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**Competitiveness of
Heritage Sites:
a comparison between Scuola
Grande della Misericordia in
Venice and Oude Kerk in
Amsterdam**

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Abstract

The presence of outstanding cultural assets is not always a synonym of tourism and local development. This means that the competitiveness of a destination or a site is also related to other factors, which have been studied and gathered within respective theoretical frameworks by different researchers. The purpose of this thesis is to apply these models to two comparable specific cases and draw from them interesting conclusion for the management of heritage sites.

The first chapter presents a literary review on this topic, starting from the destination level with Van den Berg, van der Borg, van der Meer *Urban Tourism Product Model*, then focusing on the system of physical assets, complementary products and organization outlined by Jansen-Verbeke and, finally, deepening the relationship between heritage conservation and tourist use thanks to Du Cros and McKercher assessment analysis.

The second chapter shows the case of the Scuola Grande della Misericordia in Venice, a majestic building which has just been restored and requalified to host events, meetings, exhibitions and performances. The potential of this new end use for the site is analysed in the light of the indicators resulting from the aforementioned models.

The third chapter aims at analysing how those models are applied to the second case study, the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam. The oldest building of the city and, at the same time, its newest museum, it is considered as a “best practice” in heritage sites valorisation, since its cultural and historical values are enriched and renewed by means of art exhibitions, performances and music on a daily basis.

Taking into account the results of the models application and after the comparison of the two cases, conclusions aims at analysing the path to be followed in order to obtain a Sustainable Competitive Advantage for heritage management. The chosen approach is the one of network, since it is believed that a good site management cannot overlook the development of a sustainable tourism system able to create economic value and at the same time, preserve heritage for future generations.

Introduction

The idea of this thesis comes from a general statement, which is commonly shared by Italians: “In Italy we do have a huge cultural richness that we are not able to valorize, while, in other European countries, they have less, but they know how to take advantage from it”. Thus, this elaborate aims at providing a possible “technical” translation of this sentence in terms of competitiveness. It does it through a comparison between two cultural heritage sites in two main European tourism destinations: the Scuola Grande della Misericordia in Venice – Italy, and the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam – the Netherlands. The choice fell on Venice since it is the location of my master’s degree course: a city that I could live in and understand, also thanks to various classes and on site experiences. Thanks to the Erasmus programme I also could spend a period of study abroad, at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, where I deepened subjects as Destination Development and Heritage & Sustainable Tourism Development. Amsterdam has been chosen because I could visit it many times many times during my Erasmus experience and because of its clear comparability with Venice both for their urban structure and their tourism overcrowding issues. At the KU Leuven I also took part to a project work in the field of Conservation Policies in which I worked with Architecture & Conservation of Sites and Monuments and SteDE (sustainable territorial development) masters’ students. It consisted in an interdisciplinary study about the contemporary adaptive re-use of cultural heritage buildings. From this interesting experience, once back in Venice, I chose as case study the Scuola Grande della Misericordia: it has just reopened after important restoration works which contributed to the maintenance of its authenticity and it is now destined to be an expositive space and an event venue far from the most beaten tourist tracks of the city. The Oude Kerk in Amsterdam has a similar history and, as the Scuola, aims at giving a modern value to an important part of the city’s cultural heritage.

Starting from the comparability between the case studies, this work has the purpose to identify a management path towards the competitiveness and, consequently, the sustainability of heritage sites within tourism destinations.

The approach that has been chosen to reach this aim is based on some theoretical frameworks drawn up by tourism researchers in order to support tourism planners giving them a detailed starting point for cultural heritage management policies.

The first model is the Urban Tourism Model developed by the researchers Leo Van den Berg, Jan Van der Borg and Jan Van der Meer: it gives an idea of the destination attractiveness as a whole, including not only its primary products, but also an analysis on the tourism infrastructures, the image perceived by tourists, the place accessibility and the public and industry strategies.

Successively the study moves to the particular heritage assets, which are analysed according two models: Jansen-Verbeke's *Hardware, Software, Orgware* and McKercher-DuCros' *Robusticity-Market Appeal*. The former gives an extensive background on the asset physical characteristics, its location within the destination, its ability of providing high quality tourists experiences and its organizational dynamics. The latter results in a matrix which indicates the relationship between heritage conservation and *tourismification* issues.

After their theoretical explanation, they are applied specifically to Venice and the Scuola Grande della Misericordia in the second chapter and to Amsterdam and the Oude Kerk in third chapter.

The last chapter consists in a comparison between the two cities and cases which focuses on the most important outcomes, highlighting the similarities between the two cities and the two buildings, the gaps in the management that make the Oude Kerk a *best practice* to follow for the enhancement of the Scuola's *Market Appeal* and the differences at the two organization visions' level.

Lastly, the conclusion analyses the usefulness of these models in the outlining of strategic management policies based on a network perspective. The idea is that tourism has to be integrated in the economics of a city as well as cultural heritage has to be inserted and related within the tourism sector with a systemic vision.

As a matter of fact, destination competitiveness and sustainability are based on the economic value, coming from the strategic management of the cultural heritage network, and the attention towards both society and heritage conservation and renovation for future generations.

CHAPTER 1 – THREE FRAMEWORKS FOR THE EVALUATION OF HERITAGE TOURISM DESTINATIONS AND SITES ATTRACTIVENESS

European cities pride themselves on a long history of tourism mostly thanks to the large number of cultural assets they own. However, their mere presence does not constitute an economic value and it is not sufficient to make tourism an agent of local development, as it is claimed to be by numerous municipalities in recent years. Existing resources have to be promoted in conjunction with other forms of tourist attractions, spanning from events to gastronomy, high quality infrastructure and whole regional networks, without losing from sight the necessity to bring about a diverse, original and attractive image (A. P. Russo & J. Van der Borg, 2002). Thus, tourism has to be seen as a system in which all the components are not only important in their relation to each other within the destination but also as key factors for its Sustainable Competitive Advantage (SCA). Many cultural assets are essentially similar, in fact most temples, historic buildings, festivals and even indigenous performances tend to be monotonous after a while for most tourists, which hence becomes often reluctant in visiting this kind of attractions (McKercher & Ho, 2006). How to distinguish the specific value of a heritage site, if existing?

Some theoretical frameworks have been drawn up by tourism researchers in order to support planners in the difficult task to manage not only heritage quality and significance, but also all the parallel aspects (like communication, accessibility, atmosphere) often neglected in cultural and tourism planning.

