ALAN CLARKE

# Value creation–creating values: contradictions and constraints in the development of religious tourism

There is a long history of commercialisation and commodification within religious movements—yet, commercialisation and commodification are often resisted. This article considers why economic value may not be sufficient to explain development in religious tourism. Best practice research on religious tourism demonstrates that development rests more on the contribution to the core, religious values of the location than on traditional adherence to capitalist economics (Clarke and Raffay 2012). Consequently, return on investment has to be reconsidered in other terms, as well as in terms of financial value.

To explore the values involved in the development of religious tourism in general and in Southern and Eastern Europe (SEE)[1] in particular, this article draws on current research. Known as RECULTIVATUR, this research aims to use the religious cultural values of SEE jointly with local assets, human resources, infrastructures, and services to develop a religious tourism capable of creating new jobs and generating additional income. The project is tasked to elaborate an SEE Religious Tourism Model, a step-by-step guide for decision makers and other stakeholders that would allow them to:

- identify the religious cultural potential of their area by analysing, assessing, and capitalising on previous experiences;
- identify synergies with other projects;
- address the relevant stakeholders;
- develop the region by using its religious assets;
- manage religious assets optimally;
- realise their proposals by finding suitable funding opportunities; and
- create sustainable solutions.

The research outline also promises that the project will offer equal opportunities to all the religions of the SEE Programme Area, aiming to contribute to inter-religious communication and a better understanding and acceptance of various beliefs. However, so far, this promise has been difficult to realise in practice, largely due to the overwhelming Christian (admittedly, of different sorts) bias of the membership.

[1] Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine (Eurostat 2001).

Traditionally, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism is the movement of people away from their normal place of living for periods of less than one year, while, according to popular opinion, tourism is people going on holidays and enjoying their leisure time. Of course, in practice, there are complex niche markets to consider, but this traditional view of tourism still dominates. Tourism is well recognised as a powerful economic force, not only a marginalised exploitation of the pleasure periphery. Despite the continuing uncertainty in the world economy, UNWTO designated 13 December 2012 as the day of the billionth traveller of the year—moreover, 2012 was the year this figure was ever reached. There was an approximate 4 per cent growth in both the number of tourists and tourist expenditure. Despite ongoing economic volatility in the Eurozone, Europe consolidated its record growth of 2011 with a 3 per cent growth in 2012. Results were above average in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) (9 per cent), in line with the average in Western Europe (3 per cent), yet comparatively weaker in Southern and Mediterranean Europe (1 per cent), one of the best performing European sub-regions in 2011. This was partly the motivation behind projects in religious tourism development in SEE, where the countries are rich in religious and cultural heritages (UNWTO 2012). The volume and value of religious tourism was estimated at over 300 million people spending a suggested USD 18 billion worldwide (eTN 2009). Of course, the challenge for RECULTIVATUR is to find a way to develop the potential for tourism in the SEE countries without diminishing the integrity of the religious offers.

This article is divided into seven sections. Following this short introduction, the second section compares business values and religious values, to inform the debate about the development of religious tourism. The third section considers the possibilities of value beyond the economic, especially from the perspective of co-creation. The fourth section presents the debates around the nature of pilgrimage and religious tourism from the perspective of the RECULTIVATUR project. The fifth section explores the pilgrimage–tourism axis. In the sixth section, the article considers the challenge of commodification to religious values when religious heritage sites are exposed to commercialisation. Finally, the seventh section concludes by considering the consequences of the processes discussed in the preceding sections, critically exploring the meanings and motives involved in religious tourism.

## Business values–religious values

The context for this article is a particular form of niche tourism, namely that specialised form of cultural tourism focussed on religion and religious heritage. Tourism itself can be regarded as a business, much the same—though also different

from—other forms of business. For the big tourism organisations—such as the airlines, hotel corporations, and tour operators which make up the membership of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)—tourism is an economic sector which constitutes big business. They promote a business model which draws on the extraction of surplus value, by minimising expenditures and maximising profits. The debates around this model are well established, from such ancient authorities as Marx (1867) and Weber (1904) to contemporary writers including Daft (2002) and Fisher and Lovell (2008). However, even in Fisher and Lovell's (2008) book which explores business from an ethical perspective, considering the sustainability and corporate social responsibility of the triple bottom line, there is no denying that the single bottom line is the concern for profit. It was perhaps Gordon Gekko—the star of the film *Wall Street* (1987) and, consequently, one of the most famous American businessmen of the 1980s and 1990s—who summarised all this most aptly: '[t]he point is, ladies and gentleman, that greed—for lack of a better word—is good. Greed is right. Greed works' (American Rhetoric Movie Speeches 2011).

In the traditional sense, tourism may fit within such values, as well as recognise them, but in dealing with religious tourism we find both organisations and stakeholders whose religious value system may be identified as the antithesis of 'greed is good'—religious institutions tend to value the world differently. 'Greed is good' is not a motif which translates easily into religious orders, and this establishes challenges and constraints on the development of religious tourism.

