

TRAVEL REVIEW- PARIS HERITAGE TOURISM

Naiara Palanques Garcés
1702373
European Field Trip Studies
BMTH5000



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UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID

In 2004, the French capital Paris had an estimated 2.5 million tourists, (Paris Office du Tourisme et des Congrès Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau, 2005). However, in the last couple of years, the number of visitors has decreased drastically. In 2016 the capital of France lost one million tourists due to bad weather, demonstrations and the terrorist attacks suffered in the city (Teruel, 2016). In 2017, Paris beat records, an estimation of 40 million tourists arrived to the capital (Paris Official website of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, 2018).

But it has been observed that in periods where demonstrations happen the number of tourist visitors decreased. This was observed in the Yellow vest demonstration in 2018. Tourist attractions such the Eiffel tower, the Louvre museum and the Opera Grainer had to close down and refund the tickets in order to protect the tourists as well as this demonstration generated damages of 10 million euros in the tourism business (restaurants, hotels and shops) (Europapress, 2018). Furthermore, the yellow demonstration caused many cancelations, hotels have reached 50%, the majority of them were cancelled for the Christmas period (Europapress, 2018). So how does this affect the heritage of the city?

Heritage is described as the legacy of our ancestors and it is used every day (Timothy, 2011). This heritage can be either natural for example: rivers, mountains, lakes, forests etc... or they can be cultural like castles, aqueducts, museums, monuments etc... Furthermore, heritage can be palpable or impalpable. The non-material heritage includes music, dance, believes, rituals, social mores etc... (Timothy, 2011). Some of the most recognised heritage monuments are: The Tour Eiffel, Louvre Museum, Notre-Dame, Palais Garnier, etc... these iconic monuments are recognised world-wide (Buitrago, n.d.).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Word Heritage sites preserves and protects the heritage from the 167 countries register, this includes many countries such as: France, Spain and Germany (Afpes, 2016), (UNESCO, 2019). In Paris, there are 2.391 heritage sites (en.parisinfo, 2019). The city of Paris has a rich heritage including gardens, bridges, squares and among with Rome, is one of the cities in the world with a true reflexion of the history of France (Patrimonio Cultural, n.d.).

There are many reasons why people visit Paris, in which one of those heritage tourism is included (Attwooll, 2015). Two years ago, the French authorities informed that there was an increase in heritage tourism. The monuments and museum has a great cultural offer that has attracted foreign visitors. In 2017, 7.2 million people visited Paris, which meant a growth of 5.9% in comparison to the data in 2016 (Eldiario,2018). These figures explain the strong growth in number of foreign visitors. Some temporary exhibitions played an important function and increased the number of visitors, for example: The Grand Palais increased of 24.9% the number of visitors 1,412,060 people thanks to the "Gauguin the alchemist" exposition 467,478 visits and the Petit Palais increased of 32.2% the number of visitors 1,171,220 people due to the exhibition of "the art of the cake, from Degas to Redon", 238,472 visits (Eldiario,2018). It is difficult to differentiate the number of tourist who came for heritage reasons, however these figures suggest that heritage of Paris is a strong part of its appeal.

In 2018, Paris was the sixth most visited city in the world and the second city most visited in Europe according to the list of Euromonitor International (La Vanguardia, 2018). Paris offers a huge variety of monuments, musical offers, shops and gastronomy offer, thematic tourism, business tourism etc... these offerings make Paris a destination that attracts all kinds of audiences. Furthermore, the city is known for "The city of light", "The city of love" and "The city of fashion" (Narros Arranz, 2016). The tourism in Paris generates 51% of the jobs related with tourism (Narros Arranz, 2016) and tourism represents 7,3% of the Gallic country (COEGO, 2017). Although the visitors' numbers have decreased, Paris remains a strong tourist destination and tourism is a strong part of its economy.