After analysing the overall attractiveness of an urban destination thanks to the *Urban Tourism Product* concept created by Leo Van den Berg, Jan Van der Borg and Jan Van der Meer, this chapter presents a brief literary review on the models evaluating the tourism potential of a heritage site designed by Myriam Jansen-Verbeke and Hilary Du Cros.

The former is grounded in the territorial expressions of cultural resources and looks at tourism as a proactive agent in the process of conservation and of building cultural identities for territories and their communities, rather than as a destroyer of the past and the uniqueness of beauty of places (Richards, 2007).

The latter aims at solving one of the greatest challenge in cultural tourism, according to Bob McKercher and Pamela S.Y. in “Cultural Tourism: The Partnership Between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management” (2002): the integration of the needs of cultural heritage and of tourism management through the creation of a product appealing to visitors and, at the same time, endowed of cultural and heritage values.

1.1 Van den Berg Van der Borg Van der Meer *Urban Tourism Product model and the concept of visitor-friendliness*

The idea of creating a model able to underline the relations in an urban tourism system comes from a comparative study carried out by the European Institute of Comparative Urban Research (EURICUR) in 1993, aimed at understanding the contribution of leisure activities and tourism to the revitalisation of urban regions.

The research question could be identified with the following one: what conditions tourist strategies and policies must satisfy for an optimum contribution of tourism to urban revitalisation?

In comparing the eight case studies the researchers Leo Van den Berg, Jan van der Borg and Jan van der Meer considered three main aspects:

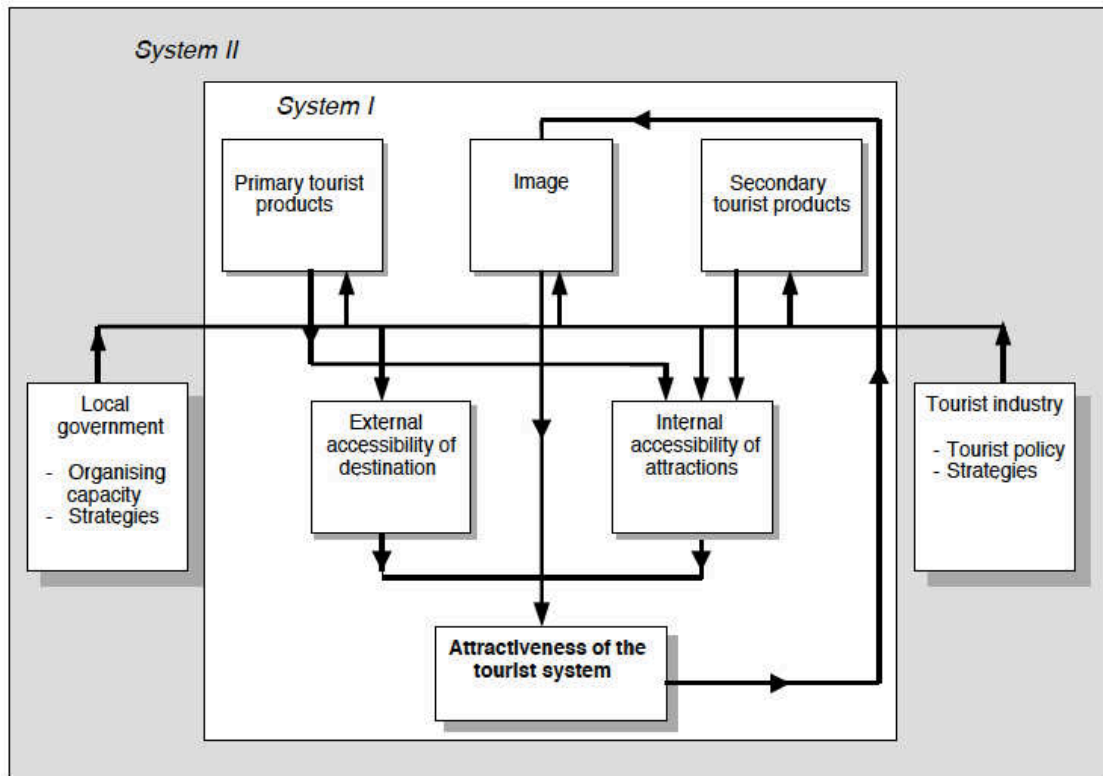
1. the tourist product and its development (the theme or themes used to stimulate tourism, its primary and secondary components);
2. marketing (presence of marketing authorities and agencies);
3. tourism development strategies and organizational strength (stakeholders organising capacities)

and ranked the cities through three criteria:

- a. accessibility
- b. product
- c. image

The model which has been sorted out is represented in Figure 1. As it shows relations in urban tourism system are gathered into two main groups: *System I* and *System II*.

Figure 1 - Van den Berg, van der Borg, van der Meer Urban Tourism Product Model



Source: Van den Berg et al.; 1995

The former shows the factors which determine the competitiveness of a tourist destination, the latter indicates how the public and private sectors can influence the development of that urban tourism product.

The attractiveness of an urban destination depends most of all on the quality of the “primary product” which corresponds to the main reason for visiting the place: natural and cultural landscape, historical features, events and attractions (such as theme parks) created for specific tourist purposes. Also the quality of “secondary products” is fundamental in drawing visitor to a city, even if it always needs to be supported by the primary ones. For this reason, hotels, restaurants, conference centres, exhibition halls are also called complementary products.

As the figure underlines, the attractiveness of a tourist city is further determined by the “image” it has in the perception of potential tourists, as well as by the accessibility of the place itself. This factor can be better described into two categories: “external and internal accessibility”. The former can be defined as the effort required to reach the destination and thus corresponds to distance and the

quality of transport connection from the demand basin to the destination. The latter regards the ease of wandering around the locality and reaching the various attraction points during the stay. Time spent from the city to the attractions, transport quality and costs, parking spaces and fees, crowds at the attractions, ambiance, information availability are examples of internal accessibility indicators.

These five factors can be implemented by government and industry through deliberate actions, however it has been noticed that majority of tourism strategies focus on single attractions and external accessibility. This is why the aforementioned analysis of the tourism product (*System I*) should help policy makers to address the available funds to what needs more attention to promote the attractiveness of the city. In order to reach this purpose, integrating the urban tourism product in *System II* is indispensable. As the framework shows, the main responsible actors in the tourism strategy are the municipality (public actor) and the tourism industry (private actor). Organising capacities of the local government and cooperation through public-public and private-public partnerships are essential in this process. Nevertheless, also the tourism sector has its own responsibility in enhancing through its strategy all the elements of the tourism system.

