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# City as a Museum: Issues & Challenges of Cultural Tourism in Saint Petersburg

Shima Hosseininasab[a]*, Ahmad Feyz[b]

*[a]MA. Architecture, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran*
*[b]MA. Architecture, Faculty of Architecture & Urban Planning, University of Shahid Beheshti, Tehran, Iran*
*[a]Email: sh.hosseininasab@ut.ac.ir*
*[b]Email: ah.feiz@mail.sbu.ac.ir*

**Abstract**

Cultural tourism has been approached from both positive and negative perspectives. In a city with the rich cultural background, the city's growth is mainly considered as a result of the growth in the tourism industry, but if the city's tourism carrying capacity exceeds its permissible limit, the daily life of local residents will be disturbed. This paper illustrates the need for studying local host's perception of cultural tourism development and inspects the host's tourism potential and local competence in the city of Saint Petersburg. The transition of the city's active role to the passive role will result in city's museification and its transformation into a museified or so-called Venetian city. In this case, the city loses its function for its permanent residents and turns into a museum. The feeling of being part of a holiday culture will deteriorate the local host's lifestyle, quality of life, and life satisfaction in the long-term period.

*Keywords:* Cultural Tourism; Hosts' Attitude; Tourism Carrying Capacity; Local Competence; Museification; Quality of Life; Saint Petersburg.

## 1. Introduction

Tourism contribution to the positive experiences of both tourists and local residents is one of the main issues of today's communities [1].

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* Corresponding author.

Although most of the papers concerning tourism refer to tourism as an advocate of the local host, it should be noticed that in many circumstances what seems to be good for a tourist is not actually good for a local host. Ko & Stewart in 2002 have stated the importance of tourism development discussions in both positive and negative aspects at a local level. Vargas, Plaza, & Porras in 2007 cited in [2] mention that from the seventies to the current day, the resident's attitudes toward the impact of tourism began to draw more attention. Since then, the scope of studies in this area has expanded and attempts have been made to analyze host communities' perceptions and responses to tourism development [3]. Some of the variables affecting tourism perception such as local's attitudes could be discussed on a sociocultural plane [2]. Studies concerned with the sociocultural perception have reported negative attitudes from the local host [4]. So cultural tourism due to its interlaced sociocultural nature, joining cultural destinations and people, has the most significant effect on the local host's perception of tourism development consequences.

There are many variables that impact the resident's attitudes (economy dependence, level of tourism development, attachment to the community, level of knowledge, type of tourist, level of income & …) [2] which allow orienting and reinforcing the alternative policies in tourism development. The aforementioned variables could take part in both positive and negative tourism development policies but when these factors engage in the sociocultural plane, they become capable of putting the local residents in an anti-tourism stance which is pertinent to the well-being stance and quality of life (QoL) of the community within the presence of tourists. In today's world where survival is no longer an issue, QoL stands out as a factor for a more satisfying life [5]. Two terms of QoL and life satisfaction are used interchangeably by the scholars [6] but what actually brings the anti-tourism stance relates to life satisfaction which encompasses three main categories: family, society, and self. In this regard, the social factor (drown in cultural tourism practices) acts as a threat to local residents and it may influence the other two factors in long-term.

The aforesaid values (QoL & Life satisfaction) are considered to be the driving forces behind the anti-tourism stance. When considering certain tourism practices, usually the host community is neglected and the outcome may not benefit the local host [1]. The local residents are the people who are exposed to the side effects of tourism development and they have to be at the core analysis of every destination planner [7]. By bypassing the social factor and not taking the local host into consideration, although the connection between cultural tourism development and better QoL for indigenous people has been profoundly analyzed and accepted, the desirable effects for enhancing the living condition of local residents are not always observed. But it is also worth noting that the impact of tourism on local hosts is highly depended on time, place [2] , and the cultural background of residents. Regarding the above-mentioned values, tourism may provoke deterioration of the local host's lifestyle, Qol, and life satisfaction depending on the type of host. Therefore, this paper has placed its emphasis on local community that is pertinent to the side effects of the cultural tourism industry and it advances the issues and challenges of cultural tourism in Saint Petersburg including its core interrelation of culture and tourism.

