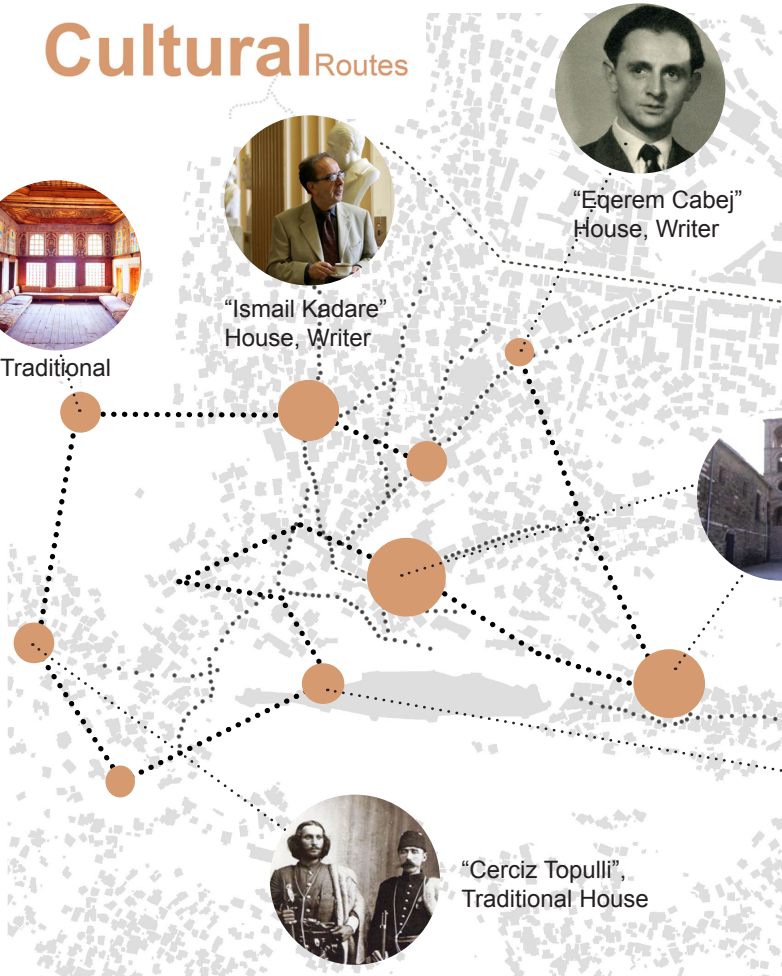
"Eqerem Cabej" House, Writer

Legend:
- Poetry Heritage
- Museums
- Traditional Celebrations
- Ottoman Housing Architecture
- Fairs
- National Folk-Concert
- Traditional Rural Buildings
- Agro-tourism
- Farming
- Polyphony World Heritage
- City of flowers
- Traditional dishes
- Gliko - Tradition
- Greek Minority

"Ismail Kadare" House, Writer

"Zekate", Traditional House

"Old Bazaar", Artisans Shops

"Saint Sotira", Church

"Castle of Gjirokastra", War Museum

"Cerciz Topulli", Traditional House

Map. 8.5 Identification Cultural route in the city of Gjirokastra based on the Cultural theme

Natural Routes

mountain landscape
Wild forest
Characteristic bridge
Swimming opportunity
Rowing opportunity
Pic-nic zone
Hiking
Sun bathing
Lookout
Waterfall
Canyons
Hunting
Winter tourism
Diving
Walking
Park
Cycling
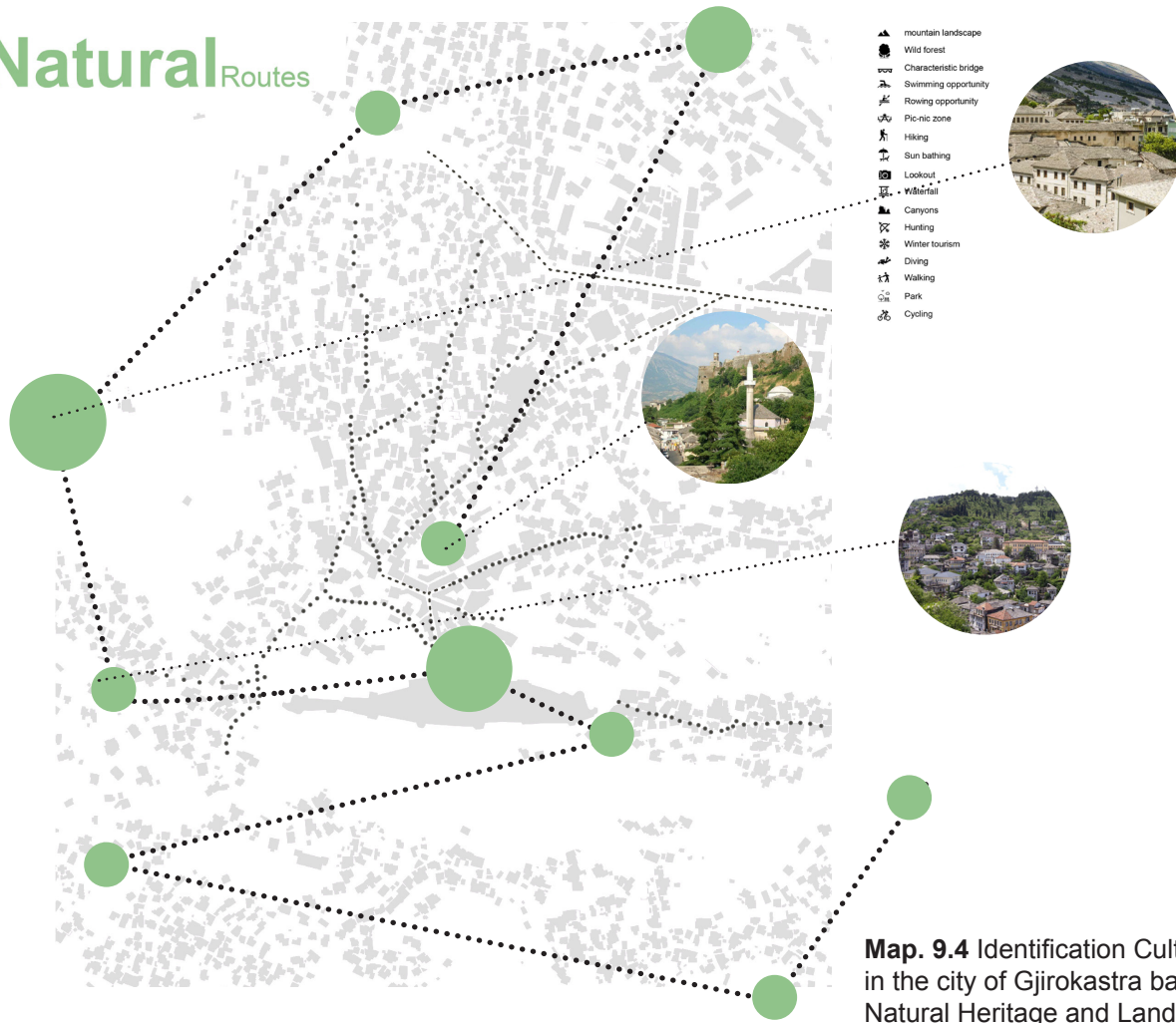
Map. 9.4 Identification Cultural route in the city of Gjirokastra based on the Natural Heritage and Landscape theme

Connection Points

Landmarks
Edge
Paths
Node
Famous Persons
Events
Connection Points
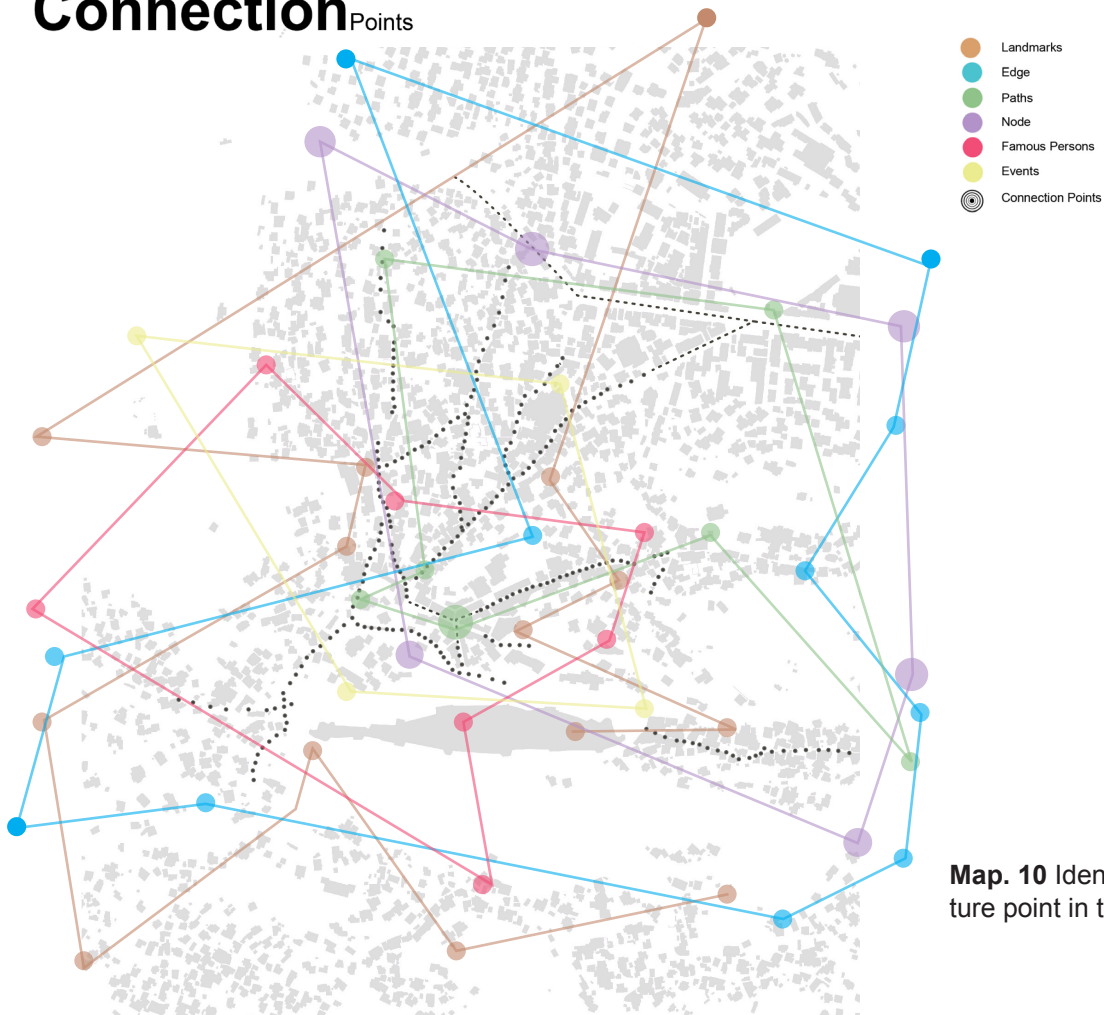
Map. 10 Identification of acupuncture point in the city of Gjirokastra

archeological route; and c) Ali Pashe Tepelena route. The county of Gjirokastra is full in historical richness, medieval castles; full of unexplored Byzantine Churches; Tekkes; ancient aqueduct remaining; Archeological sites etc. The identified cultural routes additional themes were developed based on a) Lord Bayrone route; b) Edward Lear route; c) Culinary route; d) Artistic route, and e) Architectural Route. This taken in account for the local and international poetry and literature as inspiration from the landscape. Falling under the category of cultural, identified are also the linkage of Museums found in the city of Gjirokastra, but also in the region villages; Traditional celebrations, influenced also by the Greek minority of this county; National fairs and folkloric concert; Ottoman architecture; Agro-toursim and traditional dishes of the area. Moreover, the Naturalistic routes are composed and highlight the potential of the natural heritage that the county of Gjirokastra hold. Rich in natural parks, free flowing rivers, mountain landscape, canyons and waterfalls, the application of sustainable tourism is seen as e beneficiary for the preservation of not only the natural heritage but also the historical and cultural one. The additional categories highlighted for the Naturalistic routes consist on a) Scenic route; b) Blue route; c) Cycling Route.