Some years later, this theoretical framework was further implemented by the researchers Antonio Paolo Russo & Jan van der Borg with the concept of *visitor-friendliness*, in order to perform a comparative study on another series of cities. As they state, the challenge for the competitiveness of a cultural tourist destination can be seen nowadays as finding a point of balance between the peculiarity of its cultural assets and their communication to the public and the standardisation and predictability that the tourism industry infrastructures needs to reach to be included in the global tourism market. Besides, the success of a cultural system is determined by a consumer-oriented management strategy capable to identify a niche positions responding to a super-segmentation of the market. Considering these fundamental points, Russo & Van der Borg descended from the *Urban Tourism Product Model* some qualitative indicators in order to produce a comparative analysis of the case studies. These are:

- *Existence of a strategy for tourism management at the metropolitan*

level (cooperation among private-public actors, capacity of taking into account interests and aspiration of the players variously involved in the tourism development process, presence of a shared vision in the quality of experience offered to tourists, openness towards global tourism system, use of mega-event for city promotion and infrastructures enhancement, tourism potential awareness in local administration, position of the destination in European cultural itineraries, presence and effectiveness of UNESCO brand...)

- *Quality of information and hospitality* (quality of information materials – before the departure and *in loco* –, location of tourist information offices and totem through the city and at specific attractions)

- *Presence and quality of complementary tourist services* (positive attitude of hospitality and food & beverage entrepreneurs, quality of their services and “value for money”, presence of business tourism infrastructures...)

- *Internal and external accessibility* (inter-modality and quality of public transport, links with main terminals, accessibility of events venues and attractions, predictability, fees, information availability, frequency)

- *Attractions and events* (interpretation and communication, availability all year round, time flexibility for intelligent usage...)

- *Image and atmosphere* (international reputation of the city, level of crime, cleanliness of the environment...)

As the design of the model suggests, all the elements contributing to the attractiveness of an urban tourism destination have to be systemised and managed according to an integrated and dynamic approach based on a wise balance between new technologies and human professionalism and creativity.

1.1.1 A comparison with the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index

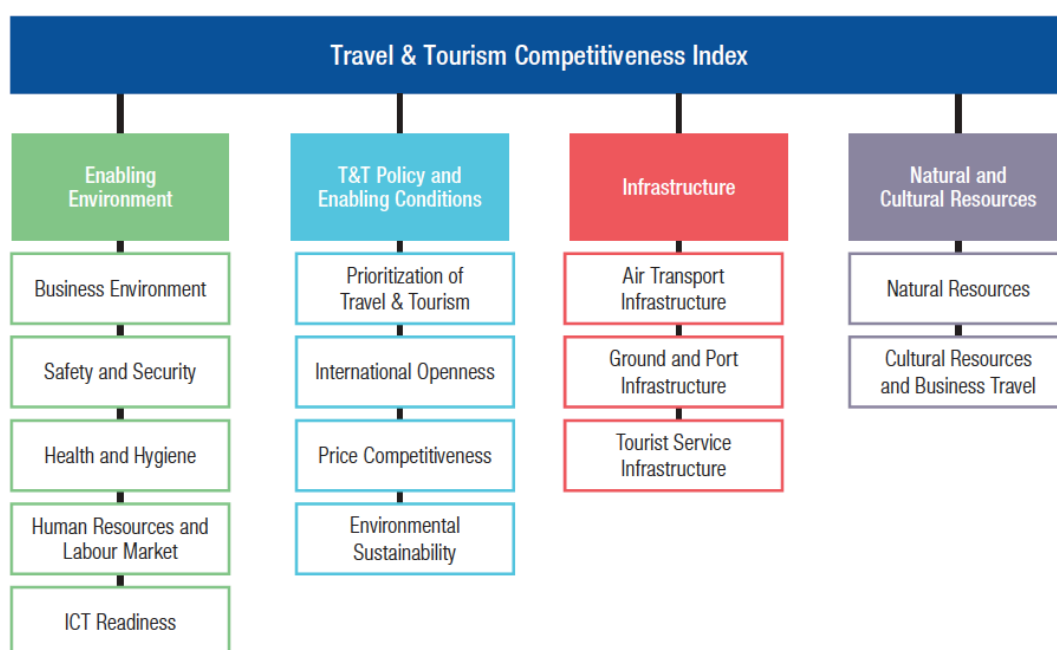
It has been noted that the competitiveness indicators of the aforementioned model can be compared to various pillars used by World Economic Forum in assessing the 2015 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI).

First compiled in 2007, the TTCI indicates the level of competitiveness of a country in the Travel & Tourism sector through the calculation of a set of various

indicators on the basis of data derived from the Executive Opinion Survey (a specific survey submitted by World Economic Forum) and quantitative data from other sources. In the last report, dated in 2015, the Index structure has been updated with more indicators in order to adapt to economic changes and to respond better to policy needs. However, this deep review of the index indicators didn't bring to useful results, if compared with previous years' ones.

As shown in Figure 2, 2015 TTCI structure has been based on four sub-indexes, which gathers 14 pillars, which in turn are measured by different indicators.

Figure 2 - The T&T Competitiveness Index 2015 framework



Source: The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015; 2015

Comparisons with the Urban Tourism Product Model can be found in various pillars. The dimension “Primary tourism products” can be identified in the sub-index “Natural and Cultural Resources”, which groups the 13th and the 14th pillars, mostly built by counting the number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, protected areas, intangible cultural heritage expressions, sports stadiums and international association meetings in the country.

“Secondary tourism products” correspond to the 12th pillar “Tourist Service Infrastructure”, which measures the number of “upper-level” hotel rooms