## 2. Literature Review

The broad scope of studies pertain to this area indicate the significance of appreciating local residents' perception. Table 1 illustrates the most critical studies conducted in years to analyze the host's attitude toward

tourism.

**Table 1:** literature review of local residents' perception of tourism

| Title | Date | Issue in question |
|---|---|---|
| Resident's attitude toward the impacts of tourism | 2015 | A discussion on the limitations of the methods and theories developed for the study of residents' attitudes toward tourism. |
| Residents' perceptions of community tourism impacts | 2005 | An investigation of residents' perceptions of tourism's impact on communities by collecting data via a statewide survey and using social exchange theory. |
| Host perceptions of tourism: A review of the research | 2014 | An argument about drawbacks and limitations in the research area, including a narrow case study base, a dependence on quantitative methods, a focus on perceptions as opposed to responses, and the exclusion of the tourist from the majority of the research. |
| Residents′ perceptions toward tourism development: A factor-cluster approach | 2015 | Classification of residents into separate groups based on their perceptions of the impacts of tourism development on their community as they relate to economic, social, cultural, environmental, and public service factors. |
| From tourist motivations to tourist satisfaction | 2013 | An exploration of the concept of push and pull satisfaction and its relation with a uni-dimensional measure of satisfaction. |
| A structural equation model of residents' attitudes for tourism development | 2002 | A test on the structural equation model between residents' perceived tourism impacts and attitudes toward host community by using five latent constructs and nine path hypotheses based upon 732 mailback questionnaires. |
| Destination competitiveness and tourism development in Russia:Issues and challenges | 2017 | A discussion on issues that have affected and that will continue to affect sustainable tourism development in Russia. |
| Tourism and wellbeing | 2017 | An exploration of relationships between diverse terminologies and perspectives as well as the ways in which hedonic and eudaimonic well-being can be derived from tourism experiences. |
| Quality of life (QOL) and well-being research in tourism | 2016 | A probe on quality of life and well-being of residents of host communities and tourists. |

## 3. Culture and Tourism

Culture has become one of the arch-motivators of tourism in certain destinations [8]. It has no universally accepted definition, however, most of the interpretations consider culture as a mediator between the man-made world (products) and the world we live in (tangible and intangible values) [5] . Cultural tourism is no exception in this regard [9]. World Tourism Organization (WTO) has delineated cultural tourism as the movement of

people towards cultural destinations away from their current residence to obtain required information, experience and satisfy their cultural needs [10]. Therefore, this type of tourism sector puts a high societal value on "products" such as art, architecture, heritage sites, events and their enactment [11,12] and its enhancement contributes to wide spectrum of life stages in community categorized as neighborhood, local, national and international [13]. Mathielson and Wall in1982 cited in [5] have defined culture in three main types: inert culture including products such as architecture, everyday culture mainly known as lifestyle and enacted culture such as traditional events. Cultural tourism can influence and get influenced by these three factors in the short and long-term analysis. Figure 1. demonstrates the modification of Mathielson and Wall's perception of culture in its categories and subdivisions. This paper seeks to define and highlight the issues and challenges of each subdivision bespoken in figure 1.
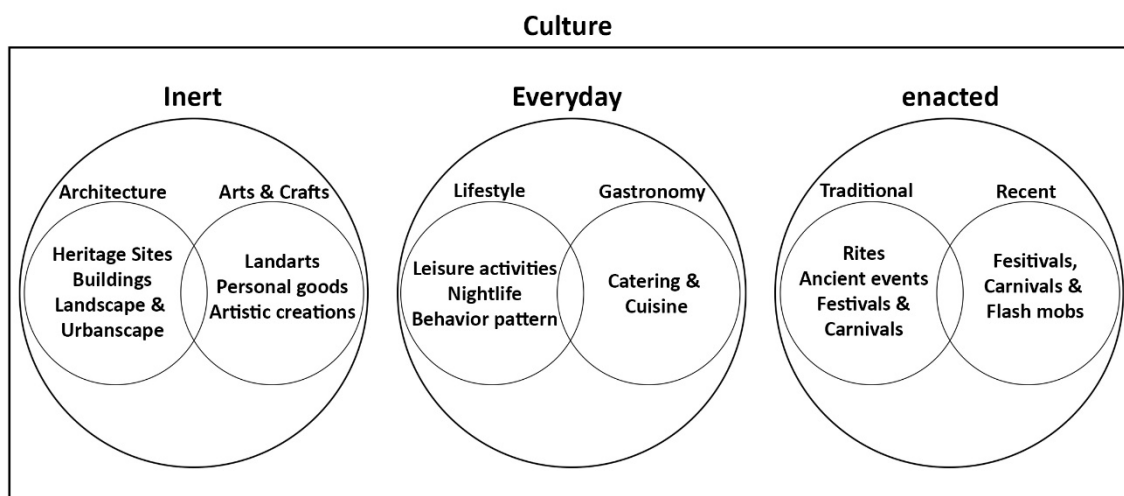