In his spiritual and moral reflections, Quesnel (2010) argued that, when he went into the temple of God, Jesus exposed a sense of avarice covered with the veil of religion—an aspect on which he looked with the greatest indignation. The High Priest received a percentage of the profit from money changers and merchants—their removal from the Temple precinct would have caused a financial loss to him. Because pilgrims were unfamiliar with Jerusalem, the Temple merchants sold sacrificial animals at a higher price than elsewhere in the city. The High Priest overlooked their dishonesty, as long as he got his share, and ordered that only Tyrian shekels would be accepted for the annual half-shekel Temple tax—they contained a higher percentage of silver, and the money changers exchanged unacceptable coins for Tyrian shekels. Of course, they extracted a profit in the process, sometimes much more than the law allowed. The merchandise of holy artefacts; simoniacal presentations; fraudulent exchanges; mercenary spirit in sacred functions; ecclesiastical employments obtained by flattery, service, or attendance, or by any other non-monetary means; and collations, nominations, and elections made through any other motive than the glory of God were all fatal and damnable profanations, of which those in the temple were only a shadow.

There is a contradiction at play in these antagonistic relationships between business values and religious values—there are many examples of organised

religion demonstrating the characteristics of considerable wealth. Brown (2012) observed that it was often the individual believers—not the church—who made the sacrifices of surrendering their wealth, often giving it up to the church itself. Poverty was a virtue and avarice the source of all evil, of course, but the institution of the church needed the money to create and maintain a reputation for power.

## Co-creation in tourism: value, beyond the economic

Any attempt to refocus the moment and the experience of tourism could only benefit from the (experience) economy literature (Pine and Gilmore 1999), the service-dominant logic literature (Vargo and Lusch 2004), and the author's own endeavours to develop a co-creation perspective (Clarke 2011a). These approaches have entered into the field of tourism and even into the study of culture and heritage tourism. However, a critical view is not easy within the confines of a single article, even one setting out to be fundamentally questioning—authors have a general tendency to provide singly defined examples of processes and practices. Authors are encouraged—correctly—to live by the empowered and active participants in heritage and cultural tourism (Morgan, Lugosi, and Brent Ritchie 2010), but these can also be the death of attempts to impose authorial authority, as encounters blossom in unforeseen directions, offering polysemic experiences to co-creators. Jazz musicians frequently explore this freedom, and so do actors in improvised theatre, where narratives develop collectively and interactively. The whole perspective denies single interpretation, yet this is the idea research underlines when talking of drawing on the differently distributed resources brought into constructions and exchanges (Clarke 2011a). Experiences will be different for each of the actors involved, as well as for those not involved, which necessitates that we recognise processes, in the plural, at every step of the analysis. This is very difficult to maintain, as we look for the certainties that we have previously come to expect in what we have seen as a fixed world of production and consumption. Habitus and even co-creation force us into pluralities and polysemic constructions—therefore, we live in a world where there should be considerably more use of the additional 's' than there is.

The author's own recent work considered the applications of co-creation across the fields of leisure, tourism, hospitality, and events to explore the ramifications for business development (Clarke 2011a). There has been a considerable interest in co-creation in the marketing literature (Vargo and Lusch 2004; 2008), where the emphasis on value creation and value extraction focused on the interactive processes between companies and their consumers (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; Payne, Storbacka, and Frow 2008). Service-dominant (S-D) logic is based around the central role of active consumers in the co-creation of value, and takes

various forms in the research on tourism experience and the value components within tourism. As Payne et al. (2009: 1) argued, this is predicated on the 'customer's active involvement and interaction with their supplier in every aspect, from product design to product consumption'. Until these recent writings, the traditional view was that companies create value and that products are the end of the consumer experience. In the S-D logic, as opposed to the good-dominant (G-D) logic, co-creation experiences are regarded as the basis for value creation.

The S-D logic and the study of services drew on the work of authors such as Ramaswamy (2008: 9) who argued that the capability for innovation and the capacity for growth come from the organisation's ability to be 'continuously interacting with its customers through engagement platforms, especially those centred on customer experiences'. This attention to the customer as the basis for the strategic capital for innovation impacted directly on the ways the author and his colleagues began to reconsider tourism development and hospitality management with customer-centred business models (Hassanien, Dale, and Clarke 2010). Of course, this raises the question of whether there can be considered to be customers in religious settings.

Several attempts were made in the marketing literature to develop a conceptual framework for co-creation by mapping customer, supplier, and encounter processes (Payne, Storbacka, and Frow 2008). These processes involve interactions and transactions between customers and enterprises, as well as the possibility to identify within this nexus the opportunities for co-creation and innovation. In marketing, from an S-D logic perspective, the customer is always a co-creator of value, and this is a key, foundational proposition of the logic (Lusch and Vargo 2008: 7). In effect, S-D logic suggests that the value starts with the supplier understanding customer value creation processes and learning how to support, encourage, and enhance customers' co-creation activities.

The author's own starting point is that it is precisely in tourism and its associated fields that we can uncover primary examples of co-creation in the ways in which experiences play essential roles in the supply and consumption of the products and services which make up the sector—the active involvement of the tourist leads to a deeper experience, and as such, in the context of the S-D logic, to a higher value. Interaction between and with consumers and providers is the foundation for co-creation (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004). For co-creation to develop effectively, active customer involvement in the production of a good or service must be introduced, maintained, and enhanced, thus ensuring that the final value of such good or service is increased because customers can tailor it as they desire (Lusch, Vargo, and O'Brien 2007). This 'co-creation experience', as Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) termed it, is linked directly to achievement of value creation as the result. For businesses, the days of autonomously designing products or developing production processes, tapping new distribution channels, or

engaging in other marketing activities without involving consumers seem to be over (Dahlsten 2004; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; Cova and Salle 2008; Kristensson, Matthing, and Johansson 2008; Ramaswamy 2008). Co-creation not only leads to an increase in value creation, but may also contribute significantly to product innovation (Clarke 2011a). Tourism research has yet to fully explore all the possibilities offered by co-creation for innovative developments in tourism destinations and the attendant increase in competitive strength (Clarke 2010).