The Eiffel Tower is an iconized image of Paris and it is used in many different media campaigns. Statistics have shown that in 2017, 6 207 303 visitors visited the Eiffel Tower, 4,6% more than in 2016 (Société d'exploitation de la tour Eiffel, 2018). The marginal revenue in 2017 for the Eiffel Tower was 83,98 million euros (Sete.toureiffel.paris, 2019). The online reviews we can find many different opinions. In Minube, we can see many online reviews for the Eiffel Tower, such as: Nuria says "Once the world's largest structure", Monica Cerqueira says "I was surprised and Taiane Machado Cella Schneider comments just perfect" (Minube, 2019). This tourist attraction received a 4.7 stars out of 5 (Minube, 2019). In addition, Paris has been selected as the city who will host the Olympic Games for 2024 (BBC News Mundo, 2017) and in its logo, the Eiffel Tower is present as well as the number 24 which represents the year of the current celebration and the last year of celebration and 1984, the last year that Paris celebrated the Olympic Games (Lowell, 2016).

Another iconic monument is Notre-Dame. In 2017, 12 million people visited Notre-Dame (eldiario.es, 2018). The revenue for the Notre-Dame was not found. According to Minube, people are surprised for the views and how beautiful the monument is. Meninha said "its beauty is incomparable", or Pamela Ferrary views it as "symbol of Paris". Serviajera describes it as "It is part of the history of the city" (Minube, 2019). This attraction was awarded with 4.6 stars out of 5 (Minube, 2019).

The second most iconic monument and highest of Paris is Sacré-Coeur (Discover Walks Blog, 2018). In this place, tourists are available to enjoy a spectacular view of Paris (Discover Walks Blog, 2018). In 2017, it was visited by 10 million visitors (eldiario.es, 2018). However, it was not possible to find the managerial revenue for this attraction. In Minube, Ferston describes it as the "best views of Paris", Isabel Cardoso describes it as "Unforgettable" (Minube, 2019). This attraction was awarded with 4.8 stars out of 5 (Minube, 2019).

The Louvre is one of the most famous art museums as well as one of the most visited in the world (Levante el Mercantil Valenciano, 2016; García, 2018). Also, 8 million visitors visited the museum of Louvre a 14,8% more than in 2016 (europapress, 2019). The revenue for the Louvre museum was not found. For the Louvre museum, people said the following. Inga "Incredible place", Allan Robert P.J says "Louvre, the museum of museums" and Sandra G (Minube, 2019). "Once of the most beautiful places in Paris". 4.6 stars out of 5 were given to this attraction (Minube, 2019).

Mass tourism generates a number of benefits, however it has also some problems. The natural ecosystems are destroyed as there is the need to construct more resources for the tourist, as well as there is an increase of Co2 as people travel farther and farther (Sostenibilidad, n.d.). Also, tourist do not adapt to local culture and the local business farther (Sostenibilidad, n.d.). Mass tourism has also had problems with Airbnb, the town hall of Paris claims 12.5 million euros for irregularities (Álvarez Barba, 2019). Some people let themselves be guided by digital platforms like Airbnb to visit cities full of visitors (TecnoHotel, 2018). Also, the low-cost airlines have decreased the expense when flying. Moreover, nowadays social media platforms have created a trend, now people use photography and networks to build an individual brand on social networks, many years ago people travel to enquire experience (TecnoHotel, 2018).

Now it is about using photography and networks to build a personal brand on social networks.

In order to restore the number of tourist visitors that visit Paris before the terrorism attack, the government of Paris has evaluated a government strategies plan which will be implemented between 2017-2022 (Maire De Paris, 2016). In this plan, heritage measures are included. The government plan to renovate 96 cultural buildings. Furthermore, the government of Paris will allocate between 2015-2020, 80 million euros will be used and this money will come to crowdfunding, subscriptions and the state. Moreover, the government wants to start projecting a 3D model program into the ten major Parisian buildings. New technologies help spread and preserve heritage. In addition, this tool allows information about the monuments and complements the face-to-face visit. It also encourages the interest of tourists and the public (Lamarca and Lapuente, 2008; Segittur, 2019).