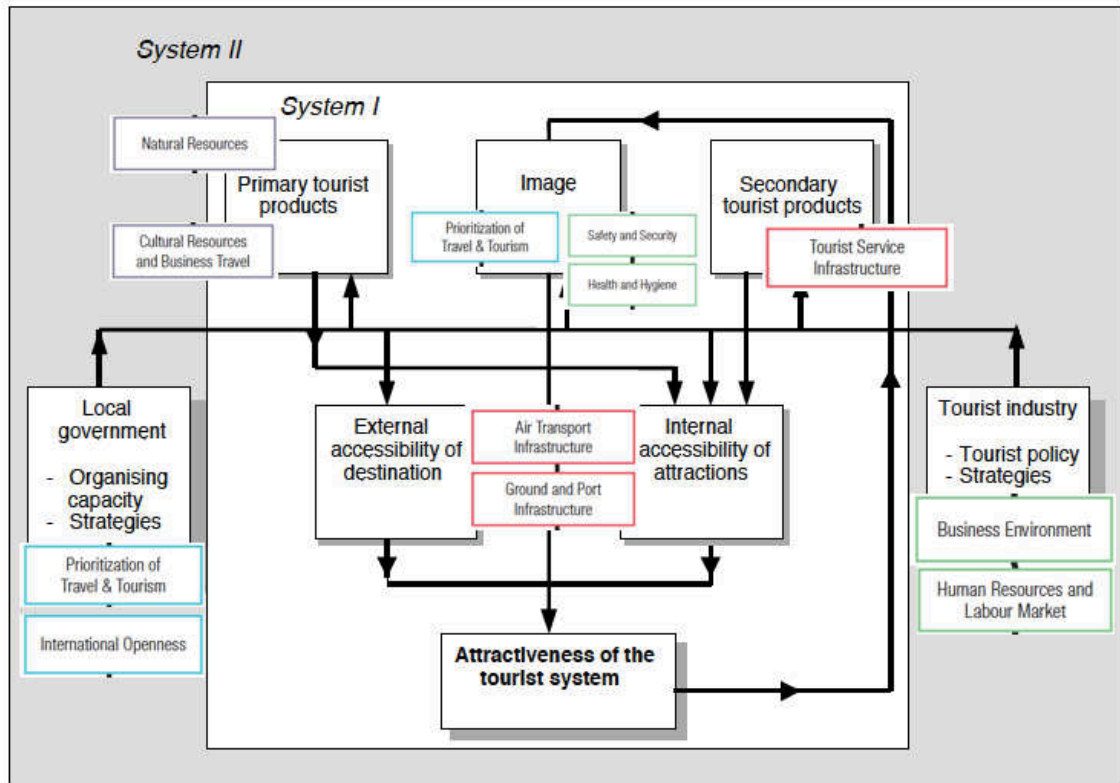
complemented by the extent of access to services such as car rentals and ATMs. “Image” is a wider concept that can be explicated through different pillars, such as the ones relating “Safety and Security” and “Health and Hygiene”, but it also depends on the way in which tourism is prioritized, in particular with the indicators measuring marketing effectiveness and brand strategy, as explicated by 6th pillar. “Internal and external accessibility” of a destination are related to pillar 10 and 11 on “Air Transport Infrastructure” and “Ground and Port Infrastructure”, which regard the quality and density of air transport, ground and port infrastructure, roads and railroads.

The influence of Tourist Industry and Local Government on this system are intertwined within various pillars. “Business Environment” attempts to measure the presence of a conducive policy environment for companies to undertake businesses, while “International Openness” calculates the degree of openness and travel facilitation in the country. “Human Resources and Labour market” tries to evaluate the capacity of a country in enhancing the quality of human resources and in developing skills through education and training. A fundamental impact on the competitiveness is, lastly, given by the degree of “Prioritization of Travel & Tourism” (Pillar 6), since it is mostly the government that can channel funds to essential development projects and can coordinate the actors and resources necessary to develop the sector. In addition to this traditional dimensions, the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index also contemplates aspects connected to “Environmental Sustainability” and “ITC Readiness”.

The former sees policies and factors enhancing environmental sustainability as an important competitive advantage in ensuring a country’s future attractiveness as a destination, thus, it measures the extent to which the government prioritizes the sustainable development of the T&T industry in its economy.

The latter takes into consideration the worldwide diffusion of online services and business operations also in T&T, with internet being used for planning itineraries and booking travel and accommodation. Therefore, it measures not only the existence of modern hard infrastructure (mobile network coverage and quality of electricity supply), but also the capacity of businesses and individuals to use and provide online services.

Figure 3 – Comparison between Urban Tourism Product Model and the T&T Competitiveness Index 2015 framework



Source: personal elaboration from Van den Berg et al. 1995

Considering the analogies between Urban Tourism Model and Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index, it can be supposed an upgrade of the former with an integration of the just mentioned sustainability and ITC issues, in order to make the model capable of measuring the competitiveness of an urban destination also considering these more recent dynamics within the tourism economy.

1.2 Jansen-Verbeke Model

Understanding the forces that are transforming cultural landscapes (urban and rural) into *tourismscapes* is a crucial step into visionary planning and responsible management of regions and places. For this purpose, an interesting approach has been elaborated considering a “territoriality paradigm”, according to which cultural resources cannot be distinguished from the context in which they are embedded. Nowadays, the emerging gap between dynamic and less dynamic cultural regions is not much given by the actual accumulation of monuments, museums or historical landscapes, but even more on the liveliness and liveability of

intangible heritage elements such as traditions imbedded in the agricultural or industrial history and habitat. These traditions find contemporary expressions in lifestyle, language, religion, music, folklore, gastronomy, events and festivities (Picard & Robinson, 2006). In such a situation, the challenge is managing this interdependency between tangible and intangible heritage in an innovative and creative way.

Despite the specific peculiarities of every cultural site, a number of common issues have been identified and a framework has been designed including components of territorial cohesion and assuming the growing relevance of this concept for the future of cultural tourism. These issues are ordered thematically according to three different, yet connected cultural dimensions of heritage sites:

1. *Hardware*
2. *Software*
3. *Orgware*

As Figure 4 shows, these three dimensions have been organized into a matrix and then declined into different variables.

Figure 4 – Jansen-Verbeke Model

MANAGEMENT ISSUES	HARDWARE of Heritage Site & Territory		SOFTWARE of Cultural Tourism Product		ORGWARE Agents and Organization	
	IN HERITAGE SITE SITE MANAGEMENT local	IN TOURIST DESTINATION DESTINATION MANAGEMENT regional	PRESENTATION & INTERPRETATION	TOURIST APPEAL & EXPERIENCES	PUBLIC & PRIVATE AGENTS POWER & INVOLVEMENT	STAKEHOLDERS LOCAL & GLOBAL INVOLVEMENT & INTERESTS
Conservation vs Tourismification	Monitoring Physical impact Robustness - Fragility	Sustainable Development of Infrastructures	Valorising tangible and intangible Heritage	Uses and affinity with the site	Awareness of sustainable tourism potentials	Inclusion & exclusion in decision making
Monitoring	Carrying Capacity	Tourist Space-use Patterns	Visitor Centre – facilities	Visitor Management	Business opportunities of TOS	Connections and disconnections Global – Local
Legislation					Ownership & Competition	Ownership & Stewardship
Development Local & Regional	Selection & Planning of Cultural Resources	Zoning & Clustering of TOS	Innovation & financial resources	Creativity & Marketing	Motivation & incentives	Partnership

Source: Jansen-Verbeke, 2012

The concept of *Hardware* refers to core attractions and their surrounding territory, including supporting tourism infrastructures. Normally its components cannot be easily re-allocated and have a heavy cost for public stakeholders in terms of conservation and maintenance.

