Value creation in the **Cultural Routes** of the European Council through the design of **military tourism** products

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Abstract | The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (C.R.C.E.) certify itineraries with relevance for their quality and distinction when managing and recovering the cultural heritage of the different destinations.

One of the main purposes of these routes is to achieve sustainable tourism by the use of cultural tourism, which involves society as a whole and attributes value to the European historical heritage.

Military tourism is a typology of tourism that meets all the criteria that the Council of Europe seeks in these routes. Many of them boost a strong historical base which may help the design of innovative proposals, in line with the current requirements of travellers, increasingly interested in having meaningful experiences during their holiday time.

The main objective of this research is to implement military tourism products as innovative and sustainable tools for the development of certified destinations joined in the C.R.C.E.

This research carried out a review of secondary data sources of military tourism as a development tool in different destinations. The results show that some military tourism actions can provide innovation to the local tourism systems. Military tourism is confirmed as an expression of tourism, capable of offering quality products to enrich the tourism supply of the destinations that have interesting tourism resources. Museums and cultural events as re-enactments add value to C.R.C.E. management network.

Keywords | Cultural Routes, military tourism, tourism management, value creation

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1. Introduction

The Council of Europe, as a tourism-enhancing body in the European territory, launched the C.R.C.E. model in 1987. The basis of the project is the heritage and the routes that connect different European destinations (Hernández, 2011). This strategic cooperation pursues the tourism development and is made visible through a certification awarded by the European Council to all those destinations that join together as a network for the tourism development of common heritages (Council of Europe, 2015).

This kind of tourism networks require a specific management model defined as network management model which differ from the traditional destination model. The network management models are suitable for destinations in tourist circuits that are defined by the dispersion of the experiences in different destinations or around one main destination. The destinations network models are similar to the destination's portfolio. The main difference is that the network management models have an integrating element, the C.R.C.E, in this case, which brings value and visibility to the destinations, adding something more to model of the destination's portfolio (de la Ballina, 2017).

Therefore, the network management model incorporates a series of entities that coordinates tourism resources in different destinations. There is no central destination, nor hierarchy among the destinations of the network. All of them acquire the same relevance and development around an integrating axis.

The heritage promotion of destinations is made following the principles of cultural tourism that focuses at fostering the local historical, heritage and cultural resources (Graf & Popesku, 2016; Pinto, 2011; Richards, 2011). Within cultural tourism, these networks seek to specialize and differentiate their offer in order to be in line with the demands of a modern consumer, looking for high quality supply (Castro, 2005). In this context, military tourism can be seen as a new and effective development model.

From a theoretical perspective, the significance of military tourism in Europe has been proven by an incipient number of researches that analyses different supply and initiatives of this kind (Folgado-Fernández et al., 2016; Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2017; Martins et al., 2018; Pinto et al., 2014).

This research develops a contextualization of military tourism as a proper tourism typology for the development of cultural and sustainable products that the C.R.C.E. networks bring about. The analysis has been carried out by reviewing secondary information sources. The paper is structured in five sections. The first paragraph introduces the main subject and explains the relevance of the paper. The second paragraph describes its background showing two important dimensions: the networking management model of the C.R.C.E., and the military tourism as a tourist-cultural development tool in different destinations. The third section is dedicated to the methodology. The fourth paragraph analyses the main results obtained and propose some inputs of military tourism resources and products. The last section offers the significant conclusions achieved and defines the limitations and future research lines to follow in the future.

2. Background

The literature review has been carried out in accordance with two criteria: i) the conceptualization of a tourism management model which is the result of an institutional initiative such as the C.R.C.E., made up of public and private entities from various destinations; and ii) the need to limit the research object to the development of supply, initiatives and experiences in the field of military tourism.

2.1. Tourism destination network: The C.R.C.E. case

The unification in different fields was one of the main aims of the creation of the European Union as a territory without frontiers. The C.R.C.E. became a cooperation project between countries and cultures in 1987. This project tries to look for the identification of the Europeans with the Union through a common heritage (Morère, 2012; Zabbini, 2012).

The conference "Routes as a cultural heritage", held in Madrid in 1994, developed the tourism concept of the Cultural Routes. The heritage routes are defined by the Committee as a set of tangible elements prompting by exchanges and transversal dialogue between the destinations (World Heritage Committee, 1994).