**Figure 1:** Modification of Mathielson and Wall's perception of Culture

## 4. The Role of Cultural Tourism in City Museification

All subdivisions forming culture play a part in formulating tourism but architecture on an inert scale has a ripple effect on other subdivisions which can influence cultural tourism immensely. Although the connection between architecture and tourism is not applicable to every city, architecture can be considered as a strong means of cultural tourism since it incessantly strikes a balance among the in-situ image of the place, the city dwellers, and tourists [14]. Valorization and promotion of architecture as an object (a product our time for its users) and an urban collection (tourism attraction and an important ingredient of urban space) should be taken into account [12]. Since the cultural and social composition within the city is something invisible, the close economic and cultural link between architecture and cultural tourism requires a stringent strategy. High-quality architecture ascends the mentioned composition and reinforces the cultural tourism as an economic source of the community. But it could also appear in a vicious cycle of touristification and erosion of daily life values in which the city starts to take a passive role in local resident's life and threatens the well-being stance of the host community. The transition of the city's active role to the passive role results in city museification, commercialization of resident's traditional values, and alterations in city's domain. Tourism activities can impact the cultural cohesion of the local host and provoke a feeling of being part of a so-called holiday culture [15]. So, A prerequisite to hinder the museification is the host's tourism potential and the local competence.

Accordingly, when a territory assumes to become a tourism destination, it requires opting its mission [16] and objective for its sustainable development according to its tourism potential. Since the host-guest interaction is a complicated, multi-dimensional and reciprocity phenomenon [3], Indispensable to the thriving progress in the tourism sector is the balanced and harmonious connection between host community's tourism potential and percentage of the tourism flow.

As mentioned before, the role of the tourism industry in economic growth is undeniable but it cannot be accomplished without a cost [3]. Thus, all destinations need to conduct a research to analyze the effectiveness of their strategies towards tourism sector in seizing opportunities [17] since tourism and society or in other words tourists and locals are in close connection, one forming the other and vice versa [5]. A city dweller brings an identity to the city equal with the built context [14]and the inflow of tourists may cross the quality line of life and result in an inactive cityscape which has a passive role in resident's life. Contemporary sense of events and habits create an active city image [12] that could contribute to sustainable tourism development at the micro and macro scale. Thus, regarding the significant side effects of cultural tourism, it is incumbent on those concerning sustainable tourism to optimize the well-being stance of the host community whilst minimizing the costs of tourism development [3].

## 5. Side Effects of Cultural Tourism in Saint Petersburg

The profile tourism type of St. Petersburg is cultural tourism [9]. So for the better insight into the community's response to cultural tourism, the target location in this research is St. Petersburg which was founded in May 1703 and named the cultural capital in the Russian Federation [18]. There is a stable tendency for an increase in the number tourists in St. Petersburg and in past few years, the cultural component has been a prominent part of the tourism industry in the city [9] . Accordingly, international tourism to Russia has experienced double-digit growth but sustainable tourism development has not been taken into account as a major issue [17]. With the dramatic growth of the cultural tourism industry in St. Petersburg, a handful of the population have benefited from the economic progress and are prone to benefit from the inflow of tourists in the short term. In long-term review, indigenous people have also undergone changes in adapting to the needs of the tourists, as many of these changes may have taken place in the subconscious and have become inseparable from their lives.