A complete *Hardware* analysis requires both a focus on the site (local perspective) and a wider one on the destination (regional perspective).

The first perspective highlights the location aspects of a heritage site (its integration with the landscape and the destination, its proximity with other remarkable sites, its accessibility and connection with main tourism gateways), its spatial characteristics (its size and scale, its internal spatial structure, its carrying capacity) and some aspects related to its robustness (fragility of tangible asset, risks connected with tourism pressure and ability to manage these impacts).

The regional perspective analyses the position of the site inside the destination, therefore the focus turns from a *heritagescape* into a broader *tourismscape*.

Although a single landmark can be strong enough to market a tourist destination, it is the actual and perceived “Tourism Opportunity Spectrum”¹ that will determine the degree of attraction of places and regions (Butler & Woldbroetz, 1991). In accordance with this idea, the destination management assessment aims at analysing the interaction and the coherence between heritage tourism core elements and supporting facilities. These latter, also known as secondary products, materialize in an evaluation of the quality of the tourist stay, comprehending accommodation, meals & drinks, amusements, events and the information availability, even before the visit. It also takes into consideration tourist space-use patterns and the presence of clusters of attractions or tourist paths.

Software coincides with the skill to attract visitors delivering a positive tourist experience. Differently from the *Hardware*, this dimension changes over time according to fashion trends and innovations. Presentation and interpretation of the

¹ The Tourism Opportunity Spectrum (TOS) is a planning tool for natural resource-based tourism and adventure travel development implemented by Richard Butler in 1991 based on Clarke and Stanley's (1979) “Recreation Opportunity Spectrum”. It presents a framework for tourism development incorporating factors of accessibility, characteristics of tourism infrastructure, degrees of social interaction, other nonadventure uses, acceptability of regimentation.

heritage site are the first fundamental variables to take into account since they create a connection between the place and the visitor. They are assessed analysing the quality of the visitor centre services (if there is one), the way in which the message is communicated through the heritage presentation (for example, by a tour guide), the presence of a link between tangible and intangible assets (traditions, music, food, handicrafts, etc). Tourist appeal of the site is evaluated through its reputation in potential visitors' mind and the analysis of target groups within the brand strategy.

Software dimension aims at understanding how *tourismscape* turns into an *experiencescape* through the idea of the place conveyed to tourists. The way in which this process is done can constitute a competitive advantage in case of similar heritage sites.

Orgware represents the organizational capacity of a destination, which results from the types, the powers and the cross-sectoral networks of both private and public organizations and their management structures. In order to understand perspectives and constraints of the *Orgware*, three main levels of analysis have to be explained: stakeholders, management and policy.

The first regards the power balance among the actors involved in the ownership and stewardships of the site, the presence of partnerships, the involvement of local communities and their influence in decision making processes.

The second aims at examining the idea behind the management of a site through the analysis of its management plan and its level of commodification.

The policy aspect highlights the dynamics related to the pursuit of economic advantages through *tourismification* and the framework given by government and conservation legislation.

Through *Hardware*, *Software* and *Orgware*, Jansen-Verbeke aims at giving a useful framework capable to identify strengths and weaknesses of a heritage site to support destination managers in designing a tourism plan. As underlined, icons are not sufficient for capitalising heritage through tourism. Thus, an analysis of context variables is needed as well as an evaluation on the possibility to transform the site by developing appropriate *Software*. Findings have to be integrated with governance dynamics, stakeholders power relationships and other policies issues

through an interdisciplinary research on the -so called- *Orgware*, also paying the heed to the involvement of local community in the process of heritage commodification.

1.3 McKercher - Du Cros Model

Another important contribution for the assessing of tourism potential of cultural heritage attractions has been provided by Hilary Du Cros and Bob McKercher in the first decade of 2000s. Their research is interesting since the background of the authors is different and, in a certain sense, opposed: Bob McKercher is a tourism expert, while Hilary Du Cros deals with cultural heritage management. This is why in their studies they aim at deepening the link between the two sectors and optimizing it in a sustainability perspective. According to them, in reality, sustainability should incorporate both use and conservation values in overall management activities (2002). As the following paragraphs explain, this does not mean that there has to be a perfect balancing of both aspects: in fact tourism can be discouraged when the assets are too fragile or poor in *Market Appeal* and cultural heritage can play a secondary role in extreme cases, like theme-parks or entertainment-oriented attractions.

In order to understand which is the leading sector between the two and to provide effective and case-specific management actions, Du Cros and McKercher start with the identification of some factors, assessing the tourism potential of a heritage site, related to context, asset specific issues, stakeholders and resources, which will be illustrated in the following paragraphs. Only after having gathered all this information, a more detailed assessment to identify options for integrated planning, development and management of an asset can take place.

1.3.1 Considering the wider context

Tourism is deeply connected with the social and political environment in which it is embedded. Firstly, any tourism development process has to work within a legislative framework, in particular in case of conservation policies regarding tangible heritage assets. Secondly, political trends or campaigns and community dynamics play an important role in supporting or preventing tourism projects.

Another relevant dimension in the broad context is the quantity and quality of heritage assets and their distribution. If on the Cultural Heritage Management side, cataloguing is fundamental for the community to have a sign of tangible and intangible heritage for the conservation for future generations, on the tourism side assets are rather taken into account on the base of their *use value* and their potential mutual connection into nodes, districts, networks and themed touring routes.

In assessing the potential of a cultural site another necessary consideration regards the destination's position in the marketplace. The development of a new cultural product should be easier in renowned destinations, while more difficult in places where low cultural tourist flows are registered.

1.3.2 Understanding the assets in its setting

In order to obtain a good assessment of the competitiveness of a heritage site, a deep understanding of the setting in which the site is collocated is fundamental. It is widely believed that a good cultural tourism product cannot overlook the sociohistorical context that have led to the nowadays situation and a certain continuity with the past.

Moreover, the tourist experience is enhanced if there is compatibility of tangible assets with the surrounding area, since this connection often helps visitors in understanding of their significances.

Finally, safety and access are essential in making a site appealing or, if negative, in dissuading tourist flows, except those rarer cases in which the awkwardness or remoteness of the destination are themselves the goals of the journey.

1.3.3 Asset specific issues

Some asset specific issues are included within the factors that determine the tourism potential of heritage sites. The physical state, the integrity and robustness are fundamental in examining tangible assets, as well as the possibility to commodify them for tourists without mining their authenticity.