6.3 Creative Tourism

Regarding the concept of creative tourism, on where and how should be implemented, also upon the theory of "touristic gaze" (John Urry), a conceptual scheme was obtained by highlighting the five principles (Paths, Nodes, Landmark, Edge, Districs) of Kevin Lynch's theory based on his empirical research of the built environment of how individuals perceive a city or area. Nevertheless, OECD (2005), and Ashworth (2009), base their theory of "touristic gaze" in regard of hallmark events, and famous personalities. Thus the concept of the build environment, famous per-
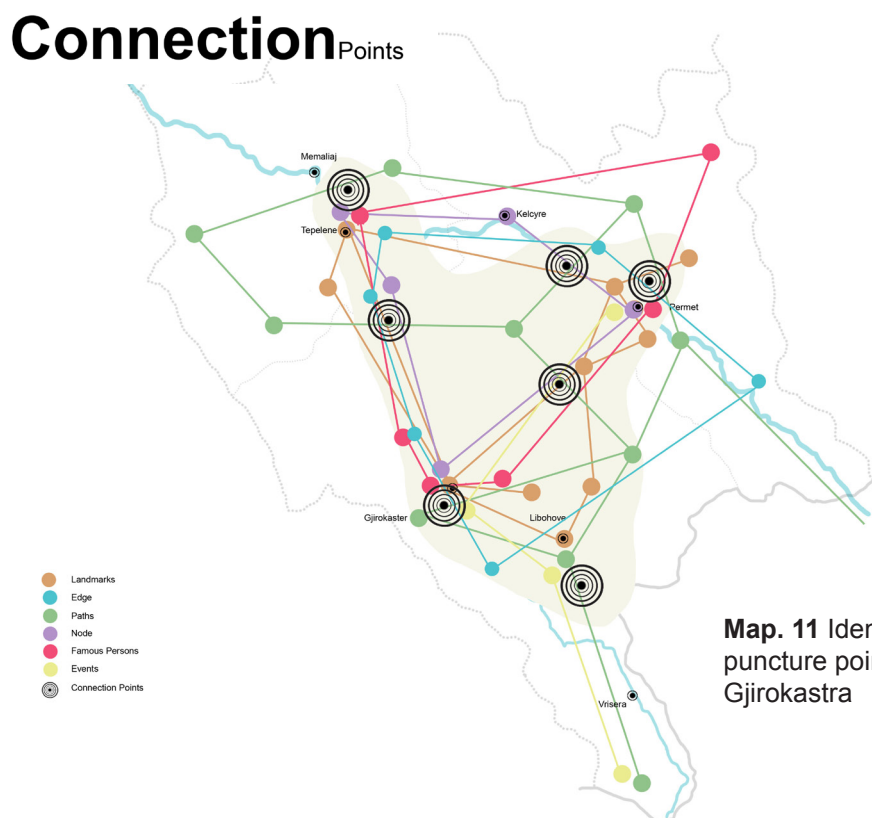
Map. 11 Identification of acupuncture point in the county of Gjirokastra

sonalities, and hallmark events were taken as bases of developing acupuncture points in the county for future development of the creative tourism. During the time frame of this research many visits have been conducted to the city of Gjirokastra and county. An analysis of the current situation of the destination within a context of tourism has been made. Based on site visits in the area, and analysis, the potential of various forms of cultural offers and activities support the concept of creative tourism, recognized as a potential for this area. However, most of various forms of cultural offers are not managed or coordinated as creative tourism and are not included in a platform of the planning organization and of the authorities in charge of tourism policy. The rural communities embody rich spiritual hereditary values, traditional customs, mythology and folklore, which are transmitted from generation to generation, symbolising a strong local identity. Most of the villages are only 20- 40% inhabited throughout the year (Albania. Government of Albania. PAP/RAC - SOGREAH Consortium, 2005). Since the trend of migration and immigration of the younger generation, most of the elderly's reside and live from remittance from next generation. Most of the absent families tend to return during the summer season, also influenced by many Orthodox religious festivals and villages festivals. The county of Gjirokastra and city, with its potential in cultural, historic and natural heritage should aim to develop creative tourism in fostering the economical and social profit. This can influence in branding the destination, cultural heritage and local community products and, thereby, attracting not only national and international tourists with specific interest in creative tourism, but also future investment for urging sustainable development and management, serving as a powerful network in bringing people and new ideas as well as fostering cultural, business and educational relations. Apart from the acupuncture points highlighted in Map. 5, a strategic calendar of creative tourism was developed in accordance of the cultural route themes highlighted in fig 26, thus aiming in extending the summer season

proposed active period
existing active period
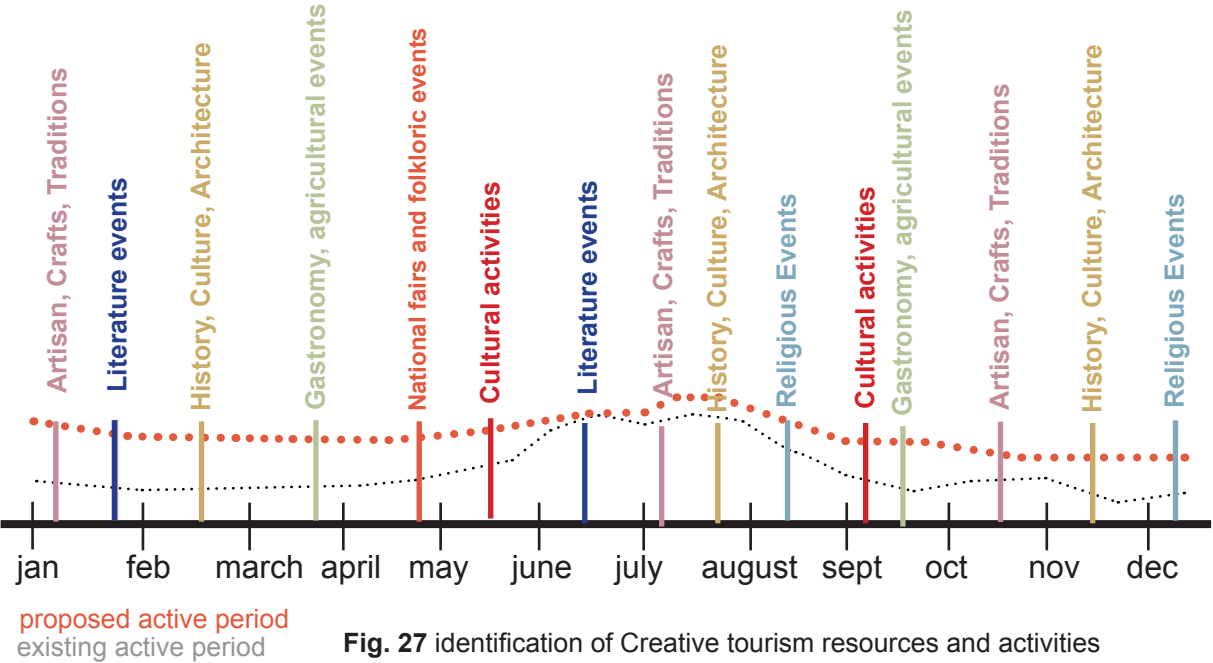
Fig. 27 identification of Creative tourism resources and activities

phenomenon into a yearly calendar of activities for the area. Amongst the proposed activities and events that should be fostered by creative tourism, are those of a) Art, craft and traditions; b) Literature events; c) History, culture and architecture of the region; d) Gastronomy, agriculture events; e) National fairs and folkloric events; f) Religious events; g) cultural activities related to the cultural route themes.

6.4 Tourism for All

Being presented as an effort made up in guaranteeing that tourist destinations and services are accessible to all, regardless the person's cultural profile, their permanent or temporary limitations (physical, mental or sensory), or special needs required by them, some beneficiaries towards "Tourism for All" in the county of Gjirokastra should focus on:

- Accessible environments and services contribute in improving the quality of the tourism product, thus increasing the overall competitiveness of the tourism destinations.
- Incorporating accessibility, in naturally developing sustainable tourism policies and strategies.
- Regions and destinations should further develop forward-thinking tourism policies and practical measures, taking in account the diversity of the human condition in terms of age, mobility, sensory and intellectual impairments or health condition.
- Combining socially inclusive policies, Universal Design techniques and the use of new technologies and information tools, destination managers and tourism providers are able to cater effectively for visitors who need "good access" (UN-WTO, 2016).

Nevertheless, Environmental and Social barriers should be treated by developing guidelines to be applicable not only for the city but for the surroundings as well. As also stated by the World Health Organization, 15% of the global population, roughly 1 billion people, live with some form of disability, and with many ongoing trends in the world and Albania, populations will face an rapidly ageing, where the number of persons experiencing obstacles will only rise (WHO, 2015). The case of Gjirokastra, numbers of people with disabilities and ageing are high, with a decline of population

Tourism for All guidelines

- Tourism destination management
- Tourism information and advertising (Preparation, information & booking)
- Urban and architectural environments
- Modes of transport and stations
- Accommodation, food service and conventions
- Cultural activities (museums, theatres, cinemas, and other)
- Other tourism activities and events
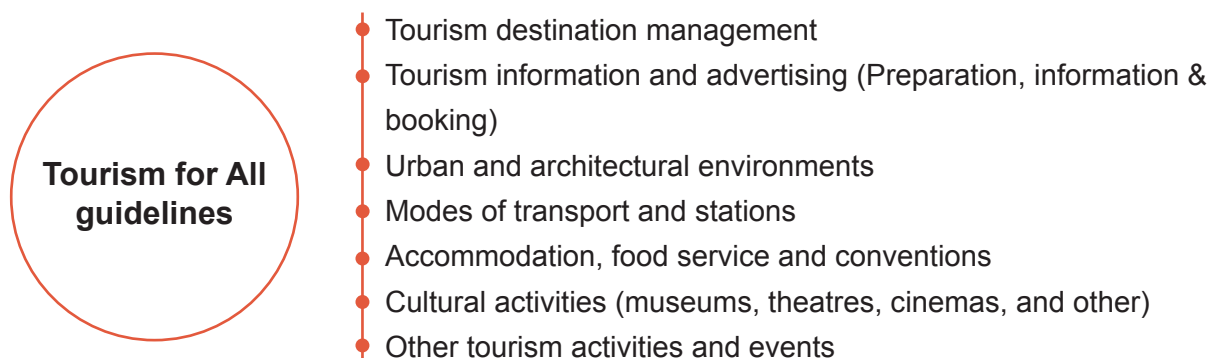
Fig. 28 Tourism for all guidelines applicable to Gjirokastra

of -43%. Hence, for this research tourism for all is seen as being part of the process of cultural routes. The following principles should be used as guidelines into achieving the tourism for all concept. The following guidelines are relevant to be applicable to other places and destination of the Albanian territory. As stated in chapter XX, other numerous population profiles can benefit from the development of Accessible Tourism such as:

- Persons with disabilities
- Elderly People
- Local residents of a certain destination
- Foreigners
- Other (Persons with injuries; people accompanying persons with disabilities; Children; people with temporary disability etc).