Tourism market research focuses increasingly on the experiences of tourists and the cultural contexts of their destinations. Lichrou, O'Malley, and Patterson (2008) asserted that destinations must not be regarded only as physical spaces. Places have intangible, cultural, historical, and dynamic aspects too. They are experienced by tourists in a dynamic context of social interaction with a common cultural meaning and with a collective memory (Stokowski 2002). According to Murphy, Benckendorff, and Moscardo (2007), the traditional destination branding approach emphasises mainly the physical attributes and activity opportunities—accordingly, destinations are simply considered as locations. Lichrou, O'Malley, and Patterson (2008) believed that visiting a tourism destination is a process of experience—the dreams and fantasies of consumers, the meeting of people, and the interactions among hosts, visitors, and other tourists. It involves a dynamic context in which destinations are simultaneously produced and consumed. Tourists have an image of a tourism destination even though they have never been there, which is why Lichrou, O'Malley, and Patterson (2008) developed the opinion that, metaphorically, destinations should be seen as narratives rather than products. This perspective urges us to work in a way which leaves room for the recognition of interaction, co-creation, and the notion of tourists as participants instead of spectators.

One of the challenges for a destination management organisation (DMO) is using the 'global network resources and thematic communities to continuously identify and act upon new innovation and value creation opportunities' to 'strengthen the competitiveness of the tourism destination' (Ramaswamy 2008: 9). To harness the strategic advantages that may come from intersectoral networking, destinations have to act as collaborative organisations rather than individual competitors. This is evident in the development of religious tourism, where few—if any—religious organisations have the connections with the wider tourism sector to access any of the wider markets. Competitors are becoming partners and cooperative competition, or co-opetition, and co-destiny are becoming increasingly important (Li and Petrick 2008; Prahalad and Krishnan 2008). This means that DMOs will have to cooperate interactively with other partners in the destination, through processes of exchanging ideas and expertise and of linking together financial and human resources (Wang 2008). Govers and Go (2009: 255) argued

that brand positioning 'should be built on a value match between place identity and the type of audience the place is attempting to attract'.

It can be argued that today's consumers have a different attitude towards consumption than those of previous generations (Poon 1994). In addition, tourists, and consumers in general, are not only better educated and wealthier, but also have access to more information than ever before. Tourists are looking for unique activities, tailored experiences, special interest foci, experiences in a lifestyle destination setting, living culture, creative spaces, and creative spectacles (Gross and Brown 2006). The need for authentic experiences, not contaminated by being fake or impure, is also growing (Gilmore and Pine 2007; Yeoman, Brass, and McMahon-Beattie 2007). Tourism destinations in particular can offer visitors experiences that they do not normally find in their everyday lives. Oh, Fiore, and Jeoung (2007: 119) posited that '[t]he benefit chain of causality view of tourism motivations tends to position tourist experience as a construct that transforms destination settings and activities into ultimate benefits and value that tourists obtain by visiting the destination.'

In research on tourism behaviour, experiences do appear to play a significant role (Gross and Brown 2006; Morgan and Watson 2007; Oh, Fiore, and Jeoung 2007). According to Sternberg (1997), tourism has been at the forefront of staging experiences, and tourism's central productive activity is the creation of the touristic experience. According to this research, tourists are in fact and by definition looking for experiences. Pine and Gilmore (1999; 2002) distinguished four types of experiences: the aesthetic experience, the educational experience, the entertainment experience, and the escapist experience (see Table 1, p. 56). These '4Es' vary along two dimensions—active–passive involvement and absorption–immersion—that intersect to produce quadrants. Active–passive involvement entails the level of participation by consumers in the creation of experience-generating offering. Those who passively participate do not directly affect or influence the offering, whereas active participants directly affect the offering that yields the experience. Absorption is 'occupying a person's attention by bringing the experience into the mind' and immersion is 'becoming physically (or virtually) a part of the experience itself' (Pine and Gilmore 1999: 31). According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), including all four types of experiences is optimal. However, we suggest that small, resource-strapped, rural businesses should initially focus on one or two of the 4Es and then augment their experiential offerings over time.

Experiences determine the value of destinations, and DMOs are increasingly using this in positioning their destinations in the market. 'The demand is growing for travel that engages the senses, stimulates the mind, includes unique activities, and connects in personal ways with travellers on an emotional, psychological, spiritual or intellectual level' (Arsenault and Gale 2004).