The phrases called as "Open air museum" [19] and "Exposed art gallery" [12] have become St. Petersburg's known nicknames over the years. Theses phrases transfer a high level of museified places in the city. By transition of the city to "Open air museum", cultural tourism commences to bring impediments in the host community's lifestyle and it directly affects the QoL of the local residents. When discussing tourism industry, cities growth is mainly considered as a result of the growth in the tourism industry, but if the city's tourism capacity exceeds its permissible limit, the daily life of local residents is disturbed. The city loses its function for its permanent residents and turns into a museum.

The clear example of this phenomenon is Venice in which local residents disapprove any further tourism development. Many claim that the balance of the resident's perceptions of the merits and demerits (costs) of tourism shape the local's satisfaction in this industry [3]. The cultural drift in Venice has caused the semantic drift of the term "Venetian". The modern meaning is radically negative and it does not seem as an advocate of

either the city or local residents. Horowitz ( 2017) cited that the city is invaded by tourists and there is a high risk of becoming a "Disneyland on the Sea" where the soundtrack of the city is the wheels of rolling luggage thumping up against the steps of footbridges as phalanxes of tourists march over the city's canals... and Hotels have replaced homes. In this scenario the costs outweigh the benefits, the enthusiasm for its enhancement becomes tempered and it results in host's dissatisfaction. As Venetians use the sentence "We are sick of tourists" [20], the slogan "It's our city" [18] is lately a noticeable slogan used by Russian preservationists in Saint Petersburg. However, slogans per se mean little if they are not followed by stringent actions and a coherent and consistent vision for the future. As a result of such conflicts between actions and words, cities mostly experience significant sociocultural crises. That is to say, the majority of Saint Petersburg's people have declared that the city is becoming less livable and unwelcoming to its inhabitants through the lack of long-term planning [18] and the menace of QoL deterioration.

## 6. Field studies' results

Given the assertion made in section 5, a questionnaire including 16 questions has been made to identify the local hosts' perception of tourism in the current condition (C.C) in comparison to future condition (F.C) with a dramatic increase in tourists' inflow.

 The survey is composed of questions about the status of Russian arts and crafts, historical buildings and their function, public-communal spaces, urban infrastructure (transportation, housing, etc.), people's lifestyle and daily life, behavior patterns in dealing with tourists, local foods and cuisine, and enactment of rites and rituals in both current condition and future condition.