Hence, the first point of how tourism for all should be developed stands on the destination management approaches. Governmental Entities should carry out an **accessible tourism strategy** laying out a set of principles explaining why accessibility in tourism is necessary; Identify services and identify changes that may be needed to the designated places; Accessible tourism destination of a locality, region or district should be provided with the necessary accessible facilities, infrastructure and transport. Second step in developing Tourism for all in the county of Gjirokastra, stands on the preparation of the adequate **tourism information and advertising**, (Preparation, information and booking). This should include tourism literature and other promotional material used in tourism with clear indications of accessible services and facilities, using international symbols that are easily understood. Information for tourists with disabilities should be included in the general tourist information, official governmental websites. The designated areas receiving tourist should make available a list of all support services for tourists with disabilities. Nevertheless, the governmental entities should develop and assign touristic destinations an accessible systems of information on the level of accessibility of facilities and services in order to facilitate the appropriate booking procedures (Website for the County of Gjirokastra). A reservation systems should be applied have clear information on the level of accessibility of facilities and services in order to facilitate the appropriate booking procedures. **The urban and architectural environments** is also keen in developing tourism for all. Adaptable and special parking spaces with proper identification for vehicles of persons with reduced mobility should be applied; The use of sign language, Braille, and augmentative and alternative ways, means and modes of communication and all other ways should be fostered in the entire county and city of Gjirokastra ; Signage, Accessible services and facilities should be clearly marked with easily understandable symbols of an appropriate size and colour which contrasts with the background; Accessible formats and technologies appropriate for the different types of disabilities; Vertical and horizontal movement should be applied

with the greatest possible independence; Whenever possible, tourism service providers must should offer appropriate infrastructure and services for visitors with disabilities. Another important element of creating sustainable tourism approach and fostering tourism for all principles are also the **modes of transport** applied. Thus for this reason the National Tourism Agencies and directories in accordance with municipalities should adaptable means of transport for people with disabilities, such as passenger vehicles, including private vehicles for hire, buses and coaches, taxis, designed to allow safe, comfortable and equitable transport of people with disabilities or reduced mobility. Nevertheless, by implementing cultural routes as the main catalizator of promoting a place and destination, creative tourism as additive in how to experience this cultural routes and destinations better, accommodation, food service and conventions establishments should have reasonable approaches in hosting also people with disabilities, without the need for assistance. Entities responsible for carrying out and promoting, **cultural activities** (museums, cultural heritage sites, natural heritage sites, religious sites) in a region, destination or establishment should take measures to ensure that people with disabilities: have access to materials and cultural activities in accessible formats; participate, develop and utilize their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit but also for the enrichment of society, hence participate in different creative tourism events for the specific region. **Other tourism activities and events** prone to develop for a certain area, should be taken in consideration by the responsible entities for recreational, leisure and sporting activities, appropriate measures to enable persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others. By this all the assigned entities should ensure that people with disabilities have access recreational and tourism facilities; in particular, for the case of Gjirokastra in excursions to surrounding areas of the cultural routes, museums; and natural environments. By highlighting the main categories and themes of the possibly applied cultural routes, identifying the acupuncture points of developing creative tourism hubs based on the built environment; famous personalities; and hallmark events,specific ideas of how to foster tourism for all are given in the diagrams below. Three diagrams are presented, showing the bases and potentials of identification of the cultural route theme, and the actual perceived path and its distribution. For each of the cultural routes, creative tourism acupuncture points are highlighted and suggested most adaptable period of time to be visited and the potential events and activities which could take part in accordance with the cultural route theme. As far as the application of tourism for all acupuncture points specific suggestion are proposed with the adaptable time period. To further validate the concept of sustainable tourism developing in this region two main categories of target groups were identified: Local residents and visitors (Family; Group; Individuals); Foreign tourist (Family; Group; Individuals), with a commonality, consisting of persons of disabilities, elderly people, other (Persons with injuries; people accompanying persons with disabilities; Children; people with temporary disability

Scenic Cultural Route

"Hotova National Park", Permet
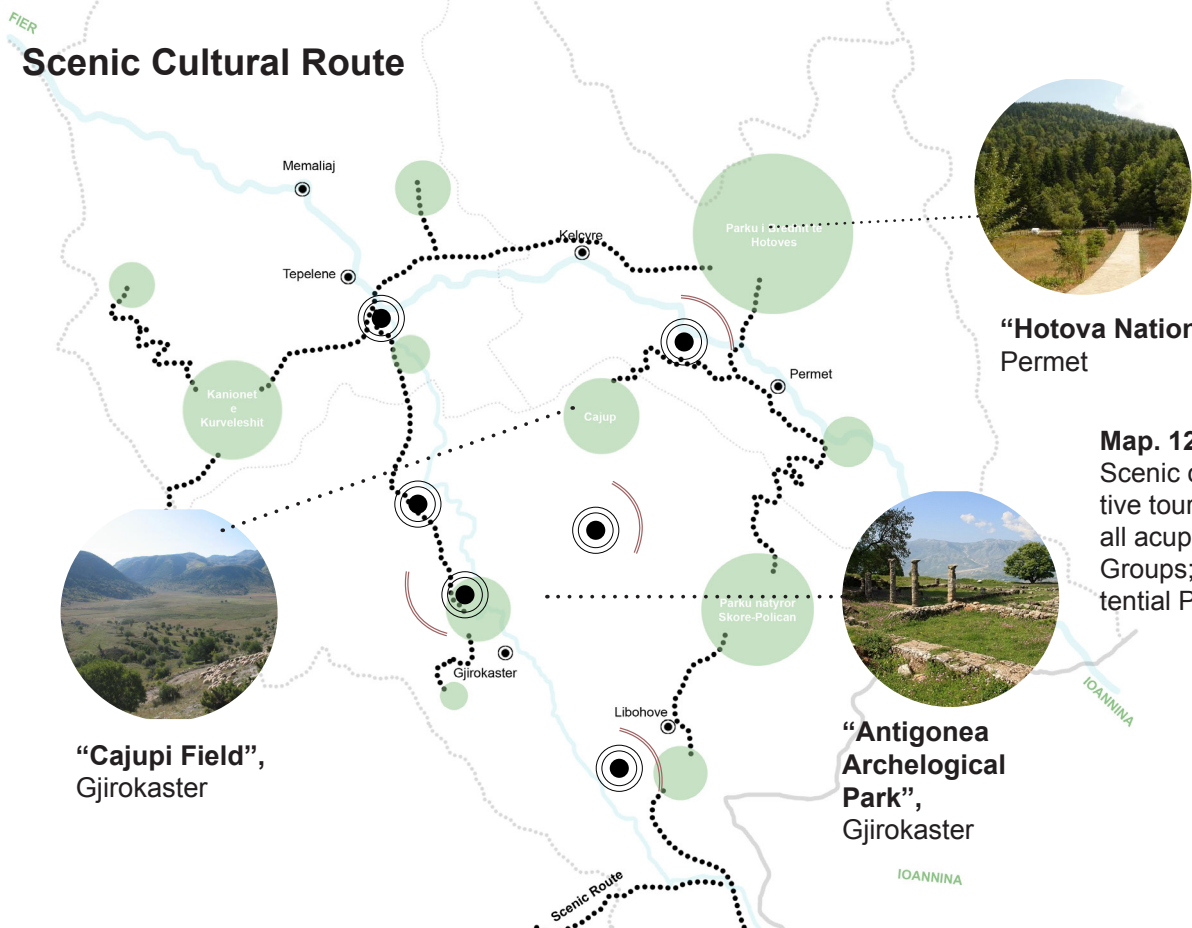
Map. 12 Representation of Scenic cultural route, creative tourism and tourism for all acupuncture point; Target Groups; Requirements; Potential Project development

"Cajupi Field", Gjirokaster

"Antigonea Archelogical Park", Gjirokaster

Cultural Route Criteria	Based on				
	Design and Structure	**Theme**	**Territory**	**Origin**	**Overnight Stay**
Scenic Route	Archipelago of points	Landscape, Nature	Regional	Historic, Landscape	Several overnight stays

Type of Route: **"**Scenic Route"; **is** based on the Nature and Landscape heritage of the county, rich and diverse in the region. The design and Structure of the route should be based on Archipelago of point due to the diverse point of interest along the route. Due to the potential number of activities to be experienced the cultural route oversees several overnight stays. **Creative Tourism :** If referring to the concept of creative tourism as an enhancer of the chosen cultural route, potential activities regarding this route could possibly be towards: 1. Gastronomy events 2. Local Traditions of the villages involved in this route; 3. Review of the history of the landscape. **Acupuncture points:** The acupuncture point highlighted in the Map.12 can be potential solutions towards small SME regarding Local Culinary, Tradition, History of the Landscape. **Referring at Table. 12 "Key elements of creative tourism based on definition in academic literature", the benefits that this pillar of creating sustainability in Gjirokastras County could potentially enhance:** Active Participation and meaningful contact between the host and guest / Activities connected to the destination / Develop new skills and learning of the History, Landscape, Gastronomy of the region / Enhancing SME regarding the theme of the route, individual experience with nature. **All of the above listed elements of creative tourism directly and indirectly impact in the:** Self Development of tourist (local or foreign) / Create revenue for the hosting communities / Build up the concept of sustainability for the host and for the visitor economically; socially; and environmentally *Create individual experience towards selective tourism rather than the concept of mass tourism Serve as a model to be followed in developing further more the image of the brand place/city/region impacting the territory and sustainability of Gjirokastra county in relation to its local products.* **Tourism for All Requirements:** Regarding Tourism for all model to develop along this cultural route some of the requirement needed as additive are focused on: Adaptable prior information of the route; Adaptable requirement of natural environments to be visited (not harming the integrity of the place); adaptable modes of transport; access to nature along the route, adaptable resources focusing on the theme of the route **Target Groups:** Target group could be divided in Local residents/visitors and foreign visitors. Common indicator that this two target groups could have in common are as such Persons with disabilities Elderly People; Other (Persons with injuries; people accompanying persons with disabilities; Children; people with temporary disability etc) **Activities:** Some of the activities could be the same as visitors experiencing creative tourism means, or it can focus in sightseeing trips for tourists with disabilities, seniors and their families. **Project development:** 1. Touch and feel the nature; 2. Potential audio guides explaining the methodology of artisans; 3. Accessible panoramic balconies explaining the region; 4. Braille texts for explaining the information; 5. Interpretation of landscape for people with disabilities; 6. Accessibility to the sight through mobility modes and accessibility inside the site, 7. Signage and braille text; 6. Qualified tourist guides focusing in offering better services for a broader public; 8. Travel Online Project aiming to add information gap and informing people with a disability and their carriers, 9. Appropriate environmental lighting of the site and route.

Artistic and Literature Cultural Route
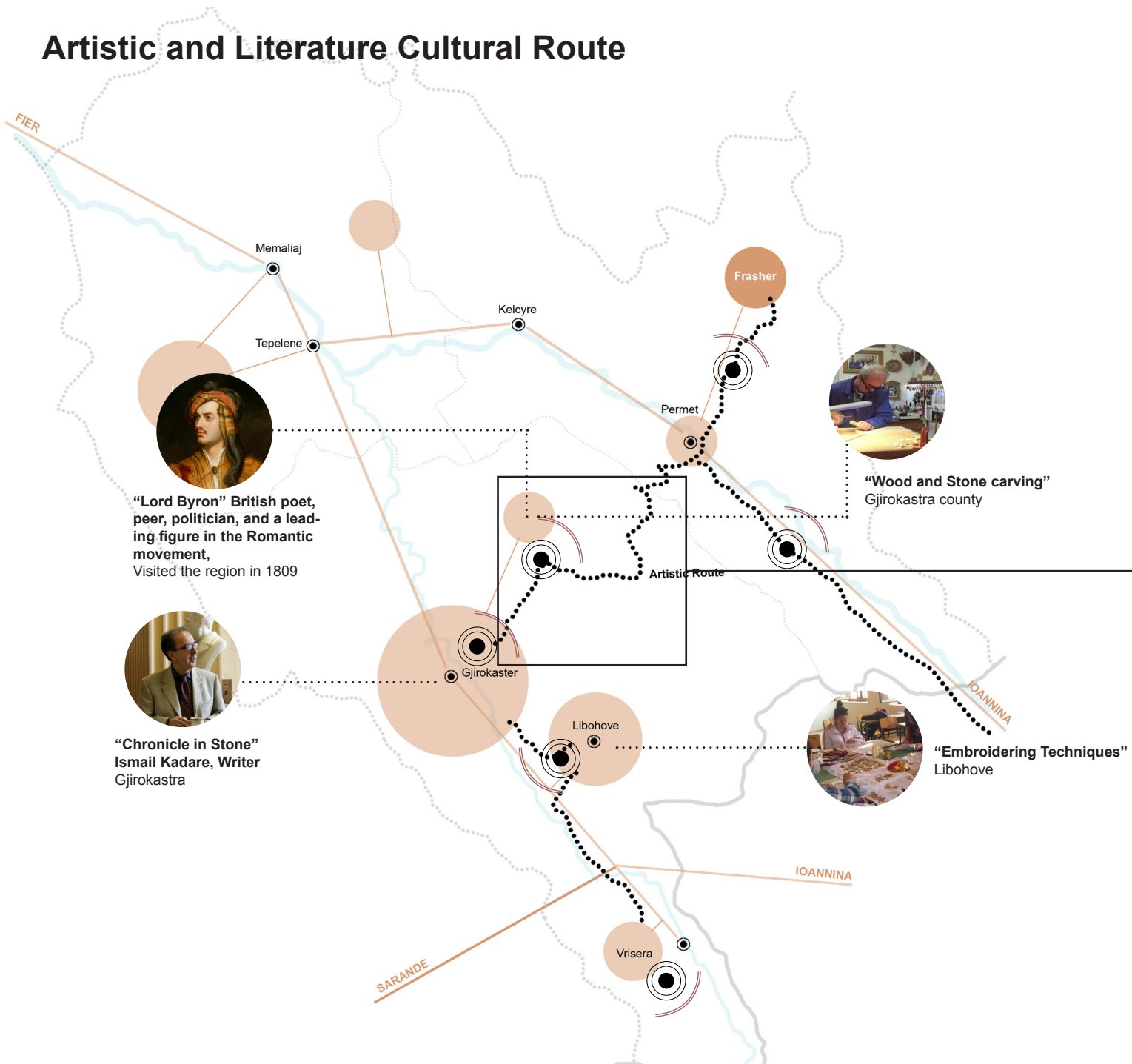
Map. 13 Representation of Artistic and Literature cultural route, creative tourism and tourism for all acupuncture point; Target Groups; Requirements; Potential Project development