On the other side, with intangible assets the required approach is based on the concept of "cultural space". It refers to a place in which popular and traditional cultural activities are concentrated but also generally characterized by a certain

periodicity (cyclical, seasonal, calendar based...) or by an event. The setting of an intangible heritage asset in a such defined *cultural space* allows to enhance the interpretation and the absorption of its values by the visitor thanks to the visibility of a certain continuity with the past, which also helps in controlling the tourist experience.

Moreover, a specific asset issue is connected to current and potential uses and users. A good site assessment has to determine if potential tourism use and visitors are compatible with existing ones. If not, plans to manage tourist actions need to be developed in order to make tourism less invasive and complementary to other activities.

1.3.4 Stakeholder and consultation issues

Stakeholder consideration is recognized as an important part of the sustainable management of any asset developed for tourism (ICOMOS 1999; AHC and TCA 1999). The reason is that their opposite interests can often lead to conflict situations which can endanger the effectiveness of tourism development. Thus, a sustainable management implies the continuous hearing of their feedbacks in order to keep their issues under control. To reach this balance, the first step, which has to start from the early planning phase, consists in selecting who has a legitimate interest in the asset management. Numerous people, agencies, entities can have direct or indirect interests in tourism development, the challenge is to understand which have the right to be involved in this process.

The second step is assuring an open and fair consultation, since it often happens that some people, such as the locals, are just apparently involved in it. A good process should involve all legitimate stakeholders and mutually listen their concerns in order to reach an agreeable resolution of any problem.

1.3.5 People, Skills and Financial Resources

The last factors to be assessed del with human resources and financial means at their disposal. The skills of the individuals involved in the *tourismification* process are fundamental since they can turn promising projects into failures. When missing, the person can acquire by himself/herself or buy them. This option is

subordinated to the availability of financial resources, which, in case of conservation works and assets maintenance, are often difficult to source. During the planning phase, thus, an evaluation of the project viability has to be done with the support of an accurate business plan highlighting the various funding sources that can be used for financing the actions.

Finally, before any planning phase, both tourism and cultural heritage manager has to answer a main question: *why is tourism being proposed? Is it an end in itself or is it a means to another end?*

According to Du Cros and McKercher “tourism reasons must be the only reasons a cultural heritage asset is developed for tourism”. They state that caution should be used if tourism is only a justification for the pursuit of other objectives, such as a desire to conserve or to protect assets for demolition or to list them in heritage registries.

In order to understand if a site can be developed for tourism reasons, recognizing the complexity of managing cultural assets, the differing needs of stakeholders, differing levels of robusticity and their varied tourism appeal, the authors created a model capable of assess all the information gathered previously in a meaningful manner. This framework will be explained in the next paragraph.

1.3.6 A first audit model for assessing tourism potential of cultural and heritage attractions

The information gathered in the previous phase are systematically organized in a model to ensure valid conclusions on the tourism potential of an asset and, as a consequence, take opportune management actions. The framework is based on the already mentioned relationship between cultural heritage and tourism. These two aspects are materialized in two respective variables: *Robusticity* and *Market Appeal*. Thus, according to the authors, sustainable tourism development is reachable when the *Market Appeal* of a site is correlated with the ability of the asset to cope with increased visitation or to be modified for use in a manner that does not compromise its values. The model consists in a 3x3 matrix in which these two dimensions are classified according to a quantitative evaluation which can assume the categories “high”, “moderate”, “low”. In particular, the score is assigned taking into account the

most significant variables explained in the previous phase, since translating every aspect into a practical audit tool would be too difficult and counterproductive. The two main axes incorporate in turn other two dimensions, as one can see in the following chart.

Table 1 - Cultural tourism assessment indicators (First Version of the Model)

Robusticity - CHM	Market appeal - TOURISM
Cultural Significance	Market Appeal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Aesthetic value</i> • <i>Historical value</i> • <i>Educational value</i> • <i>Social value</i> • <i>Representativeness</i> • <i>Rarity</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Well-known outside local area</i> • <i>National icon/symbol</i> • <i>Peculiar aspects capable of distinguish it from nearby attractions</i> • <i>Special uses</i> • <i>Ability to tell a good story (evocative place)</i> • <i>Complementarity with other tourism products</i> • <i>Tourism activity in the region</i> • <i>Destination association with culture and heritage</i> • <i>Political support</i> • <i>Ambiance and setting</i>
Robustness	Product Design Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fragility</i> • <i>State of repair</i> • <i>Management plans</i> • <i>Regular monitoring or maintenance</i> • <i>Involvement and consultation of key stakeholders</i> • <i>Likely impact of increased visitation on the structure</i> • <i>Likely impacts of increased visitation on lifestyle and cultural traditions of local communities</i> • <i>Likely Impacts in case of modification for tourism product development reasons</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Accessibility of asset features</i> • <i>Reachability from population centres</i> • <i>Proximity to other heritage attractions</i> • <i>Amenities (toilets, parking, pathways, refreshments, information availability)</i> • <i>Openness to public</i>

Source: McKercher & Du Cros, 2002

Each dimension has been evaluated according to a scaled point system from 1 (low rating) to 5 (high rating). The sum of the scores in each one is then plotted to position the asset into the following matrix. The status the asset occupies indicates the actions to be taken in the perspective of a cultural tourism planning for that site.

Figure 5 - Market Appeal/Robusticity Matrix

Robusticity	HIGH	D1	C1	A1
		D2	C2	A2
	LOW	D3	B2	B1
		LOW		HIGH
		Market Appeal		

Source: B. McKercher & P.S.Y. Ho, 2006

'A' grade assets have moderate to high *Market Appeal* and moderate to high *Robusticity*. These assets are ideally suited for significant tourism activity, no strong interventions are needed to protect the cultural values from the impact of heavy tourist flows, neither to enhance visitors appeal.

'B' grade assets have strong to moderate *Market Appeal* but a low *Robusticity*. The reason can rely in a physical fragility of the structure or in a situation in which cultural values are mined by mass visitation. Strict conservation and visitor management measures are required to avoid the achievement of a point of no return in which the site and its cultural significance are definitely damaged by an unsustainable tourist use.

On the contrary, 'C' grade assets have a high or moderate *Robusticity* but a limited *Market Appeal*. In this case, the adoption of a marketing plan capable to exploit the potential given by the site robustness is a desirable option, however managers can also decide to maintain this status quo and accept the presence of

limited tourist flows.

'D' grade assets represent a borderline case in which both *Market Appeal* and *Robusticity* are at a low level. Therefore, they should be preserved for reasons other than tourism and, even if not easy, managers should be convinced towards this decision.