For each question, a rating scale (0 to 10) is used for the facile connection between the respondent and the questionnaire. The number 0 illustrates the total negative impact (the least point) and 10 displays the total positive impact (the most point).
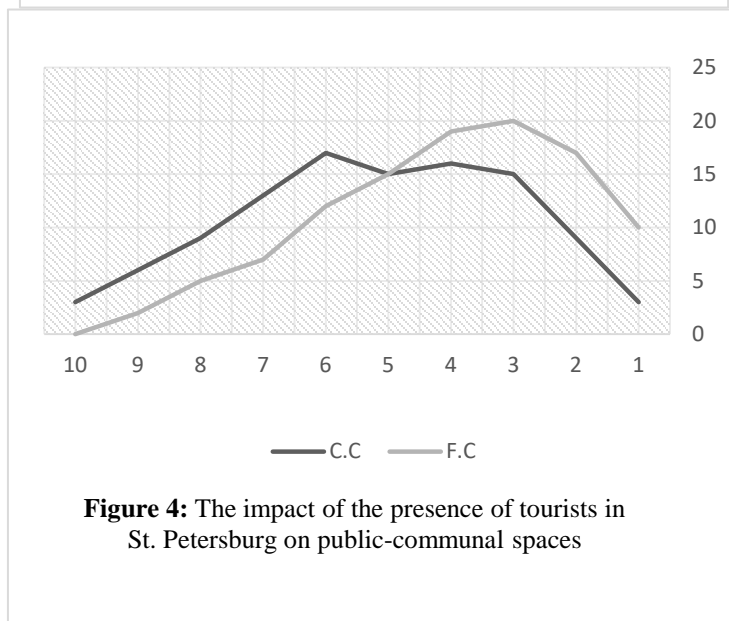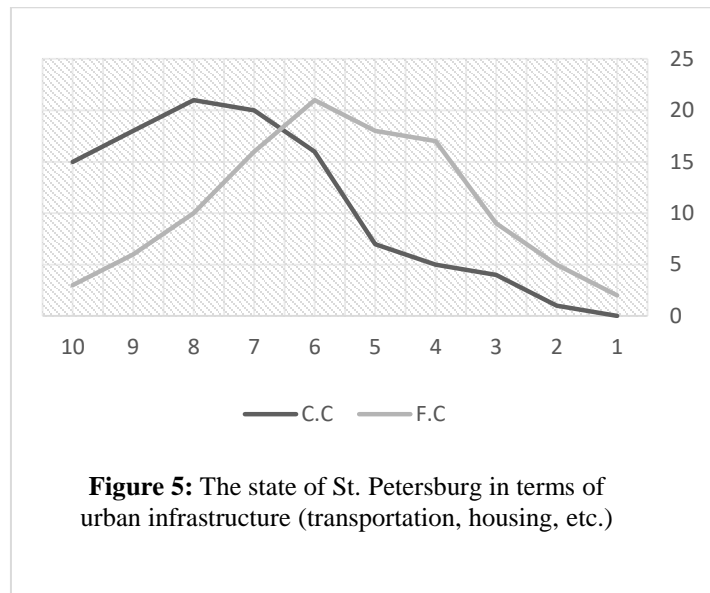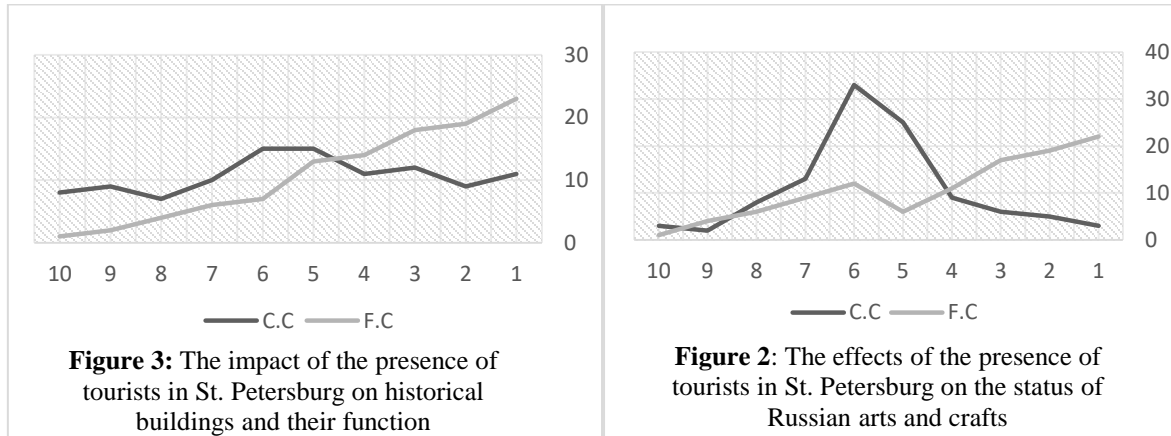
Although the research has reached its aim and the following line charts are the results conducted from the questionnaires meticulously, it is also imperative to address some unavoidable limitations throughout this study. First, because of the time limit, the research was conducted on a small size of the population.