Cultural Route Criteria	Based on				
	Design and Structure	**Theme**	**Territory**	**Origin**	**Overnight Stay**
Artistic and Literature Route	Archipelago of points	Historic; Art&Crafts; Literature	Regional	Historic	Several overnight stays

Type of Route: "Artistic and Literature"; **is** based on the artistic and litarature heritage of the county, rich diverse and creative ways of valorising the folklore and traditions of the region. The design and Structure of the route should be based on Archipelago of point due to the diverse theme of the route. Due to the potential number of activities to be experienced the cultural route oversees several overnight stays.
Creative Tourism : If referring to the concept of creative tourism as an enhancer of the chosen cultural route, potential activities regarding this route could possibly be towards: 1. Artisans arts&crafts 2. Local Traditions of the villages involved in this route; 3. Review of the regions Literature; 4. Cultural Activities ;

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Elements / Sources	Richards & Raymond 2000	Richards 2000	UNESCO 2006	Raymond 2007	Volic 2010	Rudan 2012
Active participation	X	X	X	X		X
Activities connected to destination	X	X	X			X
Opportunity to develop creativity	X				X	X
Develop new skill/ learning	X	X	X			X
Meaningful contact to hosts and guest		X	X	X		
Arts / Crafts / Heritage			X			X
Self -development of tourist		X				
Revenue for Communities		X				
Sustainable				X		
Individual Creation of experience					X	
Nature						X

most of the events taking part in this route could potentially be thought the entire ear

Acupuncture points: The acupuncture point highlighted in the Map.13 can be potential solutions towards small SME regarding Art - Crafts and Heritage, Culinary, Literature of the region.

Referring at Table. 12 "Key elements of creative tourism based on definition in academic literature", the benefits that this pillar of creating sustainability in Gjirokastras County could potentially enhance:

Active Participation and meaningful contact between the host and guest

Activities connected to the destination

Develop new skills and learning of the History, Culture, Arts and Crafts; Literature of the region.

Enhancing SME of local arts-crafts and heritage

All of the above listed elements of creative tourism directly and indirectly impact in the:

Self Development of tourist (local or foreign)

Create revenue for the hosting communities

Build up the concept of sustainability for the host and for the visitor economically; socially; and environmentally

Create individual experience towards selective tourism rather than the concept of mass tourism
Serve as a model to be followed in developing further more the image of the brand place/city/region impacting the territory and sustainability of Gjirokastra county in relation to its local products.

Tourism for All Requirements: Regarding Tourism for all model to develop along this cultural route some of the requirement needed as additive are focused on: Adaptable prior information of the route; Adaptable requirement of urban and architectural environments to be visited (not harming the integrity of the place); adaptable modes of transport; access to nature along the route, adaptable resources focusing on the theme of the route

Target Groups: Target group could be divided in Local residents/visitors and foreign visitors. Common indicator that this two target groups could have in common are as such Persons with disabilities

Elderly People; Other (Persons with injuries; people accompanying persons with disabilities; Children; people with temporary disability etc)

Activities: Some of the activities could be the same as visitors experiencing creative tourism means, or it can focus in sightseeing trips for tourists with disabilities, seniors and their families.

Project development: 1. Museum in a suitcase; 2. Potential audio guides explaining the methodology of artisans; 3. Touch and feel artisan object; 4. Braille texts for literature of the region; 5. Interpretation of literature for people with disabilities; 6. Accessibility to the sight through mobility modes and accessibility inside the site, 7. Signage and braille text; 6. Qualified tourist guides focusing in offering better services for a broader public; 8. Travel Online Project aiming to add information gap and informing people with a disability and their carriers, 9. Appropriate environmental lighting of the site and route.

Religious Route

"Teqeja e Ali Postivan"
Tekke, Permet

"Saint Marry Church",
Leuse

"Kisha e Shën
e Premtes",
Church, Permet

FIER

Memaliaj

Kelcyre

Tepelene

HIMARE

Religious Route

Permet

IOANNINA

"Saint Sotiri Church"
Gjirokaster

Gjirokaster

Libohove

IOANNINA

Monastery of Ravena,
Goranxi

SARANDE

Vrisera

"Teqeja e Melanit"
Tekke, Goranxi

"Labova Kryqit", Church,
Labove

"Kisha e Shën
e Premtes",
Church, Hllomo

Map. 14 Representation of Religious cultural route, creative tourism and tourism for all acupuncture point; Target Groups; Requirements; Potential Project development

Cultural Route Criteria	Based on				
	Design and Structure	Theme	Territory	Origin	Overnight Stay
Religious Cohesion	Archipelago of points	Historic; Religious	Regional	Historic	Several overnight stays

Type of Route: "Religious Cultural Route"; Based on the religious heritage of the county, rich in Byzantine Churches and Tekke's and Religious unity coexisting. The design and Structure of the route should be based on Archipelago of point due to the high number of religious sources in the county. Due to the high number of religious sources do the visited the cultural route oversees several overnight stays.

Creative Tourism : If referring to the concept of creative tourism as an enhancer of the chosen cultural route, potential activities regarding this route could possibly be towards: 1. History of each religious subject; 2. Culture of the villages involved in this route; 3. Architecture located in this route; 4. Related religious

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Elements / Sources	Richards & Raymond 2000	Richards 2000	UNESCO 2006	Raymond 2007	Volic 2010	Rudan 2012
Active participation	X	X	X	X		X
Activities connected to destination	X	X	X			X
Opportunity to develop creativity	X				X	X
Develop new skill/ learning	X	X	X			X
Meaningful contact to hosts and guest		X	X	X		
Arts / Crafts / Heritage			X			X
Self -development of tourist		X				
Revenue for Communities		X				
Sustainable				X		
Individual Creation of experience					X	
Nature						X

events taking part in the villages during Feb - March; Augoust; Oct-Nov

Acupuncture points: The acupuncture point highlighted in the Map.14 can be potential solutions towards small SME regarding Art - Crafts and Heritage, and Culinary.

Referring at Table. 12 "Key elements of creative tourism based on definition in academic literature", the benefits that this pillar of creating sustainability in Gjirokastras County could potentially enhance:

Active Participation and meaningful contact between the host and guest

Activities connected to the destination

Develop new skills and learning of the History, Culture, Architecture and Religion of the area.

Enhancing SME of local arts-crafts and heritage

All of the above listed elements of creative tourism directly and indirectly impact in the:

Self Development of tourist (local or foreign)

Create revenue for the hosting communities

Build up the concept of sustainability for the host and for the visitor economically; socially; and environmentally

Create individual experience towards selective tourism rather than the concept of mass tourism Serve as a model to be followed in developing further more the image of the brand place/city/region impacting the territory and sustainability of Gjirokastra county.

Tourism for All Requirements: Regarding Tourism for all model to develop along this cultural route some of the requirement needed as additive are focused on: Adaptable prior information of the route; Adaptable requirement of urban and architectural environments to be visited (not harming the integrity of the place); adaptable modes of transport; access to nature along the route.
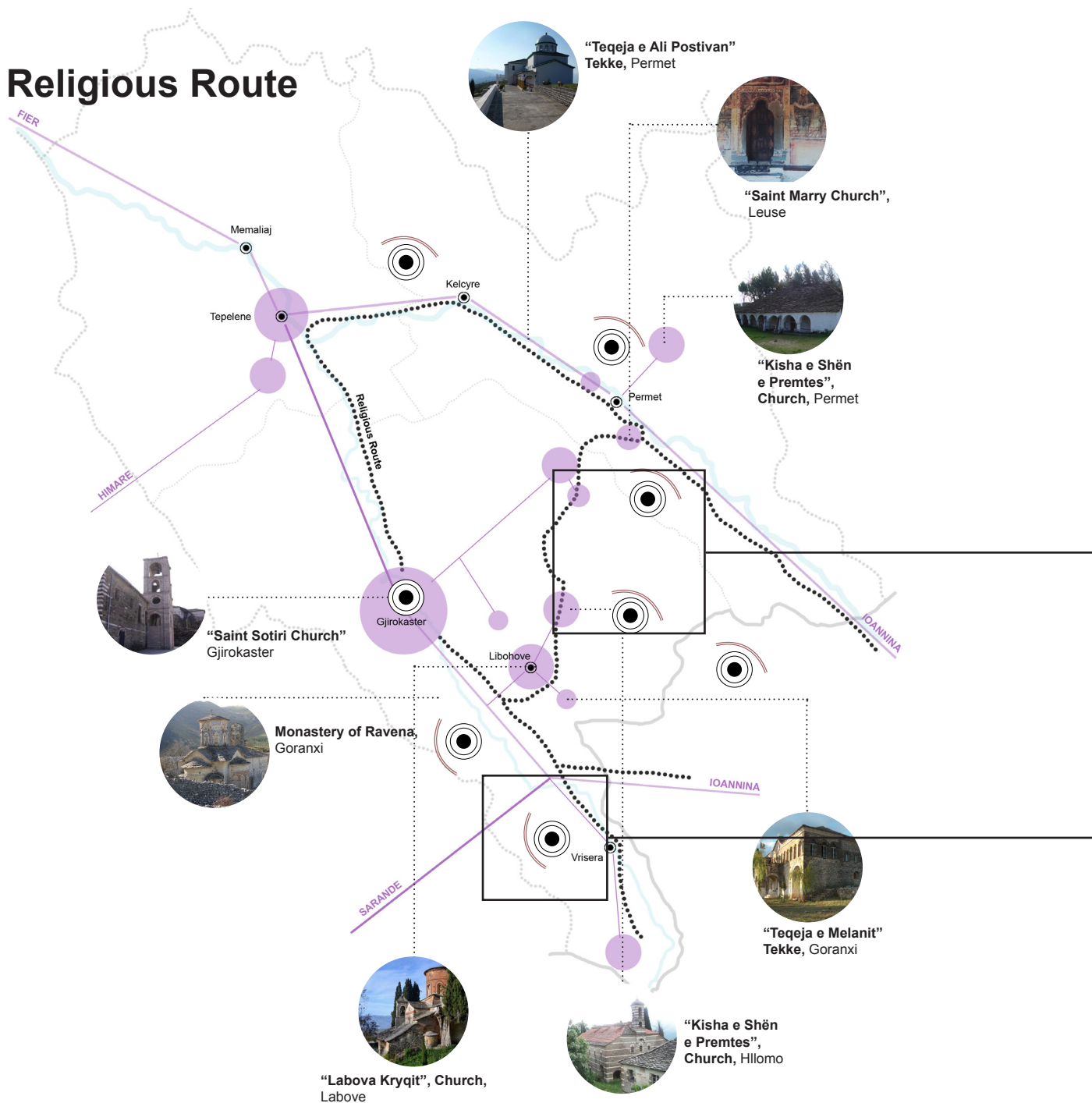
Target Groups: Target group could be divided in Local residents/visitors and foreign visitors. Common indicator that this two target groups could have in common are as such Persons with disabilities

Elderly People; Other (Persons with injuries; people accompanying persons with disabilities; Children; people with temporary disability etc)

Activities: Some of the activities could be the same as visitors experiencing creative tourism means, or it can focus in sightseeing trips for tourists with disabilities, seniors and their families.