The geographical scope and area of influence of the C.R.C.E. are wide, covering more than one tourism destination. For this reason, these routes and itineraries must opt for joint management (Majdoub, 2010). This touristic management has been often defined as Multi-destination itinerary (Zabbini, 2012), or as destination network (Morère, 2012). This last expression indicates a set of different actors and entities (private and public), at different levels, that include different local populations developing a common project with a specific marketing goal. They look for positioning the destinations in the tourism market by joining efforts and working together at an international level. This certification gives visibility to the destinations involved; it is endorsed by various committees and regularly controlled in their proper functioning. All these measures help to create an image of quality for all the certified routes (Berti, 2013; Hernández, 2011; Morère, 2012; Pattanaro & Pistocchi, 2016; Zabbini, 2012).

In 2010, after the Lisbon treaty, some authors started to define the C.R.C.E. as a development tool for the European destinations that combines cultural, territorial and heritage elements with the aim of giving more relevance to tourism as an economy enhancer (Berti, 2013; Morère, 2012; Zabbini, 2012). Also, it is relevant to develop these tools on an interdisciplinary and transversal basis in order to accomplish the Sustainable Development Goals, which are beneficial for both territories and communities. Some of these goals are to downsize the poverty, to assure peace, security and social inclusion and to foster local economic growth (Cardia, 2018). The creation of tourism products, the synergies between tourism and culture and the conservation of heritage are some of the lines of action demanded by the Council of Europe in order to give the certification to the thirty-eight existing C.R.C.E.

Within the legislation that regulates these certifications, the resolution num. 67 of the Committee of Ministers (2013), establishes the rules of granting the C.R.C.E and the different fields of action that these routes must develop in order to receive the certification. Among them, it is worth mentioning the establishment of projects that allow cultural tourism and sustainable development through exchanges between destinations, active participation, cooperation and the search for European identity at a national and regional level. This cooperation networks try to implicate all the stakeholders (Committee of Ministers, 2013).

In order to implement these fields of action, it is necessary to establish strategic guidelines. One of them is the creation of products of different tourism typologies (cultural, historical, gastronomic, etc.) for the development of the C.R.C.E. (Martorell, 2003). These products are based on specific objectives set by the Council of Europe (protection, cultural diffusion, historical dissemination, etc.) for their development within the management model.

2.2. Potential of military tourism for developing the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

According to Hernández (2011), the creation of the C.R.C.E. is based on two motivational aspects capable of initiating tourists' flows to various destinations: the heritage singularities that must be protected and disseminated and the new interests for specialized contents. Furthermore, the C.R.C.E. are closely linked to the term of experientiality (Zabbini, 2012).

Within the thirty-eight C.R.C.E. routes the certification has been granted according to different heritages: architectural, artistic and historical. The C.R.C.E. talks about different typologies of tourism to create products along these itineraries such as sustainable tourism, slow tourism, heritage tourism, etc. (Cardia, 2018; Morère, 2006, 2012). However, the C.R.C.E has to be seen as a cultural tourism product designer, as also promoted by the same Council of Europe (World Heritage Committee, 1994).

The C.R.C.E. has been classified in very different ways: according to their nature, their subject matter, their area of influence, the tourist motivations, etc. While some researchers have defined them as historical paths, limiting them to routes with a unique and authentic historical basis (Hernández, 2011), other authors define them as the physical functional layout where products and services can be created (Morère, 2012).

The conference "Routes as a cultural heritage" held in Madrid, in 1994, classified the heritage routes in several areas: religious, commercial, military or sports, among others (World Heritage Committee, 1994). For this reason, the C.R.C.E. also have been classified according to the same criteria (López, 2006). At present, nine out of thirty-eight routes declared as Cultural Routes by the Council of Europe are related, in some way, to the military theme, emphasising different aspects such as the stages of a war, important military figures and even the buildings promoted on these routes (Table 1).

The main objective of the C.R.C.E. is to outline competitive products with an experiential content that can suit any kind of public (Council of Europe, 2015).

Table 1 | Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe with military topic

Cultural Routes	Year of the first certification
Viking Routes	1993
Via Habsburg	2014
Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route	2015
European Routes of Emperor Charles V	2015
Destination Napoleon	2015
Fortified Towns of the Grande Region	2016
Via Charlemagne	2018
Iron Curtain Trail	2019
Liberation Route Europe	2019

Source: Own elaboration

Military tourism is a typology of tourism that develops the conservation of heritage by converting unique resources, linked to a territory and population, into products. The main aim is to promote tourism and sustainability of the territories involving public and private entities (Pinto et al., 2014). Within military tourism, there are several actions that can be carried out related to different areas (battlefields, military culture, military architecture, etc.). The research analyses how some destinations transform heritage and cultural resources into competitive tourism products

to serve as an example and support for their development within the C.R.C.E. This is an emerging tourism typology which finds its mayor expressions in some British and Portuguese destinations, where military tradition is a highly relevant tourism resource (Pinto et al., 2014).