Canadian research, for instance, showed that contacts with the local communities—through cooking, visiting farms, and being welcomed into the homes of locals, for example—are particularly appreciated (Arsenault and Gale 2004). This also holds true for all manner of experimental, practical, and interactive activities. Tourists do not just want to be spectators. They want to participate, roll up their sleeves—not only view the gardens, but also do some gardening. They want to take a peek behind the scenes—not only go to a concert, but also meet the musicians afterwards. Learning experiences—such as photography workshops, going to a wine university, and learning to understand the ecosystem of an area of natural beauty—are also growing in popularity. Furthermore, the sharing of experiences, the social dynamics connected with travel, getting to know new people, reinforcing old friendships and making new ones, and spending time with relatives are also considered important (Arsenault and Gale 2004).

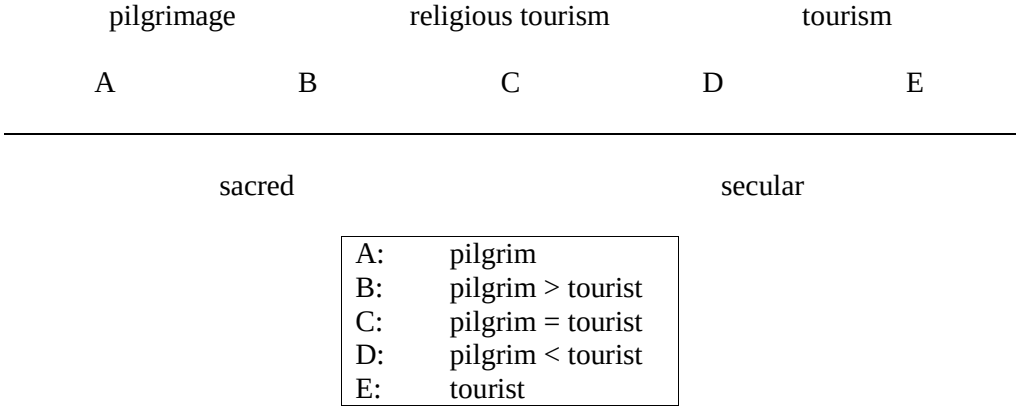
| **Type of experience** | **Description of experience** | **Active–passive involvement dimension** | **Absorption–immersion dimension** |
|---|---|---|---|
| aesthetic experience | actor enjoys just being in a sensory-rich environment | actor passively appreciates and does not measurably alter the nature of the environment | actor is immersed in or surrounded by the environment |
| educational experience | actor increases skills and knowledge through absorbing information presented in an interactive way | actor actively participates through interactive engagement of one's mind and / or body | actor absorbs the business offerings |
| entertainment experience | actor's attention is occupied by the business offering | actor passively observes activities and / or performances of others | actor absorbs, but is not part of, the activities and / or performances |
| escapist experience | actor is an active actor who shapes events | actor actively participates in events or activities | actor is immersed in an actual or virtual environment |

Table 1: Pine and Gilmore's (1999) 4Es

According to Li and Petrick (2008), co-creation between tourists and providers should be the answer. Co-creation involves tourists' active involvement and interaction with their supplier in every aspect, from product design to product consumption (Payne et al. 2009). DMOs all over the world are confronted with major changes in the tourism industry and a rapidly changing tourism consumer, against the background of far-reaching social, political, and economic developments (Gretzel et al. 2006). In addition to natural disasters and terrorist attacks, the tourism industry is also faced with sweeping climate change and its consequences for tourism and tourism regions in particular (Ehmer and Heymann 2008). Many DMOs face significant dilemmas: stakeholders with different interests, major changes in external environmental factors, tight financial budgets, and, last but not least, a red ocean of bloody competition (Kim and Mauborgne 2005).

## RECULTIVATUR's perspective on religious tourism

The RECULTIVATUR project began from a perspective heavily influenced by a traditional sense of the differences distinguishing pilgrims, religious tourists, cultural tourists, and other tourists (see Figure 1), but also from a desire to move these discussions forward (Vukonic 1996; 1998; Trono 2009). Since all categories need to be addressed, the terminology may not be the most helpful for developing markets for religious tourism as such, but it is most helpful for segmenting and analysing the visits and visitors to religious heritage sites.




Source: Adapted from Smith (1992).

Figure 1: The way from pilgrimage to tourism

Bauman (1996) distinguished between A (pilgrim) and E (secular tourist), with the way from pilgrimage to tourism—and from sacred to secular—leading through B (more pilgrim than tourist), C (pilgrim as well as tourist), and D (more tourist than pilgrim). For pilgrims, the main aim of the journey is to be with God. For religious tourists, there may be spiritual aspects to the journey, but the main aim of the journey is education and pleasure (Sallnow and Eade 1991). Being with God is not the sole aim of their journey. M. L. Nolan and S. Nolan (1989) suggested that, in lieu of piety, religious tourism involves an individual quest for shrines and locales where it is possible to experience a sense of identity with sites of historical and cultural meaning. Religious tourists visit churches or sacred places very much like tourists (M. L. Nolan and S. Nolan 1992). However, there is more integration within the religious tourism sector than Figure 1 would seem to suggest (Rinschede 1992; Timothy and Olsen 2006). The very elements which define the act and experience of pilgrimage are also integral, defining elements of religious tourism—of course, tourists who happen to pick up on them casually experience them too, albeit in different ways. For this reason, we suggest that the core elements of pilgrimage form in fact the base on which the whole religious tourism enterprise is founded (see Figure 2).