Project development: 1. Potential audio guides explaining the religious assets; 2. 3D printed models of the religious building and other assets; 3. Touch and feel the nature; 4. Accessibility to the sight through mobility modes and accessibility inside the site, 5. Signage and braille text; 6. Qualified tourist guides focusing in offering better services for a broader public; 7. Travel Online Project aiming to add information gap and informing people with a disability and their carriers, 8. Appropriate environmental lighting of the site and route.

etc). All of the suggested requirement for each cultural route and potential project development, are based on creative tourism, were people with disabilities are taken in account first. The main benefits of this approach in merging cultural routes with creative tourism principals and principals of tourism for all, enhances the possibility of access to cultural heritage (tangible and intangible heritage), participation in cultural heritage decision-making at the local, regional and national levels. Nevertheless, this approach increased the capacities to manage and preserve cultural heritage and the environment and landscape in the regions. Enhances cultural tourism and culture-related employment opportunities: improved tourism facilities in the World Heritage cities Gjirokastra access to new markets for Albanian artists and artisans through the establishment of the Gjirokastra artisan incubator centre and artisan. Enhances cultural diplomacy and marketing potentials of the area. In regards of potential stakeholders identified the Ministries: Economy and Tourism is identifies, together with Ministry of Urban Development, and Education and Sciences. Nevertheless the Municipalities of Gjirokastra, Perment, Tepelena are seen as key facilitators for future development. Institute of Cultural Monuments, National Tourism Agency and directories, University of Gjirokastra are taken in account too. The development of sustainable tourism in accordance with the specific trends taken in account will foster furthermore the involvement of private organization and business.

6.5 Concluding Remarks

The above approaches (cultural tourism/cultural routes, creative tourism, tourism for all) suggested towards the creation of sustainable tourism as the driving force for branding cities are seen as potential tools in enhancing and increasing the status of a place as touristic destination, residential, or business location, in revitalising the economical and demographic aspects of Gjirokastra. As mentioned above, branding itself is associated primary with economic value. On the other hand, branding through sustainable tourism holds symbolic values, since it constitutes a strategy to provide places, cities, towns, an image and its cultural meaning. Thus, the integration of the three pillars of sustainable tourism suggested in this work, indicates what so ever the need for individuality and emotional connection with the environment in the contexts of globalization, thus giving cities and regions depth and originality, its distinctive character by which are characterized by retaining its residents and attract new resident. The image of a city has a powerful factor in persuading all of the above in different ways. However, authorities should be more than responsible in giving proper consideration to a strong brand, seen more as a tool of improvement regarding the urban development of the city, thus allowing branding in contributing with the construction of local identity of a place.

In the case of Gjirokastra, city branding is seen as the process of distinguishing and diversification, where the potential local tourism organizations and not only, cultural

and arts facilities, museums, historic preservation groups should join to construct a place images, helping in producing tourist products with the common aim to attract consumers and investment to particular local areas, involving the component of place making (the process which makes a specific place more attractive) and place or city branding (the process of promoting a place), re-imaging the city perception in accordance with the place identity as a result of the local culture of the place. Thus the promotion of such places through creative tourism and tourism for all as enhancers of cultural tourism, can function as promotion means of place or city branding, standing in constructing and reshaping the city image from its historical architecture and street plans, the images of the city heard or read, the art produced by its residents etc, thus attracting the desirable consumers and maximizing consumers spending, aiming in developing new ways of communicating the city's image; achieve competitive advantages; strengthen the reputation of a city, improving also its economical importance.

Previously published research regarding city branding originate from the disciplines of marketing and urban studies, tending in following parallel directions rather than interdisciplinary paths. The close parallelism drawn between city branding and corporate branding has gained the attention of many scholars in terms of their complexity and range of stakeholders. Here the complexity of city brands is determined from their accountability to address the needs of a wide spectrum of different target groups. Thus one of the key challenges for branding cities stand and revolves around the issue on developing a strong 'umbrella' brand, coherent across a range of different areas of activity with different target audiences. Moreover, target audiences are as diverse as a city's residents, potential investors, tourists and stakeholders.

Moreover, with the growing demand over touristic places as the tourist gaze upon certain places, the tourism industry in many historic cities or places has been shifting towards mass tourism. Many issues have been arising in concern of the cultural heritage of the place and it image identity. On the other hand, expert agree that countries, regions and cities should shift towards sustainable tourism development and management practices focusing in every category of tourism depending on the types of destinations. Noted by many authors (Maffesoli, 1994; Matarosso & Landry, 1999; Timothy, 2011; Calvo et al., 2014 Richards, 2011; R. J.S Beeton, 2002); and organizations (UNWTO, 2016; UNESCO, 2011), sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, establishing a suitable balance between these three dimensions in fostering long-term sustainability. As noted by UNEP and UNWTO, 2005, "A Guide for Policy Makers", sustainable tourism should: *1) Create optimal use of environmental resources*

prioritising key elements in tourism development, helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity. 2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.3) Ensure long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005). Nevertheless, the development of sustainable tourism requires that participators of all relevant stakeholders, as well as the right political entities should ensure a wide participation and consensus in building this capacities, with constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary corrective measures whenever necessary.

The 12 aims identified by UNEP and UNTWO, 2005, regarding sustainable tourism focus on.

1 ECONOMIC VIABILITY: To ensure the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises, so that they are able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term.

2 LOCAL PROSPERITY: To maximize the contribution of tourism to the prosperity of the host destination, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally.

3 EMPLOYMENT QUALITY: To strengthen the number and quality of local jobs created and supported by tourism, including the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways.

4 SOCIAL EQUITY: To seek a widespread distribution of economic and social benefits from tourism throughout the recipient community, including improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor.

5 VISITOR FULFILMENT: To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways.

6 LOCAL CONTROL: To engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of tourism and territory in their area, in consultation with other stakeholders.

7 COMMUNITY WELLBEING: To maintain and strengthen the quality of life in local communities, including social structures and access to resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation.

8 CULTURAL RICHNESS: To respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of host communities.

9 PHYSICAL INTEGRITY: To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes, both urban and rural, and avoid the physical and visual degradation of the environment

10 BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: To support the conservation of natural areas, habi-

tats and wildlife, and minimize damage to them.

11 RESOURCE EFFICIENCY: To minimize the use of scarce and non-renewable resources in the development and operation of tourism facilities and services.

12 ENVIRONMENTAL PURITY: To minimize the pollution of air, water and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors (UNEP and UNTWO, 2005).

Nevertheless,the European Commission in accordance with UNWTO foreseen the need to develop a guidebook concerning the development of sustainable tourism, in terms to enhance common understanding and commitment to Sustainable Tourism. Some of the new trends highlighted where focused in a) cultural routes as a product of cultural tourism; b) creative tourism; and c) tourism for all (UNWTO, 2012).

On the other hand, when there is the case of World Heritage sites involvemt and Tourism UNESCO itself has recognized the need for sustainable approach for planning and managing these sites in accordance with the sites capacity, visitor needs and the local population´s needs (UNESCO, 2016). The main mission stated by UNESCO stands in the increasement of awareness, capacity and participation, creating a balance between conservation and visitor experience in:

- Integrate sustainable tourism principles into the mechanisms of the World Heritage Convention
- Strengthen the enabling environment by advocating policies, strategies, frameworks and tools that support sustainable tourism as an important vehicle for protecting and managing cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)
- Promote broad stakeholder engagement in the planning, development and management of sustainable tourism that follows a destination approach to heritage conservation and focuses on empowering local communities
- Provide World Heritage stakeholders with the capacity and the tools to manage tourism efficiently, responsibly and sustainable based on the local context and needs
- Promote quality tourism products and services that encourage responsible behaviour among all stakeholders and foster understanding and appreciation of the concept of OUV and protection of World Heritage(UNESCO, 2016).

Thus, sustainable tourism should be applied in terms of new proactive trends, maintaining a high level of resident and tourist satisfaction, ensuring a meaningful experience for both parties, raising awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them adapted also in World Heritage sites.

Chapter_7

Chapter 7 consists of the main conclusions regarding the development of sustainable tourism in Gjirokastra as a methodology of banding cities, places and destinations, hence, potentially applicable to other regions in the Albanian territory. The methodology proposed through this research in bringing sustainable tourism (cultural routes; creative tourism, tourism for all) as branding methodology for Gjirokastra, is seen as a potential approach in being applied in other areas of the Western Balkan countries, were tourism focuses in the most known cities or regions. One of the main conclusion drawn from this research through the selective approaches towards sustainable tourism, belongs to the commonalities and accordance in which this three themes fall under; Socially, Economically, Environmentally. Furthermore, this chapter highlights its limitations and difficulties encountered during its development.

7.1 Conclusions

Referred as a Western Balkan country, Albania and the rest of the Western Balkan countries are rich in natural; historical and cultural resources, which form the backbone of the tourism industry. However the percepted image that the region has gained for many years, due to political disputed, economical issues etc, has gained Albania and the rest of the countries of the Western Balkan, a bad and vague image perception, in terms of tourism attraction.

Gjirokastra, one of the most important touristic site of Albania is a great historical Albanian city with great potentials in attracting visitors, also inscribed by UNESCO as rare example of an architectural character typical of the Ottoman period. Although recognized as a product under the UNESCO brand, one of the main problematic's related to the area (compared with Tirana), stays in the lack of non-holding visitors through the entire year, thus making the spring summer season the only period of time, decrease in population, and labour market. This is a common phenomena encountered for cities the size of Gjirokastra, which lack in experience and valorisation of their true potentials, in fostering the economy, tourism potentials in fully activating the regions.

For the past ten years Albania has been trying to use the "unknown" touristic image of the country to create a brand for attracting more investments, visitors, and attention as a touristic product in the WB. However, with all the attempts in building up a tourism brand, the country has lacked in many basic resources, were new methodologies are seen as an important solution in transitioning from an aggressive tour-

ism trend (intervention to the landscape, cultural heritage, environment) to a more sustainable tourism trends in branding the country and especially Gjirokastra.

The standardization of cultural tourism as a simple mean of branding a place, in accordance with changes in tourists' motivations and interest, has resulted in identifying and developing new trends and forms of sustainable tourism worldwide: such as cultural tourism experienced through cultural routes; creative tourism, and accessible tourism (Chapter 5), as new forms which avoid mass tourism and the "Mathew Effect" of places enhancing new possibilities of the applied place with social, economic, and environmental benefits, which aim in fostering positively the image of the city. Thus, as concluded and reviewed in the branding literature (Chapter 4) many destinations have been working on shifting their branding methodologies from mass tourism trend focused in branding well-knows cities, to new trends of sustainable tourism, which have gained contribution to the economical and cultural activities of the area applied. Small capacity countries such as Albania and other Western Balkan countries, are desperate cases which can never compete in relation to Western European countries not only in attraction of mass tourism, but also economically and socially speaking, were various issues regarding such factors should be further researched. In the case of Gjirokastra and by the obtained results (Chapter 2), cities such as Gjirokastra, full in cultural and natural heritage potentials, are seen in constant competition economically and socially with bigger cities (Tirana, Shkodra, Durres) within the Albanian territory, nevertheless if it is compared with neighboring cities. The phenomenon of branding of places, cities, thus does not attract and activates peoples persuasion outside the territory of a country or region, persuasion occurs also within a common territory creating competitiveness between big cities and small ones (Chapter 4). Thus the researched new trends of sustainable tourism, defined as "new products" of sustainable tourism were seen as conceptually testing method, in urging to activate small cities within the Albanian territory defined by sustainable tourism products in building up branding methodologies (like in the case of Gjirokastra) in accordance of their true potential for the development of the territory in accordance with the economical and social part. Apart form the comparison made between branding products and cities, and the means of understanding the difference between "brand" and "branding", the conclusion drawn highlighted the difference standing between the brand which consist on a product (city, places, destination), and branding consisting in the means and ways by which the image of the product (city, place, destination) (Chapter 4) is established, perceived and constructed by the consumer (means of marketing). Hence, with this drawn conclusions, sustainable tourism is taken in account as the process of branding (sustainable tourism trend (Chapter 5,6); cultural routes, creative tourism, tourism for all) in achieving and constructing a brand identity (city of Gjirokastra).