Different researchers categorised military tourism as subtype of heritage tourism (Ray et al., 2006) or cultural tourism (Carneiro et al., 2019) without consensus among them. And some others classify war and death heritage resources as dark tourism elements (Biran & Hyde, 2013; Dunkley et al., 2011; Lemelin et al., 2013). The main different between both tourism typologies is the tourist motivations to visit the destination (Pinto et al., 2014). Dark tourism is focused on nostalgia and pain and military tourism is based on educational and identity goals. Both typologies can share heritage resources but the product design is different (Çakar, 2018).

3. Research methodology

This research carried out a descriptive and exploratory analysis on the development of military tourism supply as an expression of cultural tourism, in order to provide the C.R.C.E. with innovative proposals and contents.

Graph 1 | Model of the case of study
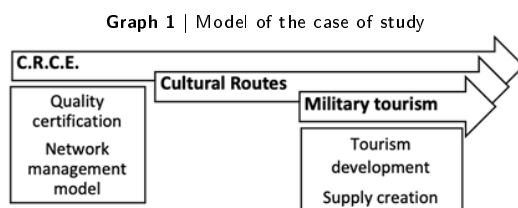
Source: Own elaboration

The model describes, in a theoretical-conceptual way, different aspects related to the tourism development of the C.R.C.E. (Graph 1).

It makes use of secondary data sources such as the various declarations, resolutions and official publications of the Council of Europe which regulate the functioning of this certification. In addition, the research carries out an exhaustive review developed using academic articles on military, cultural and heritage issues. Web of Science (W.O.S.) and Scopus have been the main databases used to reach the whole literature of reference. The keywords employed for the search were: Cultural Itinerary, tourism development, military tourism, battlefields, re-enactment, living history and a combination of them.

The main objective of this research is to implement military tourism as innovative and sustainable tools for the development of certified destinations joined in the C.R.C.E.

To achieve this main objective, a series of specific objectives are proposed: i) to study the value creation capacity of the C.R.C.E. model, ii) to identify the potential of military tourism in the tourism development of destinations certified by C.R.C.E., iii) to propose military tourism products for developing cultural resources in different destinations.

4. Proposal of military tourism products in the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

The C.R.C.E. destinations have different resources that have the potential to be developed. This potential is based on the tourist's motivation, local services supply or regional institutions interest. Commercialization is the fundamental step for converting tourism resources in tourism products (Moreno-Lobato et al., 2020).

The design of military tourism products adds value to the heritage and cultural resources in the C.R.C.E. The previous sections highlighted the potential of military tourism in the C.R.C.E. and their suitability to meet the objectives set by the Council of Europe as strategic lines of development.

This section is structured in two main subjects. The first paragraph presents the tourism resources as a good that can be designed with the aim of create tourism products. The second paragraph shows different actions carried out in various destinations for the development of military tourism. Among them, special attention is deserved by those enhancing experientiality and characterized by historical rigour of their tourism products. These aspects turn them into high quality proposals (Castro, 2005; Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2019). Thus, the most outstanding ones have been selected and described in detail in the following sections.

4.1. Potential military tourism resources

Some routes and itineraries have potential capability for developing tourism products. The different goods associated to a destination are the basis for managing and creating tourism products (Torres, 2006). Nowacki & Kruczek (2020) highlight that the context and the place are important in co-creation of experiences in heritage tourism. Battlefields and civil constructions could be the context and place, and they are studied as the most relevant military tourism resources in the European market.

4.1.1. Battlefield

The tourist interested in visiting the battlefields has been studied by different researchers in various destinations. Authors like Winter (2011) in Belgium, Van Der Merwe (2014) in South Africa, Yeneroglu & Aykac (2016) in Turkey, or Kokkranikal, et al. (2016) in Ireland. These researchers explored different case studies and their common conclusion is that, in the European market, the battlefield tourist is a domestic traveller, being the German, English and French tourists the most interested ones in this kind of products. Outside Europe, the tourists fondest in the visit to battlefields are the Americans. The sociodemographic profile identified shows a consumer with a high educational level and an age over 40 (Kokkranikal et al., 2016; Van Der Merwe, 2014; Winter, 2011; Yeneroglu & Aykac, 2016). Some other researchers try to segment the type of visitor distinguishes between pilgrims and tourists depend on their motivation (Clarke et al., 2011; Winter, 2011).