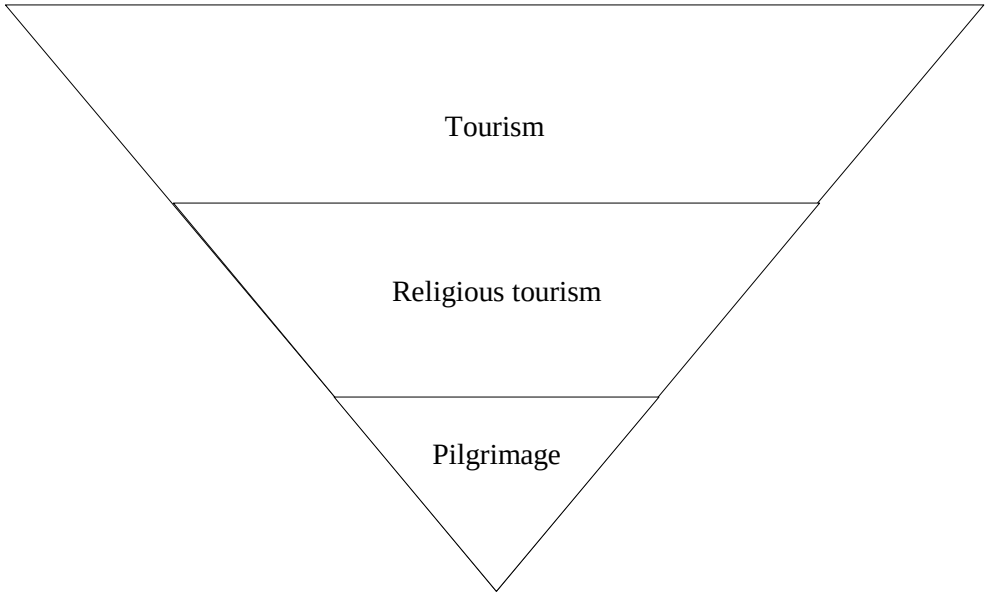


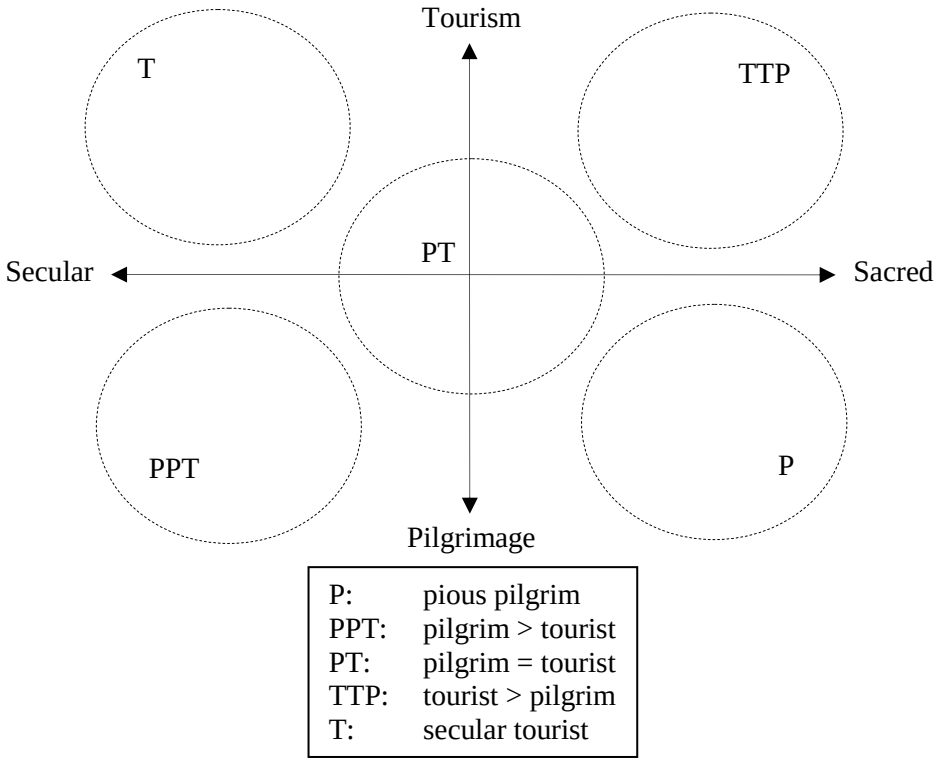

Figure 2: The essential integration of pilgrimage in religious tourism

This has been an ongoing debate at least since 1300, when Pope Boniface VIII sought to alter the balance between the sacred and the profane (Vukonic 1998). To facilitate pilgrimage to Rome, and to contribute more to the coffers of not only the church but also those of various Roman suppliers, the rules were changed. Pilgrimage to Rome had previously necessitated thirty days of continuous indulgences in the Basilica, but Pope Boniface VIII lowered this requirement to fifteen days, with the other fifteen days to be spent with 'the other and profane pleasures' of Rome. For the millennial jubilee of that year, he also ensured that the Vatican controlled the food and accommodation markets (unfortunately, we can find no direct reference to souvenirs), demonstrating that the strict division of the sacred and the profane as expressed in the division between non-material and consumption was already being queried in practice.