The government of Paris gave to the company Sete with the following objectives (Maire De Paris, 2016). The company needs to maintain the monuments and ensure the quality of the attractions and safety. Also, the company needs to improve the reception as well as the access of the building and the flow of visitors. Furthermore, the enterprise needs to implement the plan for renewal and modernization of spaces as well as create animations that contribute to the prestige and animation (Maire De Paris, 2016).

Another name given to Paris is the city of lights, taking advantage of this the government wants to create events around the light allowing the tourist to live a unique experience (Maire De Paris, 2016). Another government strategy to boost the heritage, is to improve the lightning and access to the Arc de Triomphe. LED illumination will be installed in order to reduce the energy consumption and help the planet, also this new technology will allow the monument to change colours (Maire De Paris, 2016). Moreover, the government wants to strengthen the vegetation, develop shared garden tours as well as articulate the historic landscape with new uses. On top of that, the French administration wants to develop more animations and events in the Champs-Élysées (Maire De Paris, 2016).

Butters theory describe that tourist sites have got a life cycle (Geographyfieldwork, 2019). There are seven stages:

Exploration- This is the first stage when developing a tourist destination. In this phase, a very small number of people visit us and evaluate their visit (Geographyfieldwork, 2019). In the sixteenth century, the elite is interested begins to show interest and visit this city (Boyer, n.d.).

Growth and development- Tourist are starting to arrive more into our destinations. Articles in newspapers and brochures have been published advertising our destination (Geographyfieldwork., 2019). In 1992, the government of Paris started to develop a plan in order to classify the different type of tourist who visited the city (Instituto de Estudios Turisticos Secretaria General de Turismo, 1995).

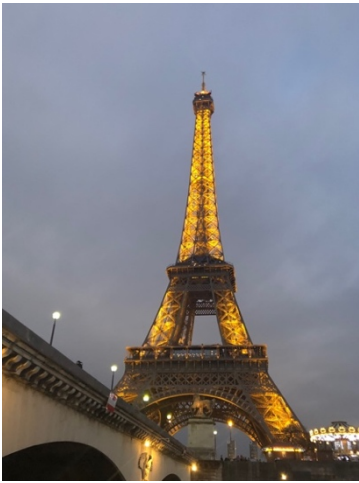
Success- At this point, all the facilities are occupied. At this moment, mass tourism substitutes the niche tourism. In addition, local culture may be depreciated and it will be replaced into a more international culture (Geographyfieldwork, 2019). In 2013, Paris was in the top 5 cities of the most visited cities in the world (Las 10 ciudades más visitadas del mundo en 2013, 2014).

Decline and Rejuvenation- At this point it can be observed that there are two options lefts. Either the destination goes on decline or they can rejuvenate (Geographyfieldwork, 2019). Also, they devolved more sustainable strategies based on the lower visitor numbers. After the terrorist attacks, the city of Paris suffered a decline in the number of visitors (Teruel, 2016). Furthermore, the yellow vest demonstration caused a decline in the number of tourist (Europapress.es, 2018). At the moment, the city of Paris in the stage of rejuvenation as they are developing new strategies in order to increase the numbers as they were before the terrorist attacks.

In order to improve the experience of the travellers it would be recommended to inform travellers if there are any demonstrations in order to plan other excursions as well as to avoid the area. Also, in the metro of Paris, they should be informed of stops in more languages such as: Spanish, German or Italian. Furthermore, Paris should use heritage monuments to advertise Paris for the 2024 Olympic Games as well as to celebrate competitions near heritage monuments.

In conclusion, Paris is one of the most visited cities in Europe despite the challenges that the city has had to face. The results show that Paris broke the record for the number of visitors who enjoyed the charms of the city of light, compared to previous years. However, when there are social revolts in the city, the number of tourists have decreased. In addition, statistics show that tourists continue to visit in great numbers the monuments of the heritage of the city of Paris. Therefore, it can be said that the strategies and investments in tourism matters and are effective.

Images



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