Bornarel et al. (2020) and Çakar (2018) develop an opinion analysis using TripAdvisor in French and Turkish battlefields. This website is a benchmark for opinions all around the world. Both outline the impact of emotions and nostalgia in these battlefields related to the First and Second World Wars.

All these researchers highlight the relevance of authenticity of tangible and intangible element for creating identification and motivation in tourists.

Battlefields are identified with the destination that is, being in a specific territory, a competitive advantage to develop military tourism experiences in a destination (Lemelin et al., 2013). This resource can involve another landscape subtypes like trenches, memorials or forts (Bornarel et al., 2020). These battlefields also imply local protection of the environment due to their exclusive nature (Ramírez & Jiménez, 2012).

Tourists' motivations for visiting a battlefield can be varied. According to Van Der Merwe (2014) this resource does not generate, by itself, enough motivation, however, it can be developed some different products like tours, re-enactment events or cultural visits.

4.1.2. Civil constructions

Military architecture can be classified in civil-military and religious-military architecture (Rodríguez, 2013). But this type of architecture is wide and can include memorials, monuments, castles, forts or cemeteries.

Dunkley et al. (2011) develop an analysis of different constructions based on war and conflict but using dark tourism view. Winter (2011) study the motivations of the tourists for visiting war cemeteries. The results show the relevance of national proud and familiar memories as a motivational element. Some other authors develop holocaust memorials as a dark tourism resource, but they also emphasise the use of emotion and education as interesting variables for developing tourism products (Liyanage et al., 2015; Nawijn & Fricke, 2015; Nawijn et al., 2018).

The usages of these constructions have been diverse. The forts and castles are characterized by the fact that they are managed by the Government and Public Administrations, which have taken advantage from them for years as museums or by integrating them into the tourism offer, as hotels or restaurants (Rodríguez, 2015).

In the Iberian Peninsula exists the case of *Paradores* and *Pousadas*, which are public buildings used for accommodation services. The use of these unique buildings makes these accommodations particularly attractive. Castle of *Óbidos* (Portugal) or Monterreal Fort (Spain) are some examples (Rodríguez, 2015).

Similarly, some Spanish regions, such as Extremadura, developed a network of publicly funded accommodations, the *Red de Hospederías*, that includes unique religious, civil and industrial buildings (Sánchez et al., 2012). The private sector is also committed to the rehabilitation of unique buildings for tourism development, mainly hotels and restaurants (*Vila Galé* Hotels in Portugal or NH Collection Hotels).

In their touristic development these constructions do generate an added value to the tourism experience. The historical remains housed in these buildings are generally safeguarded; therefore, they provide the buildings with a special and unique characterization which represents a supporting element for the articulation of singular tourism products.

4.2. Military tourism products

Managers put value on these resources and offer tourism packages with different services for creating tourism products. Cultural Routes are tourism products on its own, but they are also the basis of the development of other products (Graf & Popesku, 2016). In this paragraph is analysed some of the most relevant products that could be developed in the C.R.C.E.: museums and cultural events which are set in some others military destinations.

4.2.1. Museums

Heritage and history are educational elements that are traditionally developed on tourism area. Expositions or museums are products that bring closer history and tourists (Allan & Attal, 2016).

Museums are cultural tools for scape, investigation and knowledge (Allan & Attal, 2016). Ritchie et al. (2011) describe museums as complete experiential tourism products. Museums have to include emotional and cognitive elements for the immersion of visitors (Del Chiappa et al., 2014). Museums generate interest and can also be very diverse due to the transversality of the military field. This includes musealizing the battlefields themselves and the specific events that take place on them, the clothing, weapons, strategies and attacks, and even the participation of the local population and their customs in the development of these events (Ramírez & Jiménez, 2012; Reid, 1998).

Military museums are spaces to preserve and exhibit objects to history and traditions at the military level (Reid, 1998). The musealization of history involves bringing together equipment, events and various elements of interest to a specialized public (Ramírez & Jiménez, 2012).

The motivational axis of the visit to these very particular historical museums opens up a range of options: from the military motivated by memory,

the general public moved by education or tourist seeking popular knowledge (Martín, 2005; Reid, 1998). Gieling & Ong (2016) stand out the relevance of intrinsic motivation as national identification, education and entertainment.

The challenge in museums is creating experiences that involve tourists emotionally through activities and interactive tools like virtual reality, social media or QR codes (Alabau et al., 2019; Del Chiappa et al., 2014).