## The pilgrimage–tourism axis revisited

Collins-Kreiner and Kliot (2000) explored pilgrims' behaviour along a sacred–secular continuum (see Figure 3, p. 60). They examined the existence of such a sacred–secular continuum, where pilgrims' features can be ranked, overlaid by a gap analysis of where the pilgrim's perception sits against a definition of reality as sacred or secular. A second continuum, ranging from astonishment to disappointment or from pilgrimage to tourism, allows the construction of positions in the matrix showing how important the different characteristics of the site are to the different types of visitors. Collins-Kreiner and Kliot (2000) identified the need to gain inspiration and strengthen belief as the major pilgrimage motivation for Roman Catholics and noticed that visiting the Holy Land enabled them to continue their lives back home with new energy and a feeling of purpose. They observed that awareness of Jesus' inspiring 'presence' at the sites gave significance to pilgrims' visits—and made them more conscious of the spiritual aspect of life (Bowman 1991). It is, in fact, crucial for pilgrims to visit the site itself and to understand the meaning of what happened there—Roman Catholics perceive themselves as pure pilgrims, who concentrate on religious aspects and disregard touristic ones. Collins-Kreiner and Kliot (2000) showed that Roman Catholic pilgrims are close to the sacred end of the sacred–secular continuum—they do not blend holiness and secularism during the pilgrimage and ignore all touristic aspects, including facilities and activities. At the same time, Protestants believe in direct contact between faithful and Bible—for them, building a church at a site harms the site's authentic atmosphere (Bowman 1991). Protestant pilgrims want to 'feel Jesus' directly, not by means of intermediaries. They prefer simple, natural places (such as the Sea of Galilee and its surroundings) to elaborate, artificial sites (such as churches), because they believe in the spiritual aspect of the pilgrimage,

not in its physical aspect. In addition, Protestant pilgrims are interested in non-religious activities such as visiting sites which combine religion and history, for example, and getting to know Israel and its residents. They do not ignore the tourist aspect of pilgrimage, use tourist facilities, mix cultural and sporting activities with religious activities, and visit secular and non-Christian sites. In short, Protestant pilgrims are close to the tourism end of the pilgrimage–tourism continuum and to the 'religious tourist' prototype, in the middle of the axis, rather than the pure 'pilgrim' prototype.




Source: Adapted from Collins-Kreiner and Kliot (2000)

Figure 3: Basic discrepancies between the pilgrim's perception and reality

The location of each pilgrim on the scale is personal and subjective—almost infinite sacred–secular combinations lay between extremities. According to Smith (1992), these locations try to reflect the multiple and dynamic motivations of the traveller, whose interests—and ensuing activities—may switch from tourist to

pilgrim and vice versa within the course of the journey, without the individual even being aware of the change. Our continuing work suggests that the different positions identified interpellate different criteria of significance for these different types of actors, and that it would be possible to develop a model for thresholds of tolerance and acceptability. The model would call on the different values embedded in different sites of value generation, values which can range from purely capitalist to wholly sacred (see Figure 4). Even a church may be deemed unsustainable and / or unauthentic enough!

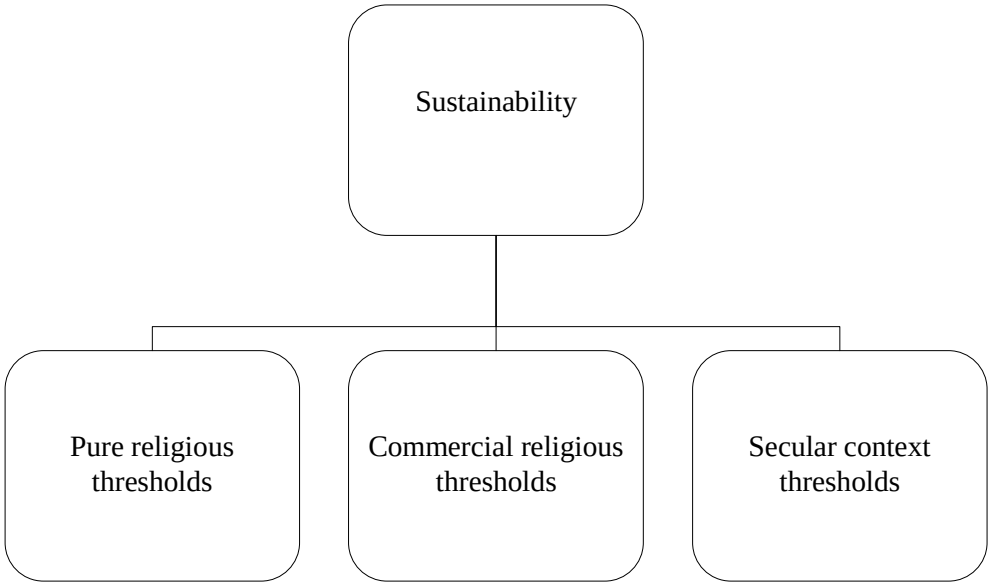



Figure 4: The thresholds of sustainable religious tourism

Contemporary research explores the complicated relationship between pilgrimage, religion, and tourism, including aspects such as economic, political, social, psychological, emotional, and others (M. L. Nolan and S. Nolan 1989; 1992). For example, Eade (1992) explored the interaction between pilgrims and tourists at Lourdes, Rinschede (1992) developed a typology of tourist uses of pilgrimage sites, and Vukonic (1996) examined the connection between tourism and religion. In addition, Rojo (2007) argued that there are no homologous religious audiences for sacred sites. Therefore, the religious tourism trend comprises heterogeneity of demand, individualism in motivation, and, possibly, even a tailor-made, complex, and chaotic response required of providers. It will necessitate both flexibility in response and construction and determination to vouchsafe the religious contents and values of the heritages in such a way as to

appeal to both religious and non-religious visitors. Religious sites are not visited merely by religious tourists, and the motivation to choose a tourist destination is not bound with the religion of the visitor (Rojo 2007: 57).