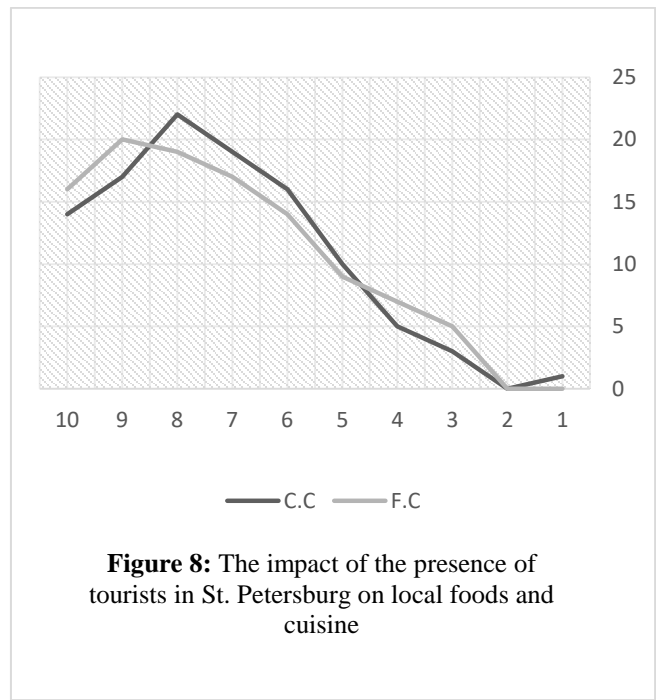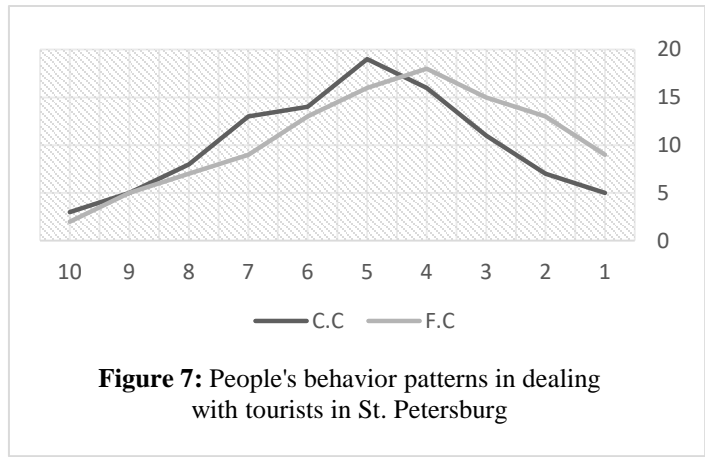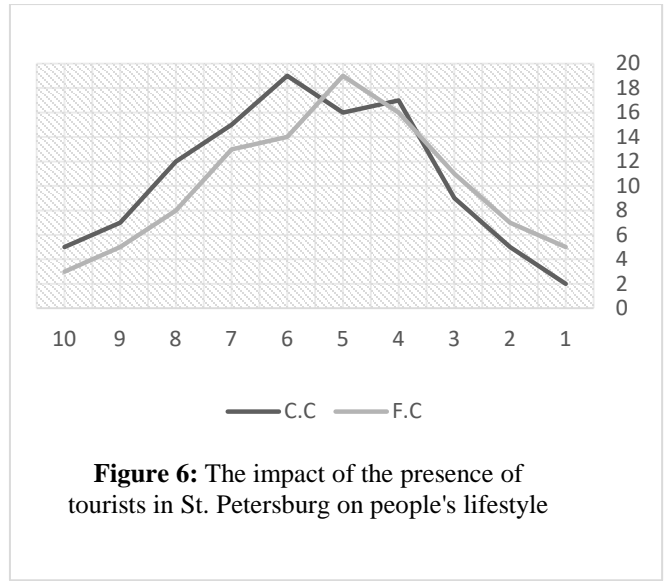
132 people were asked but the number of eligible respondents is 107 since some of the participants lack the motivation to answer all the questions. Second, all participants are not impartial and the elder group of Russian residents might show a slight bias in favor of the current condition in their city but to mitigate the effects of this issue, attempts have been made to include different age groups in the study.