This poses new reflection upon the fact that branding cities, places or destination should be achieved only through the means of building new architecture, hallmark events, or producing logos and slogans as enhancers of attracting attention. Although many cities, places, and destinations use means of marketing in regard of enhancing their cultural, natural resources as tourism attraction, based on the literature review (Chapter 3, 4), many scholars and expert agree that sustainable approaches should be taken in consideration in regards of the build environment (heritage or not), in relation also to its residents. Thus, city's branding helps in increasing the status of the a place as touristic destination, residential, or business location, were branding itself is associated primary with economic value. Apart from the symbolic values that branding holds, it should provide a sustainable strategy to provide places, cities, towns, an image and its cultural meaning. Branding indicates the need for individuality and emotional connection with the environment in the contexts of globalization, thus giving cities depth and originality, its distinctive character. However, a strong brand (city, place, destination) should not only be seen as a potential tool in attracting visitors, business, investment, but most importantly should be used as a strategy to retain its local residents and attract new resident to foster furthermore the economical and social values of a place. Nevertheless, the image of a city, place, destination has a powerful factor in persuading all of the above in different ways. However, in the Albanian case and specifically Gjirokastra, assigned authorities should be more than responsible in giving proper consideration to a strong sustainable brand, seen as a tool of improvement regarding the urban development of the city, thus allowing sustainable branding through tourism in directly contributing with the construction of local identity of a place.

Since the focus of this research has been the development of sustainable tourism as a methodology of branding Gjirokastra, focus in Chapters 2 and 3 set the overall state of Albania and Gjirokastra situation in regards to tourism development, whereas Chapter 4 created the basis methodologies and research regarding branding (city, places, destinations), Chapter 5 consisted in exploring sustainable trends of tourism in order to build a continuous approach from the conclusions derivered from Chapter 3, regarding branding strategy based on the main potentials of Gjirokastra. The conclusions drawn from Chapter 5 related to the fact that all of the three chosen tourism trends fell within the concept of maximizing positive effects towards the application of cultural routes, creative tourism and tourism for all, while minimizing the negative ones, related to the local economy of a place, socially development, and the build environment impact. Perhaps one of the most noticeable positive conclusion deals with the impact that this tourism trends have in revitalising culture through increased societal self esteem of the place. Additional conclusion from Chapter 5, consisted in the fact that if sustainable tourism is taken into account as a methodol-

ogy to be followed in branding (cities, places, destinations), where revenues can boost or bring back lost or declining cultural objects and activities and at the same time create job opportunities, regional income growth and tax revenue. Nevertheless, common conclusion from both Chapter 4 and 5 consisted that both the branding process (branding cities, places, destinations) and the process of developing sustainable tourism required identification of participators of all relevant stakeholders, governmental entities, and potential ones, in order to ensure wide participation and consensus in building this capacities, constant monitoring of impacts and processes, corrective measures in maintaining the desirable image. Thus, both the approach of branding (cities, places, destinations), and sustainability in tourism should be applied in terms of the foreseen trends (socially, economically, demographics, etc), maintaining and requiring a high level of residents, future residents, tourist satisfaction, ensuring a meaningful experience to the tourists and sustainable life to the current residents, by raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them. Although the methodology of investigating all the potential identified trends of sustainable tourism separately, the main conclusion derivered from Chapter 5 consist in the fact that cultural routes apart from the great approach and aim in fostering sustainable tourism and branding a product (cities, places, destinations), would have a greater impact if they are developed by including both creative tourism and tourism for all as additive components to this new product of cultural tourism. Thus forming a chain of actions where each of this trends develop in accordance with each other.

Referring to the main question of "How can Gjirokastra, Albania, a UNESCO site rich in cultural heritage resources be branded through sustainable tourism trends in achieving an authentic experiences of the place?", the research shows that drawn conclusion for Gjirokastra (Chapter 6), where based on the used methodology applied in answering this questions, based on the main data and conclusion deriverd from Chapters (2,3,4,5). Through the actual proposed alternatives of how the three main enhancer of sustainable tourism could be applied, main conclusion consisted, that there is a wide potential in creating cultural routes as products of cultural tourism in Gjirokastra county, consisting of thematic routes, which could be either linear or broken routes. However as a direct result of this main conclusion consisting on cultural routes, accessibility to information regarding the brand (city, place, destination) and its additive product (cultural routes) is needed in accordance with infrastructure, highlighted as one of the main indicators in further fostering the positive impact of this sustainable tourism trend. Alternative conclusion regarding only the implication of cultural routes is seen in the ability to increase the economic efficiency of the heritage resources found in the area, and broadening the diversify offered, making the experience more satisfactory for potential tourists and also revitalising areas not taken into account before by governmental entities. Conclusions derived

from the application of creative tourism in Gjirokastra, note there the area has a great potential and need in hosting creative tourism, based also in the conclusion of Chapter 3. Different from the result of cultural routes, creative tourism finds solid grounds in developing through the entire year, by enhancing its historical, cultural potentials; artisans; religious, etc, seen as an urging method in todays tourism markets, differentiating not only from its neighbouring countries, but also from bigger cities in the Albanian territory. In addition to this main conclusion, alternative conclusion consist in urging and developing approaches to enhance active participation, distinctive experiences (cultural routes) creative activities, co-creation urging joint creation of experiences by consumers and producers; and creative potential for tourists to enhance their creativity while being part of the community in a place. Main conclusion regarding tourism for all approaches to Gjirokastra enhance the fact that by incorporating accessible environments and services to a place (cultual routes, city, natural and cultural heritage)it contributes in improving the quality of the tourism product (Gjirokastra), thus increasing the overall competitiveness of the tourism destinations which naturally tend to develop sustainable tourism policies and strategies. Additional conclusions related to the social development model of a place, consists in the applications of tourism policies and practical methods taking in account the human condition in terms of age, mobility, sensory and intellectual impairments or health condition, which directly benefits also the residents of the place developed. Combining socially inclusive policies, universal design techniques and the use of new technologies and information tools, destination managers and tourism providers will be able to enhance the possibilities of the built environment effectively for visitors who need "good access".

7.2 Limitations

Some of the limitations encountered in this research dealt with the insufficient material of similar case studies regarding sustainable tourism as a branding methodology in the Western Balkan Region to make an comparison with the case of Gjirokastra. Insufficient and non-reliable data of tourism development and impact in Albania has been one of main problems identified while developing this research. In the case of Gjirokastra the municipality doesn't hold a website which could further inform researcher about many issues that are arising in Gjirokastra. Moreover, there is no clear data of the specific revenues derivers from cultural and natural heritage in Gjirokastra and methods of how they are measured. Limitation regarding the tourism for all development stand in the fact of the lack of priror research which deals with accessibility for people with disabilities in Albania, and Western Balkan countries. In addition to this, limitation regarding the actual terrain is also highlighted. As far as the research regarding cultural routes and creative tourism, it seem that

a very vague research is being conducted but still no additional documents can illustrate such approaches.

7.3 Further Research

To be more reliable, further similar research should be conducted in the Albanian territory in similar situations as that of Gjirokastra where, branding needs to be explored through different methodologies, also taking into account the benefits of developing a branding methodology based on sustainable tourism, if tourism is the main focus. Nevertheless, this research can be used as the bases for future alternative research also for the Western Balkan countries which do face same issues and urge the need of developing economical and social prospect from the tourism industry. More qualitative and quantitative studies should be approached in order to measure peoples attitudes towards sustainable development of tourism. In the Albanian context, sustainable tourism and its new trends; branding (cities, places, destination) are new theme of research, meaning that this research finds the crucial need to further be developed and explored through economical and social qualitative study on the same topic, adding more in-depth information about the topic. Indeed quantitative studies do not really measure people's attitudes and behaviour's while qualitative studies offer more opportunities to observe and understand this kind of variable in the contest of branding through sustainable tourism. Nevertheless, the importance of this research stands in the fact that governmental entities could take it approachable recommendations to be implemented in their tourism strategies. Nevertheless, this research also comes at a time when many experts, researchers and Albanian governmental entities are now paying attention to the role of developing sustainable tourism in terms of economic growth for Albanian regions. Experts have been trying to develop a strategy for the development of tourism without taking in consideration new tourism trends, which not only benefit to the sustainable tourism sector, but has a high impact in the social context and urban and landscape image of the territory. Although, Albania has and is facing many political, economical and social problems, this fast-growing area is becoming more and more important for economic development. To enrich furthermore this topic, the implication of City managers, Urban Planners, Architects, Designers, Historian is seen as crucial in obtaining more detailed research.

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Appendix _ 1: List of cultural and Natural Monuments in Gjirokastra County

Kalaja e Gjirokastrës	**Category: I**	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Vendstrehim	
	Area: Arkitekture	**County: Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Adem Zekos	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Bejo Beqirit	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Kulle me një krahë me çardak	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Donika Qëndros	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Eqerem Çabej	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Ismail Kadaresë	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Abdyl Babaramos e Isuf Jahos	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Kulle me dy krahë	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Ahmet Dudumit Dhe Zylfo Bakirit	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Angonatëve	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Asllan Muhedinit	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë	
	Area: Arkitekture	

Banesa e Astrit Dhramit	Category: I		**County:**	**Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Kullë			
	Area: Arkitekture			
Banesa e Bako Bathaj	Category: I		**County:**	**Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Faik Belaj e Vasil Papadhopullit	Category: I		**County:**	**Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Farie Duros	Category: I		**County:**	**Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë me nje krahe			
	Area: Arkitekture			
Banesa e Galanxhijve	Category: I		**County:**	**Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë			
	Area: Arkitekture			
Banesa e Galanxhijve	Category: I		**County:**	**Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Galip Sinoimerit	Category: I		**County:**	**Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë			
	Area: Arkitekture			
Banesa e Halim Canit	Category: I		**County:**	**Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë			
	Area: Arkitekture			
Banesa e Hatif Zekos	Category: I		**County:**	**Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë			
	Area: Arkitekture			
Banesa e Iljaz Babametos	Category: I		**County:**	**Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesa me nje krah te ngjitura			
	Area: Arkitekture			

Banesa e Irfan e Haki Kokalarit	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Islam Kokonës	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Koço Çuçit	**Category: I**	**Place: Dhoksat**
	Typology: Banesë	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Koco Pacelit e Polo Zoices	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Medi Çiços e Azem Berberit	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Mersin Likës	**Category: I**	**Place: Golem**
		County: Gjirokastër
Banesa e Mexhit Kokalarit	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Mine Halite	**Category: I**	**Municipality: Gjirokastër** **County: Gjirokastër**