## Commodification: counting the cost of commerce

According to Vukonic (1998: 11),

> [v]ery often "religious considerations" and religious teaching are ignored and attempts are made to use the large-scale presence of believers in the same way or in a way very similar to the way this is done in traditional tourism. In Christian, especially Catholic pilgrimage centres the religious "border" was crossed long ago in all possible forms of the commercialisation of the religious feelings of visitors.

Commodification—or commoditisation, the possible loss of unique cultural meaning and identity—of religious sites may distress worshippers and pilgrims. This may happen at Uluru, in Central Australia, just as much as at Westminster Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral, in England. Our research explored the paradox of commodification through the benefits and costs to worship at religious sites of special interest (Wiltshier and Clarke 2012).

The sale of goods and services at such sites is widespread and anticipated with some trepidation by visitors, as they enter or leave. Souvenirs, often mass produced well away from the site itself, are regularly purchased and collected by visitors to commemorate a sacred visit, for example to Fatima in Portugal or Lourdes in France. Relics are copied, religious scripts are reproduced, and vernacular and sacred architectural mementoes created in resins and petrochemicals are widely distributed as faithful copies and sold on a large scale. The need for non-worshippers to possess copies of special—even unique—keepsakes could always be questioned. The need for the site to sell mass-produced items to generate surplus for reinvestment in site protection and interpretation could never be questioned—and herein lays the paradox: is it fair, or indeed equitable, to support the production of trinkets in faraway places? Does the purchaser have any notion of whether the income thus generated benefits the sacred site? A balance can be reached between the needs and expectations of all parties involved through compliance with the religious significance of the place and its norms of conduct, through avoidance of over commercialisation and excessive exposure of religious supply elements, and through care for the environment and host community. Religious tourism supply is ready and willing to become an integrant part of sustainable development, as long as it serves to the accomplishment of its spiritual mission (Stănciulescu and Ţîrca 2010: 129).

Visitors and worshippers alike have a duty of care towards both special, revered sites and the guardians of these sites. Consequently, visitors and worshippers can be assured of the importance of making a contribution to offset the cost of their visit through the purchase of all manner of souvenirs. However, visits to such sacred sites of worship and pilgrimage should not be sullied by outright greed—sympathetic businesses and tour operators must consider ethical and responsible practices to support the ongoing management of religious sites. An early souvenir may be the creation and sharing of identity as part of both religion and tourism as journeys. Stausberg (2010) alerted us that, at the crossroads, a pilgrim may well be aligned with the tourist and in no way in an opposed or contrary binary position. He refocused our views of the shared liminal experiences of tourism and religion on a contemporary perspective of congruence and convergence rather than binary opposition. The complex and chaotic characteristics defining the itinerary of the new mass tourist may open a view that permits individualism, differentiation, and otherworldly options in tourism. While not focusing on the chaotic and complex as such, Stausberg (2010: 27) did refer to the 'experience hunter' and the contemporary tourist enjoying a 'travel career'. One of the beauties of his text is that the evidence presented in the narrative is of the tourist as in practice, blurring the boundaries between tourist and ascetic, between traveller and pilgrim. This can be seen as one of the impacts of co-creation within the pilgrimage, religious tourism, and commercial nexus. With the contributions of the participants given full respect in the co-creation of the experiences, it is possible to see how the values emerge, change, and continue around the different constructions. It is possible to find space even within the most commercialised sites where the religious values of pilgrims can be expressed and even reinforced.

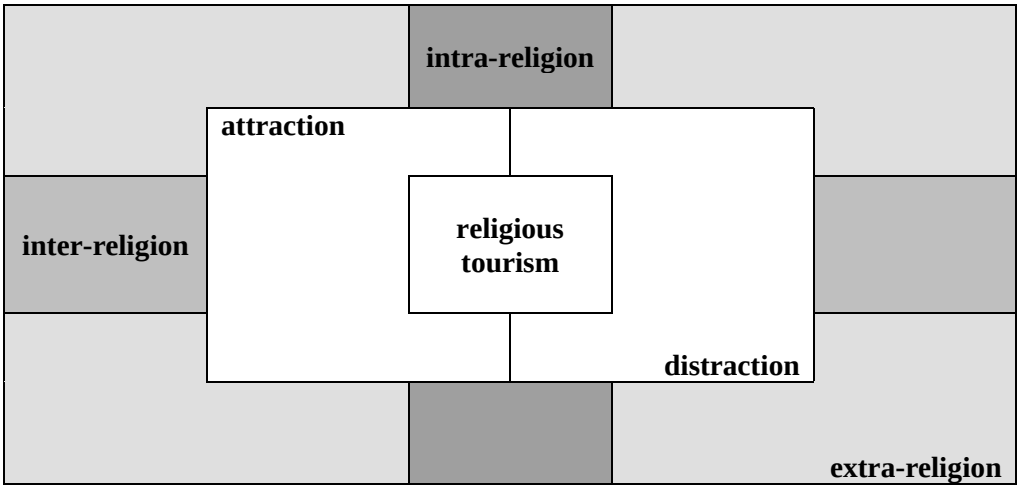
## Meanings and motives in religious tourism