1.3.7 An implementation of the model

Various empirical tests (du Cros, 2000; Li & Lo, 2004) proved not only the framework's efficacy as a preliminary assessment tool, but also its ability to provide insights into future management strategies, descending mainly from the identification of four key dimensions. Nevertheless, the model also has some shortcomings that relate principally to the subjective nature of its indicators (B. McKercher and P.S.Y. Ho, 2006). For instance, the difficult quantification of some variables, such as "social value" or "ambiance", could lead the assessor to use personal and non-objective criteria in their assessing. Furthermore, Li and Lo (2004) show a tendency in obtaining results in the central positions of the matrix: in a situation in which one dimension (usually *product design* and *Robusticity*) is high and the other (usually *Market Appeal* and *cultural significance*) is low, the use of the arithmetic mean for the score aggregation brings to have non-significant outcomes, since the indicators have the same weight. For instance, the auditor may see a fatal flaw, but cannot give it the importance it deserves in the final assessment (B. McKercher and P.S.Y. Ho, 2006).

In order to remedy to these limits, Bob McKercher and Pamela S.Y. Ho (2006) provided an alternative assessment protocol as an implementation of the Du Cros Model (2001), which was tested by post-graduate students of the School of Hotel and Tourism Management of Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

The main innovation consists in the disaggregation of the du Cros model into four constituent dimensions: cultural, physical, product and experiential values. As Table 2 shows, their assessment is done following a series of sub-indicators which are sort of guidelines questions whose answers have to be given on an ordinal scale based on five categories of 'Low', 'Low/Moderate', 'Moderate', 'Moderate/High', and 'High'. Thus, the previous model matrix 3x3 turns into 5x5.

The level of tourism potential of the asset is obtained through an overall assessment, which takes into account the results reached evaluating the aforementioned dimensions, and also a consideration on fatal flaws, which was an important shortage in the previous version of the model.

The subjective nature of the tool provides the necessary flexibility to be applied across a wide array of assets (museums, historic buildings/landscapes, heritage attractions and temples) of different scales (small buildings to entire villages), in different physical states (derelict to fully conserved and retrofitted for adaptive re-use) and in different locational contexts (urban, suburban, rural and remote). Furthermore, in this version of the model, sub-indicators can be given different weights depending on the unique attributes of each asset.

However, being qualitative, the assessment still risks to be influenced by personal bias and subjective perspectives. In order to avoid such circumstances, authors recommend cross-training in which tourism is the training emphasis for the cultural heritage management (CHM) sector and CHM principles are emphasised for tourism industry workers (McKercher & Ho, 2006). The perspective which the assessor must deal with is the one of the tourist who does not know much about the history of the asset and the locality. Thus, external auditors are preferred in this process. Furthermore: they should be two or more in order to reduce risks of subjectivity. In this way, the potential emergency of divergences indicates the necessity to rethink the just done assessment.

Table 2- Cultural tourism assessment indicators (Second Version of the model)

Robusticity - CHM	Market appeal - TOURISM
Cultural values	Product values
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do the stakeholders want tourists/tourism? 2. Can the asset withstand visitation without damaging its cultural values (tangible and intangible)? 3. Does the asset reflect a unique cultural tradition (living or disappeared)? 4. Is the asset of local, regional or international cultural significance? 5. Does a visit create an emotional connection with the individual? 6. Is the asset worth conserving as a representative example of the community's heritage? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the site big enough to attract and retain tourists for a long time? 2. Is the effort required by tourists to get to it too difficult to make a visit worthwhile (time, cost, effort)? 3. Is it near other attractions (similar or different types)? 4. Is there sufficient information about the site available (e.g. magazine, website, etc.) 5. Does the site have tourist market appeal?
Physical values	Experiential values
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can all areas be accessed (if not what can be done to rectify)? 2. Does the site represent potential hazards for visitors (if so what can be done to rectify)? 3. What is the physical state of repair (any wear and tear) and will its authenticity be damaged after repairs are made? 4. Can it be modified for use (legally, practically)? 5. Are both the site (inside its physical boundaries) and the setting (its surrounds) appealing to tourists? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does this asset have the potential to offer interesting experiences to tourists? 2. In what ways is this asset capable of providing a participatory, engaging and/or entertaining experience? 3. Is this asset capable of meeting different tourists' expectations? 4. How authentic would general tourists perceive of the experiences offered by the asset? 5. Is good quality interpretation currently available and if not, how can it be provided?

Source: B. McKercher & P.S.Y. Ho, 2006

1.3.8 Results applications and management implications

As already mentioned, the evaluation of a heritage asset through such a product-oriented model allows to understand the key issues for a potential future management plan on a sustainable tourism development perspective. Being based on two main dimensions, tourism on one side and cultural heritage management on

the other one, it gives indications on how their relationship can be optimized (du Cros 2000, du Cros 2001). If the asset is robust and has a strong tourism potential, normally Tourism perspective should be the one to follow in management issue. On the contrary, when the asset is fragile Cultural Heritage Management purposes have to be followed. Where there is some tourism appeal and the asset is moderately to highly robust, opportunities exist for a more equal relationship between tourism and Cultural Heritage Management objectives (McKercher & Du Cros, 2002).

In particular, in dealing with *Market Appeal*, *product value* is the most critical aspect to find a management solution for, since the lack of attributes to draw tourists and retain them for a sufficiently long time to warrant a visit is a gap that cannot be easily filled. On the other hand, problems at the *experiential value* stage are often easier to resolve, since they relate primarily to the presentation of the asset. Minor modifications to presentation can enhance the experience. (McKercher & Ho, 2006).

Tourism purposes should also be abandoned in case that conservation or commodification measures are foreseen to be economically unsustainable, hence the attention should be moved on another asset and another objective should be chosen for it.

Ultimately, the model can be used not only to evaluate the competitiveness of a single asset but also on a wider perspective, in order to assess the tourism potential of an area, a city or a region through an integrate analysis of the assets of that territory. In this sense, the use of the framework is necessary for the design of *formal action plans* on a micro level and more rooted *destination policies* on a macro one. In practice, after the assessment of every asset, the respective scores are tabulated and plotted on the *Market Appeal-Robusticity* Matrix. The resulting chart shows how the different heritage sites of the studied area distribute in the frames.

In a proactive context in which destination management board needs to take decisions on the future local or regional planning, the outcomes give indications on most feasible options to develop and the ones to reject. The audit is also applicable reactively, assessing the potential of places already being promoted by the destination marketing organisation that have been (or can be) subjected to an increase in visitation and/or a change in visitor profile, which need to cope with without being damaged in their tangible and intangible values.