Finally, while we tried to minimize the impact of subjectivity to the least possible level, a slight degree of subjectivity might be found since the descriptive assessment of the results from questionnaires is conducted by the authors.

The line charts compare the residents' perception of cultural tourism in its subcategories (negative or positive impact) in the current condition and future condition of the city of in Saint Petersburg. The full description of

the results is delineated in table 2.



**Figure 3:** The impact of the presence of tourists in St. Petersburg on historical buildings and their function



**Figure 2**: The effects of the presence of tourists in St. Petersburg on the status of Russian arts and crafts



**Figure 5:** The state of St. Petersburg in terms of urban infrastructure (transportation, housing, etc.)



**Figure 4:** The impact of the presence of tourists in St. Petersburg on public-communal spaces

**Figure 6:** The impact of the presence of tourists in St. Petersburg on people's lifestyle



**Figure 7:** People's behavior patterns in dealing with tourists in St. Petersburg



**Figure 8:** The impact of the presence of tourists in St. Petersburg on local foods and cuisine

**Figure 9:** The impact of the presence of tourists in St. Petersburg on enactment of rites and rituals

**Table 2:** The descriptive results of the field studies

| Cultural criteria | Touristaic impacts exceeding area's carrying capacity | Current condition (C.C) vs Future condition (F.C) |
|---|---|---|
| Inert | | |
| 1.Arts & Crafts | | |
| Land arts | Product quality<br>Product Diversity<br>Product Originality | C.C:<br>1. Partial impacts of western European style<br>2. Local variance (not global)<br>3. The feeling of being in the Russian domain<br>F.C:<br>1. Arrant impacts of western European style<br>2. Global variance instead of local variance<br>3. The decline in Russian originality, identity, cultural content and quality |
| Personal Goods | Product Quality<br>Job opportunity<br>Product originality<br>Tourist's satisfaction<br>Impact of foreign goods | C.C:<br>1. Reasonable fabrication and cultural content<br>2. Preservation of Russian originality and identity<br>3. Cultural value over Economic benefits<br>F.C:<br>1. The decline in Russian originality, identity, cultural content and quality<br>2. Seasonal jobs<br>3. The Economic benefits over cultural values<br>4. Global fabrication<br>5. Tourist's dissatisfaction |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Artistic creation | The interaction between host & tourists<br>Originality<br>Lucrativeness | C.C:<br>1. The conscious and isolated interaction between artists & tourists<br>2. Russian identity in both form and content<br>3. Orientation: Russian audience and inter tourists satisfaction<br>F.C:<br>1. The unconscious interaction between artists and tourists.<br>2. The alteration of Russian identity and originality to global non-identity and unoriginality<br>3: Orientation: Global audience and intra tourist satisfaction (Economic concerned tourism) |
| **2.Architecture** | | |
| Heritage site | Erosion and disrepair<br>Alteration of function<br>Alteration of culture<br>Alteration of religion | C.C:<br>1. Preserved sites<br>2. The main function in a transitory state<br>3. Local host's dissatisfaction due to the functional conflict in the presence of tourists (mainly in religious and cultural sites)<br>F.C:<br>1. Decayed sites and buildings in disrepair<br>1. Possibility of Museification<br>2. Deterioration of the main local function of the site<br>3. Local host's dissatisfaction<br>4. Local resident's immigration due to long-term desolation |
| Buildings | Vertical development<br>Urban disharmony<br>Quality of renovation and restoration | C.C:<br>1. non vertical development strategy<br>2. Harmonized city context<br>3. Quality renovation and restoration<br>4. Partial globalization in the interior of the buildings<br>F.C:<br>1. Inevitable vertical development<br>2. Disharmonized city context<br>3. Reduction of the quality of renovation and restoration<br>4. Globalization in both exterior and interior parts of the building |
| Landscape & urban space | Impact on urban zoning<br>Alteration of function in the historical cityscape<br>Environmental issues<br>Tourism carrying capacity | C.C:<br>1. Partial detachment of the city into a tourist and non-tourist area<br>2. Urban life orientation: both tourists and residents' urban lifestyle included<br>3.Rare environmental issue<br>4. Reasonable infrastructure for the city's carrying tourism capacity<br>F.C:<br>1. Detachment of the city into a tourist and non-tourist area<br>2. Urban life orientation: only tourists' lifestyle included<br>3. Alteration of the function in the old part of the city<br>4. Problems raised by large population (Air pollution, traffic, etc.)<br>4. Excessive development of the old part of the city (Touristification) |
| **Everyday** | | |
| **1.Lifestyle** | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Leisure activities | Alteration in the purpose of activities<br>Comfort level | C.C:<br>1. Nonconflicting range of activities<br>2. The partial decline in resident's comfort level<br>F.C:<br>1. Alteration of the main point of the activities<br>2. Noticeable decline in resident's Comfort level |
| Nightlife | Security<br>Holiday culture<br>Impacts on daily life occurrence | C.C:<br>1. Mental and physical security<br>2. Nonconflicting range of activities<br>F.C:<br>1. Mental security<br>2. The decline in physical security<br>3. Conflicting range of activities |
| Behavior pattern | Isolation<br>Immigration issues<br>Impact on local behavior | C.C:<br>1. Isolation against tourists<br>2. Russian residency<br>3. Preserved traditions<br>F.C:<br>1. Negative isolation feedbacks<br>2. Immigration of foreigners<br>3. Alteration in Russian behavior pattern |
| 2.Gastronomy | | |
| Catering & cuisine | Job opportunity<br>Serve quality<br>Impact on local foods<br>Food quality | C.C:<br>1. Reasonable quality<br>2. Noticeable impacts of western European cuisine<br>3. Economic benefits over quality local food<br>F.C:<br>1. Major quality reduction<br>2. Arrant impacts of western European cuisine<br>3. Local food's oblivion |
| Enacted | | |
| 1.Traditional | | |
| Rites | Purpose of attendance<br>Conflict of intention | C.C:<br>1. Functional conflict in religious platforms<br>2. Local residents' dissatisfaction<br>3. Ethical tensions between tourists and locals due to the conflicts raised by the purpose of attendance<br>F.C:<br>1. Museified religious areas<br>2. Deterioration of the main function<br>3. Allocation of the religious areas to touristic purposes and transition of local functions to other sites |
| Ancient events | Purpose of attendance<br>Alteration in Purpose of activities<br>Holiday culture | C.C:<br>1. Local enactment of historical ceremonies and events<br>2. Preserved and enacted Russian values<br>F.C:<br>1. The decline in value of Russian ancient events<br>2. The transition of valuable ancient enactments to the stagy touristic presentation |
| Festivals & carnivals | Alteration in Purpose of activities | C.C:<br>1. Stagy representations with no cultural values to |