The purpose of this article has been to elaborate the differences between simple, capitalistic values and religious values in tourism development for the further investigation of religious tourism offers, both within the RECULTIVATUR project but also with colleagues in the ATLAS Special Interest Group on Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage (Griffith and Raj 2012). This will help optimise the value of tourism development in a non-conflictual way not only in religious communities but also in tourism communities and host communities. Focussing on the fundamental values of pilgrimage, we argue that the core practices enshrined in pilgrimage are enhanced by linkages to elements from the tourism system. Since not all elements of the tourism system constitute an additional benefit, it is possible to propose a model whereby religious tourism is surrounded by the notion of attraction, derived from the concept familiar to tourism researchers, with amenities,

attractions, and accommodation included (see Figure 5). Moreover, since some of these attractions may not act as actual motivators for pilgrims, we introduce the notion of distraction, defined as those parts of the wider tourism system that do not address directly the core concerns of the pilgrims' quest. The analysis of religious tourism undertaken in and around the RECULTIVATUR project has suggested three sets of factors influencing the development of religious tourism, drawn from three identifiably different sources:

- intra-religious factors, developed from within the religious values of the host's core value system;
- inter-religious factors, identified from the best practices of other religions in order to develop the core experience; and
- extra-religious factors, coming from outside religious value systems, mostly drawing on the sense of development from the tourism industry.

The particular issues of the sustainable recreation of experience and commercialisation of contexts need to be articulated.




Source: Developed from Clarke 2011b.

Figure 5: Clarke's model for the future development of religious tourism

Levi and Kocher (2009) suggested that pilgrims are a distinct category of tourists, with a distinct purpose and a discrete sense of the experience involved. However, there are opportunities for developing integration rather than segregation—for bringing the sense of pilgrimage into the experience domains of other types of tourism—of course, as long as the core values of pilgrimage are

observed and protected. Clarke's model suggests that it is possible to develop religious tourism without destroying the core of the pilgrimage experience.

We have grown accustomed to the idea that pilgrims are concerned solely with the non-material and non-economic elements of the experience. However, there are obvious absences in defining pilgrims outside the consumption relationships found in other forms of tourism. This may no longer be the case, as we find evidence of commercialisation of even the pilgrimage experience. There are examples already of the certification of pilgrimage and of the recognition that this certification is, in itself, part of the valorisation of the experience. Certification is linked not only to the duties of the routes, but also to the wider values enshrined in experiences as well as routes. Implicitly, this involves links with the organisations involved in the certification of sustainable tourism developments.

It is possible to promote sustainable linkages among pilgrims, religious tourists, and other aspects of tourism development, especially with regard to the promotion of religious values. Our research will continue to explore these linkages from the points of view of sustainability, authenticity, involvement, and connectivity. The core values of the pilgrimage suggest that the socio-cultural importance of sustainability is embedded in the developments we discussed—and will perpetuate, if religious tourism is to continue to have meaning and significance within its specific contexts of operation. By working closely with religious communities, tourism communities, and local, host communities, it should be possible to build on the best practices identified to ensure that religious tourism is at the forefront of an emerging sustainable community tourism, with respect to the thresholds we discussed.

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**Alan Clarke** is Associate Professor with the Department of Tourism at the Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pannonia. He arrived in Hungary in 2005, after a career in UK higher education where he had taught Leisure Management and Hospitality, Tourism, and Events at the Universities of Derby, North London (now London Metropolitan), Nottingham, Sheffield, and Sheffield Hallam and where he had worked on Open University programmes by distance learning. Alan was Head of Research at the University of North London and Assistant Dean of the School of Business at the University of Derby. He created the School of Tourism and Hospitality in Buxton, where he continues as a Visiting Professor.

Alan was the first PhD in Sociology at the Open University, where he completed research on the semiology of British television crime series and conducted postdoctoral research on local government finance and the emergence of Thatcherism. His PhD research focussed his attention on the importance of narrative and the significance of the symbolic which have underpinned his work ever since, adding critical perspective to his research. After working in local government policy until his council was abolished, Alan returned to academia, where he successfully supervised 25 PhD students and four MPhil students.

As a management consultant, he worked as management trainer, researcher, and facilitator throughout the UK, as well as in Bulgaria, China, the Dutch Caribbean, Fiji, France, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Italy, Macau, Malaysia, the Maldives, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, and the West Indies. In addition, Alan undertook research and consultancy projects for the public and private sectors in leisure and tourism in Europe, Asia, the Caribbean, and India, and contributed to three major European projects.

Alan's current research focuses on governance, policy, and development in tourism, especially in cultural, sports, and wine tourism. He published over fifty articles and several books, including *Hospitality Business Development* (with Ahmed Hassanien and Crispin Dale). *International Hospitality Management*, his most recent book (with Wei Chen, one of his former PhD students), is a bestseller translated into French and (Brazilian) Portuguese—it will soon be followed up by a second edition.

Alan can be contacted at clarke@turizmus.uni-pannon.hu, at the Department of Tourism, Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pannonia.