Banesa e Mitro Koços	**Category: I** **Typology: Banesë** **Area: Arkitekture**	**Municipality: Gjirokastër** **County: Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Muco e Bajram Hoxhës	**Category: I**	**Municipality: Gjirokastër** **County: Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Muhamet Ficos	**Category: I** **Typology: Banesë** **Area: Arkitekture**	**County: Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Myrteza Toros	**Category: I** **Typology: Banesë** **Area: Arkitekture**	**County: Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Myzafer Karagjozit	**Category: I** **Typology: Banesë** **Area: Arkitekture**	**County: Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Naim Çenes	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Niazi Ficos	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Pano Gërëos	**Category: I** **Typology: Banesëme një krahë** **Area: Arkitekture**	**Place: Qestorat** **County: Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Pertef e Xhevat Angonit	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Petro Stavrit (Sevo Stavri)	**Category: I** **Typology: Banesë**	**County: Gjirokastër**

	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Ramadan Qeribashit Dhe Jani e Jorgo Gjinit	Category: I	**County: Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Resajve	Category: I	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë me një krah	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Resul e Fetah Hoxhës	Category: I	**County: Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Sevo Marës	Category: I	**Place: Dhoksat**
	Typology: Banesë	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Shefqet Peçit	Category: I	**Place: Picar**
		County: Gjirokastër
Banesa e Sherif Çuberit	Category: I	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Skënder Dari	Category: I	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë me një krahë	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Skëndulajve	Category: I	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Kullë me dy krahë	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa e Sulo Llaqit	Category: I	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë/monument arkitektonik	
	Area: Arkitekture	

Banesa e Vasil Drazhës	**Category: I**	**Place:** **Hllomo** **County:** **Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Vaso Rumbit	**Category: I** **Typology: Banesë** **Area:** **Arkitekture**	**Place:** **Qestorat** **County:** **Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Veiz Xhezos	**Category: I** **Typology: Banesë** **Area:** **Arkitekture**	**County:** **Gjirokastër**
Banesa e vëllezërve Kore	**Category: I** **Typology: Banesë me një krahë** **Area:** **Arkitekture**	**County:** **Gjirokastër**
Banesa e vëllezërve Xhaxhiaj	**Category: I** **Typology: Banesë** **Area:** **Arkitekture**	**County:** **Gjirokastër**
Banesa e vllazerisë Xheneti	**Category: I** **Typology: Banesë me dy krahe** **Area:** **Arkitekture**	**County:** **Gjirokastër**
Banesa e Zahari Steries	**Category: I**	**Place:** **Derviçan** **County:** **Gjirokastër**
Banesa Kikinajve, Lagja Manalat	**Category: I** **Typology: Banesë** **Area:** **Arkitekture**	**County:** **Gjirokastër**
Banesa Myzejen Brahjes	**Category: I**	**County:** **Gjirokastër**
Banesa Nadire Babametos	**Category: I** **Typology: Banesë** **Area:** **Arkitekture**	**County:** **Gjirokastër**

Banesa Niko Zografit	Category: I	Place: Qestorat
	Typology: Banesë me një krahë	County: Gjirokastër
	Area: Arkitekture	
Banesa Pronë Shtetërore	Category: I	County: Gjirokastër
Banesa Zapanaja e Zekatëve	Category: I	County: Gjirokastër
Ish Poliklinika (Mitropolia)	Category: I	Municipality: Gjirokastër
	Typology: Mitropoli	
	Area: Arkitekture	County: Gjirokastër
Banjat e Qytetit (Gjirokastër)	Category: I	County: Gjirokastër
	Typology: Hamam	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Bendi i Rikës mbi Përroin e Gurrës	Category: I	Place: Këllëz- Lunxhëri
	Typology: Ujëmbledhës	County: Gjirokastër
	Area: Arkitekture	
Bendi mbi përroin e Nakovës	Category: I	Place: Nakovë- Lunxhëri
	Typology: Veper hidraulike	County: Gjirokastër
	Area: Arkitekture	
Çezma e Hllomos	Category: I	Place: Hllomo-pogon
		County: Gjirokastër
Çezma Me Kupolë	Category: I	Place: Selckë
		County: Gjirokastër
Çezma në Guvën Shkëmbore	Category: I	Place: Goranci
		County: Gjirokastër

Bendi mbi përroin e Nakovës	Category: I	Place: Nakovë- Lunxhëri
	Typology: Veper hidraulike	County: Gjirokastër
	Area: Arkitekture	
Çezma e Hllomos	Category: I	Place: Hllomo-pogon County: Gjirokastër
Çezma Me Kupolë	Category: I	Place: Selckë County: Gjirokastër
Çezma në Guvën Shkëmbore	Category: I	Place: Goranci County: Gjirokastër
Dhoma e Mirë në Banesën e Lolomanëve	Category: I	County: Gjirokastër
	Typology: Banesë me dy krahe	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Dhoma e Mirë në Banesën (ish e Goricajve)	Category: I	County: Gjirokastër
Gërmadhat e Kishës Së Shën Anës	Category: I	Place: Derviçan County: Gjirokastër
Godina e Manastirit Të Cepos	Category: I	Place: Mashkullore
	Typology: Manastir	Municipality: Gjirokastër
	Area: Arkitekture	County: Gjirokastër
Kalaja e Jermës	Category: I	Place: Saraqinisht County: Gjirokastër
Kalaja e Kardhiqit	Category: I	Place: Kardhiq
	Typology: Kala	County: Gjirokastër
	Area: Arkitekture	
Kalaja e Labovës Së Kryqit	Category: I	Place: Labovë E Kryqit County: Gjirokastër

Kalaja e Labovës Së Kryqit	**Category: I**	**Place:** Labovë E Kryqit **County:** Gjirokastër
Kalaja e Libohovës	**Category: I**	**Place:** Libohovë **Municipality:** Gjirokastër **County:** Gjirokastër
Kalaja e Melanit	**Category: I**	**Place:** Nepravishtë **Municipality:** Gjirokastër **County:** Gjirokastër
Kalaja e Pepelit	**Category: I**	**Place:** Pepel **Municipality:** Gjirokastër **County:** Gjirokastër
Kalaja e Shën Triadhës (Gjirokastër)	**Category: I** **Typology: Kala** **Area:** Arkitekture	**Place:** Valare **Municipality:** Gjirokastër **County:** Gjirokastër
Kalaja e Shtëpezës	**Category: I**	**Place:** Shtëpezë **Municipality:** Gjirokastër **County:** Gjirokastër
Kalaja në fshatin Paleokastër	**Category: I** **Typology: Kala** **Area:** Arkeologji	**Place:** Paleokastër **Municipality:** Gjirokastër **County:** Gjirokastër
Kalaja e Selos	**Category: I**	**Place:** Selos **Municipality:** Gjirokastër **County:** Gjirokastër
Kamerieja e Jonuz Shehut	**Category: I**	**Municipality:** Gjirokastër **County:** Gjirokastër

Kamerje e Ismet Roqit	**Category: I**	
	Typology: Banesë	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
	Area: Arkitekture	**County: Gjirokastër**
Karakoll në Qafën e Çajupit	**Category: I**	**Place: Zhej- Zagori**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Manastirit të Shpërfytyrimit (Mingul)	**Category: I**	**Place: Mingul**
	Typology: Objekt kulti(kishë)	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
	Area: Arkitekture	**County: Gjirokastër**
Kisha e Manastirit të profet Ilias (Jorgucat)	**Category: I**	**Place: Jorgucat**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Manastirit të Shën Mëhillit (Nivan)	**Category: I**	**Place: Nivan**
	Typology: Kishë	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
	Area: Arkitekture	**County: Gjirokastër**
Kisha e Manastirit Të Shën Mërisë (Spiles)	**Category: I**	**Place: Tranoshisht**
	Typology: Objekt kulti (kishë)	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
	Area: Arkitekture	**County: Gjirokastër**
Kisha e Manastirit Të Shën Mërisë (Koshovice)	**Category: I**	**Place: Koshovicë**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Manastirit Të Shën Triadhës (Pepel)	**Category: I**	**Place: Pepel**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër

Kisha e Manastirit të Shpërfytyrimit (Catiste)	**Category: I**	**Place: Çatistë-pogon**
	Typology: Kishë	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
	Area: Arkitekture	**County: Gjirokastër**
Kisha e Profet Ilisë (Gjirokastër)	**Category: I**	**Place: Stegopull**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Shën Apostujve (Hoshtevë)	**Category: I**	**Place: Hoshtevë**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Shën e Premtes (Hllomo)	**Category: I**	**Place: Hllomo**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Shën e Premtes (Selcke)	**Category: I**	**Place: Selckë**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Shën Gjergjit (Nakovë)	**Category: I**	**Place: Nakovë**
	Typology: Objekt kulti(kishë)	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
	Area: Arkitekture	**County: Gjirokastër**
Kisha e Shën Kollit (Dhuvjan)	**Category: I**	**Place: Dhuvjan**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Shën Kollit (Saraqinisht)	**Category: I**	**Place: Saraqinisht**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër

Kisha e Shën Mëhillit (Mingul)	Category: I	Place: Mingul
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Shën Mëhillit (Gjirokastër)	Category: I	
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Shën Mërisë (Gjirokastër)	Category: I	Place: Derviçan
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Shën Mërisë (Peshkepi e Siperme)	Category: I	Place: Peshkëpi e Sipërme
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Shën Mërisë (Zervat)	Category: I	Place: Zervat
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Shën Mërisë së Drianos (Zervat)	Category: I	Place: Zervat
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Shën Thanasit (vetëm ikonostasin, 1987)	Category: I	Place: Selo
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Shën Thanasit (Poliçan)	Category: I	Place: Poliçan
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër

Kisha e Shen Thanasit të Mezhanit (Poliçan)	**Category: I**	**Place: Poliçan**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha e Shpërfytyrimit në godinat e Mitopolisë (Gjirokastër)	**Category: I**	
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha Fjetja e Shën Mërisë (Sopik)	**Category: I**	**Place: Sopik -pogon**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha Fjetja e Shën Mërisë (Labovë)	**Category: I**	**Place: Labovë E Kryqit**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha Fjetja e Shën Mërisë (Vllahogranxi)	**Category: I**	**Place: Vrahogoranxi**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kisha Paleokristiane e Manastirit (Nepravishte)	**Category: I**	**Place: Nepravishtë**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kopshti i Canajve (Gjirokastër)	**Category: I**	
	Typology: Banesë/veper hidraulike	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
	Area: Arkitekture	**County: Gjirokastër**
Kroi i lagjes së poshtme (Dhoksat)	**Category: I**	**Place: Dhoksat- Lunxhëri**
	Typology: Krua	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
	Area: Arkitekture	**County: Gjirokastër**

Kroi me bendin e çetës së mesme (Dhoksat)	Category: I	Place: Dhoksat
	Typology: Cezem	Municipality: Gjirokastër
	Area: Arkitekture	County: Gjirokastër
Kulla e Miho Ngjelës	Category: I	Place: Goranci
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kulla e Niko Ngjelës	Category: I	Place: Goranci
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Kulla e Vango Dules	Category: I	Place: Goranxi
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Manastiri I Shën Qirjakut Dhe Juditës	Category: I	Place: Dhuvjan
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Manastiri I Ungjëllizimit (Vanishte)	Category: I	Place: Vanishtë
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Manastirii I Shën Mërisë (Goranxi)	Category: I	Place: Goranci
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Mësonjtorja e vjetër (Gjirokastër)	Category: I	Place: Labova E Zhapës
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Monumenti i Çerçiz Topullit	Category: I	
	Typology: Bust/statujë	Municipality: Gjirokastër
	Area: Art	County: Gjirokastër

Përcaktimi i zonës së mbrojtur të Varrit Monumental dhe Ujëmbledhësit (Jorgucat)	**Category: I**	**Place:** **Jorgucat**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: **Gjirokastër**
Porta e Banesës Së Haxhi Kurtit	**Category: I**	
	Typology: Porte	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
	Area: **Arkitekture**	**County:** **Gjirokastër**
Porta e Jashtme e Banesës Së M.Bozos	**Category: I**	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
		County: **Gjirokastër**
Porta e Jashtme e Banesës Së Rakip Saracit	**Category: I**	
	Typology: Portë	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
	Area: **Arkitekture**	**County:** **Gjirokastër**
Pusi Karakteristik në fshatin Sofratike (Gjirokastër)	**Category: I**	**Place:** **Sofratikë**
		Municipality: Dropull
		County: **Gjirokastër**
Rënojat e Banesës së Çelo Picarit	**Category: I**	**Place:** **Picar**
		County: **Gjirokastër**
Rrënoja e fshatit të vjetër të Kardhiqit (Kardhiq)	**Category: I**	**Place:** **Kardhiq**
	Typology: Banesa	**County:** **Gjirokastër**
	Area: **Arkitekture**	
Rrënojat e Bazilikës Paleokristiane	**Category: I**	**County:** **Gjirokastër**
Rrënojat e fshatit të vjetër të Kardhiqit	**Category: I**	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
		County: **Gjirokastër**
Rrenojat e Këmbëve të Ujsjellësit	**Category: I**	
	Typology: Akuadukt	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
	Area: **Arkitekture**	**County:** **Gjirokastër**