| | Lucrativeness<br>Cultural values | entertain tourists<br>2. Economic benefits over the cultural values<br>F.C:<br>1. Deterioration of the original and traditional festivals and carnivals |
|---|---|---|
| 2.Recent | | |
| Festivals, carnivals & flash mobs | Behavioral aberration<br>Cultural variation issues<br>Isolation | C.C:<br>1. Partial behavioral aberration<br>2. Partial behavioral conflict due to cultural variation in recent ongoing culture<br>3. Isolation against tourists<br>F.C:<br>1. Arrant behavioral aberration<br>2. Arrant behavioral conflict in long-term cultural variations<br>3. Local residents' dissatisfaction |

**7. Conclusion**

In conclusion, in all three sections, there is a general shift and a move toward city's touristification. The current condition seems reasonable in some subcategories but as it is mentioned in the descriptive results of the questionnaire, in many cases, the city has undergone changes and has entered the touristification stage. Given the responses from local residents about the inflow of tourists in the future and the continuation of alterations within the city, Saint Petersburg's future condition does not seem promising.

**8. Recommendations**

In these times of crises, when the deployment of immobile resources such as cultural tourism as a mainstream tourism segment for economic gain is growing rapidly [15], host's tourism potential and local competence should not be neglected. The intensity of intra and inter tourist flows for cultural tourism in Saint Petersburg is becoming noticeable. Therefore, it is crucial that destination planners appreciate the local host's perception of tourism [21]. Prioritizing a certain city or area for cultural tourism development should be in line with its safeguard and maintenance for a future generation [22] and the needs of the local host should supersede the unsustainable tourism development for economic gain. Thus, given the results made in papers concerning local hosts' perception towards tourism, it is imperative for tourism developers and policymakers to fathom the resident's needs before embarking on new tourism developments [21].

Future directions for research might include recognition of possible solutions for sustainable cultural tourism in cities undergoing the same issues and challenges. This could also include further examination of the local residents' perception towards cultural tourism in which researchers may need to apply a multi-disciplinary approach to come up with practical solutions in terms of sustainability.

**Acknowledgment**

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