4.2.2. Cultural events: re-enactments

Getz (2008) classify cultural events in eight categories including cultural celebrations, politics events, educational and scientific events or recreational events among others. This author support that the relevance of these types of products in tourism arises from the exclusive spatio-temporal characteristics of them. In some C.R.C.E. are developed different types of events: commemorations, political events or educational seminaries.

Peregrination is a cultural event that is developed in some C.R.C.E. as a tourism product based on spiritual and personal goals (Clarke et al., 2011). But the most experiential military tourism events are re-enactments. Historical re-enactments are understood as cultural events for the creation of an experience that involves both the population and the territory and all the resources that the location can provide (Del Barco, 2009; Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2017). The main objective that the managers of the re-enactments propose is to revitalize the history and bring it closer to the tourist (Agnew, 2007).

Authenticity, originality, interaction and rigour are the elements that tourist appraise the most. Historical re-enactments are divulgation tools that offer emotional and entertainment tourism activities (Carneiro et al., 2019).

Tourists have been segmented in based of the emotions in three re-enactment tourists' profiles: apathetic, drivers and influencers, and satisfied and enthusiastic. This segmentation shows the different motivations, immersion and evaluation of the market (Carneiro et al., 2016).

As well as the rest of the tourism products proposed, the historical re-enactments can offer different typologies with diverse objectives. A distinction is made between purely promotional re-enactments and those that are more rigorous and of higher quality (Ray et al., 2006; Rojas, 2018). "Living history" is a particular type of re-enactment based on military events. This typology is characterized by a real history that involves local population and look for rigour and authenticity in a destination (Ray et al., 2006). These tourism products are made up of various elements such as accommodation in addition to the re-enactment experience itself. This is why we can speak of a complete product that attracts highly specialized tourists, which in turn requires a detailed planning, historical rigour and tailor-made services (Agnew, 2007; Del Barco, 2009; Rojas, 2018). The design of this product could make the destinations more dynamics and improve the destination image (Carneiro et al., 2016).

5. Conclusion, limitations and future research

The C.R.C.E. European certification criteria specify the use of tourism as a tool for the development and cooperation of destinations with the aim of creating a unified European feeling based on a common heritage. Military tourism brings together territory, history and population and can create new tourism proposals based on historical and heritage resources of relevance at a European level.

The management and control model of the C.R.C.E., and above all, their re-certification every three years, creates a perception of quality at a promotional level and a need to outline quality tourist experiences based on existing resources in the dif-

ferent destinations involved in the routes.

Military tourism is a typology of tourism that contributes to the sustainable development of populations. It helps to restructure the supply by focusing on the resources and heritage of the destination. The population is part of the tourist actions that are developed to generate quality experiences. Finally, the territory is totally linked to the development of this type of tourism since the singular constructions and battlefields are endogenous resources of these territories, just like its history.

Cultural events, as historical re-enactments, or the museumization of important events are actions that create a tourism supply for a very specific consumer's profile, respectful and loyal to this type of experiences. These actions give value to different territories that, through a network management model, are tools for the creation of competitive tourism products for the destinations linked by their heritage. This competitive advantage have to be grasp by the tourism managers and suppliers for developing specialized products for the segmented target groups with different motivations. Military tourism is one of the ideal types of tourism for the creation of value in networks of destinations, involving different territories with a common objective and history.

From a theoretical perspective, it can be concluded that this topic is incipient, and the scientific community shows a relevant interest in the exploration of military tourism as a promising and innovative tourism practice, which is proved by the increasing number of contributions on the topic published in the last years (Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2019). So far, the military tourism initiatives that received major attention are the one taking place in Portugal and Great Britain. On the other hand, military tourism actions have been studied and explored from other research fields indirectly linked to tourism, such as history, architecture or geography.

It is necessary to study the consumers who enjoy these tourism products, profiling them with regard to their motivations and detecting those aspects that differentiate them from the general public.

The economic and social viability of military tourism is a germane element to consider when looking for the application of concrete actions at the destinations. This type of tourism has been implemented in various destinations, mainly Portuguese and British that have a significant military tradition. An example of this development is the tourism marketing networks and the development of existing offerings.

The main limitation of this research is that the C.R.C.E. is very little explored in scientific literature, so it was necessary to recur to institutional sources of information, in order to outline a proper theoretical contextualization of the topic.

Future lines of study are identified as those based on the marketing of military tourism products, the study of the tourist profile and its impact on the territory. Moreover, it would be interesting to explore the network management models, particularly the C.R.C.E., as a management and certification tool for the development of various destinations following a common tourism strategy.

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