Rrënojat e Teatrit Antik (Sofratik)	**Category: I**	**Place: Sofratikë**
		Municipality: Dropull
		County: Gjirokastër
Rrenojat e Ures Se Shen Kollajve (Lazarat)	**Category: I**	**Place: Lazarat**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Shtëpia e Enver Hoxhës (Muze i luftës N.Ç.)	**Category: I**	
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Shtëpia e Andon Zako Çajupit	**Category: I**	**Place: Sheper**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: Gjirokastër
Shtëpia e Topullarve (Gjirokastër)	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Banesë	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Stera e Baboçatëve (Gjirokastër)	**Category: I**	**County: Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Sterë	
	Area: Arkitekture	
Stera e ujit në fshatin Vanistë (Gjirokastër)	**Category: I**	**Place: Vanistë**
		County: Gjirokastër
Tavani Dhe Porta e Vjetër në Banesën e Kozma Shajkos	**Category: I**	
	Typology: Tavan/porte	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
	Area: Arkitekture	**County: Gjirokastër**

Tri urat e vogla mbi përroin e Zerzebilit (Gjirokastër)	**Category: I** **Typology: Urë** **Area: Arkitekture**	**County: Gjirokastër**
Tumat Pranë Fshatit Jermë	**Category: I**	**Place: Jermë** **County: Gjirokastër**
Ujësjellësi në Teqen e Melanit	**Category: I**	**Place: Nepravishtë** **County: Gjirokastër**
Ura e Gurit e Çiminxhit	**Category: I**	**Place: Hllomo- Pogon** **County: Gjirokastër**
Ura e Gurit të Hoshtevës	**Category: I**	**Place: Hoshtevë - Zagori** **County: Gjirokastër**
Ura e Kollorcës (Gjirokastër)	**Category: I** **Typology: Urë me harqe guri** **Area: Arkitekture**	**County: Gjirokastër**
Ura e madhe e gurit e Kaçarellos	**Category: I**	**Place: Hllomo- Pogon** **County: Gjirokastër**
Ura e Nivanit	**Category: I**	**Place: Nivan - Zagori** **County: Gjirokastër**
Ura e ujësjellësit të Sopotit	**Category: I** **Typology: Veper hidraulike** **Area: Arkitekture**	**Municipality: Gjirokastër** **County: Gjirokastër**
Ura e Zonjës (Labovë)	**Category: I**	**Place: Labovë** **Municipality: Gjirokastër** **County: Gjirokastër**

Ura në fshatin Grapsh	**Category: I**	**Place:** **Grapsh**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: **Gjirokastër**
Ura në fshatin Haskovë	**Category: I**	**Place:** **Haskovë**
		Municipality: Gjirokastër
		County: **Gjirokastër**
Ura në Subash	**Category: I**	**Place:** **Subash**
	Typology: Urë	**Municipality: Gjirokastër**
	Area: **Arkitekture**	**County:** **Gjirokastër**
Varreza antike (Sofratikë)	**Category: I**	**Place:** **Sofratikë**
		Municipality: Dropull
Varri monumental dhe ujëmbledhësi (Jurgucat)	**Category: I**	**Place:** **Jorgucat**
		County: **Gjirokastër**
Xhamia e Teqesë	**Category: I**	**County:** **Gjirokastër**
Zapanaja e Braho Babocit (Gjirokastër)	**Category: II**	**County:** **Gjirokastër**
	Typology: Zapana	
	Area: **Arkitekture**	

Appendix _ 2: Tourist Survey _ Gjirokastra

1. How long is your trip? ___days in Albania ___nights in Gjirokastra ___full days in Gjirokastra

2. What is the main purpose of your visit to Albania?
  a. ☐ Business/commerce ☐ Pleasure/Tourism ☐ Visit friends or family ☐ Other_____
  b. If you are here for pleasure/tourism - what made you choose Albania?
    ☐ word-of-mouth/ recommendations from friends/family
    ☐ ads in news paper/online/TV/travel store *(please specify)* _____
    ☐ other *(please specify)*_____
  c. b. If you are here for pleasure/tourism - what made you visit Gjirokastra?
    ☐ word-of-mouth/ recommendations from friends/ family
    ☐ ads in news paper/online/TV/travel store *(please specify)* _____
    ☐ other *(please specify)*_____

3. How did you arrive in Albania? *(check one box)*
  ☐ Airplane ☐ Ship ☐ Bus ☐ Organized Bus ☐ Owned car ☐ Rented car ☐ Motorcycle

4. How did you arrive in Gjirokastra? *(check one box)*
  ☐ Bus ☐ Organized Bus ☐ Taxi ☐ Owned Car ☐ Rented Car ☐ Other *(please specify)*_____

5. In which city did you spend the night prior to your arrival in Gjirokastra and where are you going next? Coming from_____ Going to_____

6. How are you traveling? *(check one box)*
  ☐ alone   ☐ family   ☐ other_____

7. Did you purchase a package tour?
  a. ☐ yes   ☐ no
  b. If yes, where did you buy it?   ☐ In Albania   ☐ Online   ☐ At home/physical tourism agency
  c. Can you please write the name of the tour operator?_____
  d. What was the total per person cost of your package? _____euro/person

8. What sources of tourism information on Gjirokastra did you consult prior to your arrival?
  ☐ Online information (please specify) _____
  ☐ Guide books (please specify) _____
  ☐ Relatives/Friends
  ☐ Other (please specify) _____

9. What sources of tourism information have you found and used in Gjirokastra?
  ☐ None other than I brought with me
  ☐ maps ((please specify) _____
  ☐ guidebook (please specify) _____
  ☐ signage
  ☐ tour guide
  ☐ other (please specify) _____

10. What is the quality of tourism information available in Gjirokastra?

Very good	Good	Ok	Bad	Very bad
5	4	3	2	1

11. Please check the activities that you participated in during your visit in Gjirokastra
☐ Horseback riding ☐ Hiking/walking ☐ Sightseeing ☐ Bicycling/Mt.Biking
☐ Picnicking ☐ Cultural event ☐ Museum ☐ Guided tour ☐ Other_____

12. In what type of lodging have you spent the night in Gjirokastra?
☐ Hotel, Bed& Breakfast, Hostel etc (please specify the name) _____
☐ Family owned private residence

13. Please specify your experience of the accommodation *rating from 5 (very good) - 1 (very bad)*

a. **availability/accessibility** (to contact, opening hours, booking ease, website information) 5 4 3 2 1

b. **location** (surroundings, close to attractions, easy to locate the place) 5 4 3 2 1

c. **staff** (quality of service, treatment, language skills, and helpfulness) 5 4 3 2 1

d. **facilities** (room furnishing/ decoration, design, cleanliness) 5 4 3 2 1

e. **information** (welcome letter, tourism information) 5 4 3 2 1

14. Please indicate the level of satisfaction with your visit to Gjirokastra *(circle one)*

completely satisfied	satisfied	Neutral	not satisfied	not at all satisfied
5	4	3	2	1

15. Based on this trip, how likely are you to do the following?

	Very likely	Likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Unlikely	Very unlikely
a. Visit Gjirokastra again?	5	4	3	2	1
b. Recommend friends to visit?	5	4	3	2	1

16. What would Gjirokastra need to improve for you to be completely satisfied with your visit?

17. Please rate the importance of the following attributes in your vacation experience AND your assessment of the current quality of these attributes in Gjirokastra

	Importance when traveling					Quality in Gjirokastra				
	very high	high	neutral	low	very low	Very high	High	Neutral	Low	Very Low
Climate	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Scenic landscape	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Outdoor recreation	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Flora and Fauna	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Interesting Architecture	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Historic atmosphere	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Local art/music/dance	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Friendly people	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Entertainment/nightlife	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Guide Services	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
General affordability	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Lack of crowds/ unexploited	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Food and dining	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Accommodation	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Information availability	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Communications (internet, telephone)	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Infrastructure (ease of transport, road quality)	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Personal Safety	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Cleanliness/waste disposal	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Medical service	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Genderbased treatment	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
Religious tolerance	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1

Survey results

1. How long your trip?

The mean value stated that tourists stayed around 10 days in Albania and around 3 nights in Gjirokastra.

2. What is the main purpose of your visit?

a)Pleasure and tourism (90 per cent)

3. How did you arrive in Albania?

The majority (80 per cent) arrived by airplane followed by bus mostly from a neighbouring country. Visitors coming with buses from neighbouring countries do only account for the tourists this survey is focused on.

4. How did you arrive in Gjirokastra?

Most tourists arrived in Gjirokastra by bus (85 per cent).

5. In which city did you spend the night prior to your arrival in Gjirokastra and where are you going next?

Most people where coming from or going to Berat (40 per cent) followed by Tirana (25 per cent) and going to Ioannina or Greece (35 per cent).

The most mentioned cities follow as such: Berat, Ioannina, Tirana, Korce, Saranda, Permeti and Dhermi. However, additional Information on why this cities are preferred should follow.

6. How are you travelling?

Most people seem to travel alone (75 per cent), but others travelled with family or friends (25 per cent). This responses differ in season period. And if the branding methodology is applied to Gjirokastra more questionnaires should be developed.

7. Did you purchase a package tour?

No one seem to have purchased a packaged tour. All of the participant in this questionary preferred to travel based on the Lonely Planet and Trip Advisor web

8. What sources of tourism information on Girokastra did you consult prior to your arrival?

The majority stated that online information has been used (80 per cent). Trip advisor and Lonely planet are also mentioned

9. What sources of tourism information have you found and used in Gjirokaster?

Most tourists stated that they haven't found or used additional source of information (80 per cent). Others used available city maps (20 per cent). No additonal information is given regarding certain sites or different activities that tourist can participate.

10. What is the quality of tourism information available in Gjirokaster?

From a scale 1 to 5 the mean value obtained about the quality of tourism information in Gjirokastra was about 3 .

11. Please check the activities that you participated in during your visit in Gjirokastra!

The most checked activities were: Hiking/Walking; Sightseeing; Visiting the Museum.

Some of the interviewd stated that insufficient resources and in bad condition the build

environment minimises the attractiveness of the place, hence the landscape was claimed as a potential resource.

13. Please specify your accommodation experience

a) Availability/ Accessibility (3)

b) Location (4)

c) Staff (4)

d) Facilities (3)

e) Information (2)

14. Please indicate the level of satisfaction with your visit to Gjirokastra

80 per cent of the visitors stated during their stay in Gjirokastra

15.a) Would you Visit Gjirokastra again?

The average value obtained for this question was 3 states, due to the lack of information, activities, infrastructure, different experiences

b) Would you recommend people to visit Gjirokastra?

The average value was 4.

16. What would Gjirokastra need to improve for you to be completely satisfied?

Most of the visitors stated the lack of information and tourism activities. Better management of the infrastructure, waste management, no cars or trucks in old town etc.

17. Rate the importance of the following attributes as part to your trip experience?

The given answers highlight a basic overview of the situation regarding responses in question 16. Nevertheless, the observation conducted for this study confirm that there is great potential of the landscape, cultural heritage, hospitable people, the quality of the food. Nevertheless once again the issues about the lack of entertainment, the poor infrastructure(roads, transport, energy, water and waste) and the insufficient information are repeating factors.

The remain answers of the questionnaire were not taken into account since many of the visitors interview were hesitant in answering.

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