This chapter had the aim of presenting a brief literary review on the models which have been considered as useful tools to provide management solutions for sustainable and competitive development strategies in cultural heritage management. In the second and in the third chapter Van den Berg, Van der Borg, Van der Zee Urban Tourism Model will be applied to Venice and Amsterdam contexts, while Jansen-Verbeke and McKercher Du Cros will help in deeply analysing the characteristics of the Scuola Grande della Misericordia and the Oude Kerk. Successively, the frameworks will also constitute the basis for the comparison between the two cases studies in chapter four.

CHAPTER 2 – CASE STUDY: SCUOLA GRANDE DELLA MISERICORDIA IN VENICE

The second chapter has the purpose of explaining the case study through the application of the models theoretically analysed in the previous chapter. Firstly, an analysis of the destination will be presented through Van den Berg, Van der Borg, Van der Meer Urban Product Model, secondly the focus will move on the specific site in accordance with the principles of Jansen-Verbeke model and McKercher-Du Cros framework. The selected case study is Scuola Grande della Misericordia in Venice, Italy. Recently re-opened after deep restauration interventions, the building has been conceded by the Municipality to a private company with the aim of turning it into a new cultural hub for the city.

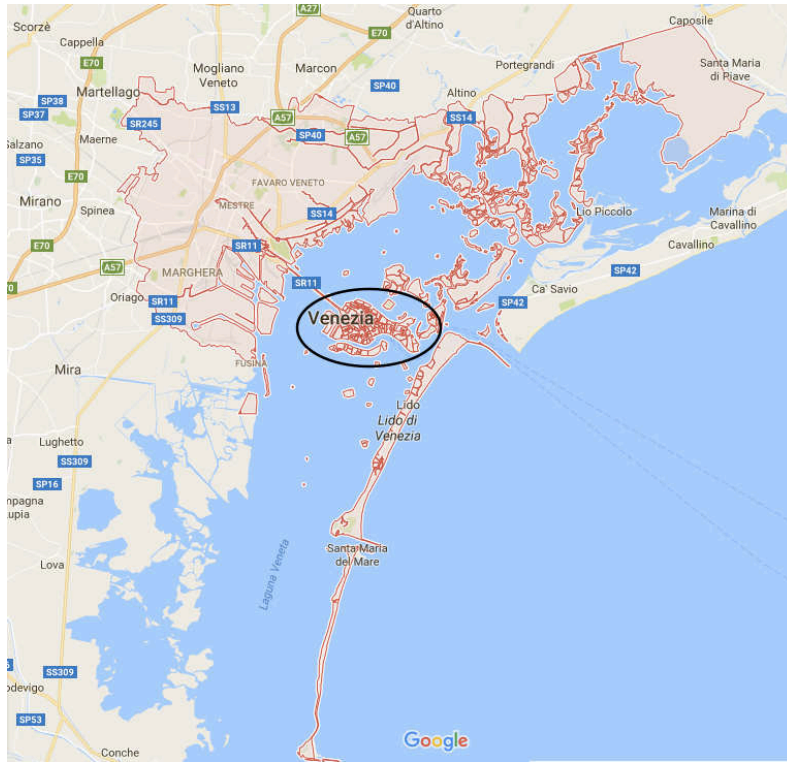
2.1 Van den Berg Van der Borg Van der Meer Urban Tourism Model applied to Venice

The tourism development of heritage sites cannot be untied from the context in which they are located: the tourism destination. In order to analyse it, the researchers Van den Berg Van der Borg Van der Meer developed a model including all the factors contributing to its competitiveness. In this paragraph they will be examined to offer a useful background for the comprehension of the Venice as a destination and the collocation of the case study in this specific context.

For the research purposes, the application of the Urban Tourism Product Model has been restricted to Venice “city centre” (also called Venice “island”), without considering the whole municipality which comprehend also the -so called- “mainland”. The reason lies in the physical and socio-demographic peculiarity of this area: built on the water, almost entirely pedestrian, with a population of almost 55.008 inhabitants on the 262.268 of the entire municipality². The following study on the model will help to further clarify this characterization.

² Comune di Venezia, September 2016, www.comune.venezia.it/archivio/88771

Figure 5 - Venice Municipality area vs study area



Source: personal elaboration from www.google.it/maps

2.1.1 Venice primary and secondary products

What are the so called “primary products” in Venice? Answering this question can be rather easy, considering that the main reason for visiting it is the unique physical feature of the city itself, an outstanding cultural and natural landscape, which let “Venice and its Lagoon” be inserted in the UNESCO World Heritage List from 1987. Besides the main tourist attractions, a series of events can be considered as primary products too, such as the Carnival, *Regata Storica*, *Redentore*, New Years’ Eve, which attract high tourist flows every year, and the countless cultural initiatives, among which Arts and Architecture Biennale and Venice Film Festival are the most known.

Museums do not seem to be the main reason for visiting the city by the majority of tourists, however, as Table 3 shows, they represent a huge part of the supply and their visitors keep on increasing.

Table 3 - Museums visitors 2014/2015

	2014	2015	Variation 2014/2015
Fondazione Musei Civici Venezia³	2.144.983	2.229.925	4,00%
State Museums⁴	759.590	759.590	6,50%
Ecclesiastical Museums & churches	361.197	401.143	11,10%
Other Museums⁵	776.453	821.562	5,49%
Scuole Grandi⁶	169.097	170.625	0,89%
Total	4.042.223	4.212.220	4,03%

Source: personal elaboration from Comune di Venezia Settore Turismo, 2016

While primary products are easily recognizable, secondary products need a deeper explanation. Hospitality system counts 18.213 beds in hotel accommodations, the majority of which are part of 4 stars' hotels, and 14.683 in extra-hotel accommodations, among which private houses, Bed & Breakfast are the most widespread. Both categories keep on expanding their capacity, but in particular the second one had an increase of 10,4% last year and it is represented mostly by private apartments. A similar trend is observable in Airbnb, the famous online homestay network, which enables people to rent short-term lodging in residential properties. As highlighted in figure 6, the number of Airbnb listed properties have highly grown in the last years. This aroused various debates in the city since the majority of listings are entire apartments, estimated to be rented frequently and for a high price, as Inside Airbnb⁷ study demonstrates. Also

³ Foundation Venice Civic Museums comprehends Palazzo Ducale, Museo Correr, Museo del Vetro, Ca' Rezzonico, Ca' Pesaro, Museo di Storia Naturale, Palazzo Mocenigo, Casa di Carlo Goldoni, Torre dell'Orologio, Museo del Merletto

⁴ Galleria dell'Accademia, Galleria Franchetti alla Ca' D'Oro, Palazzo Grimani, Museo Archeologico, Museo dell'Arte Orientale

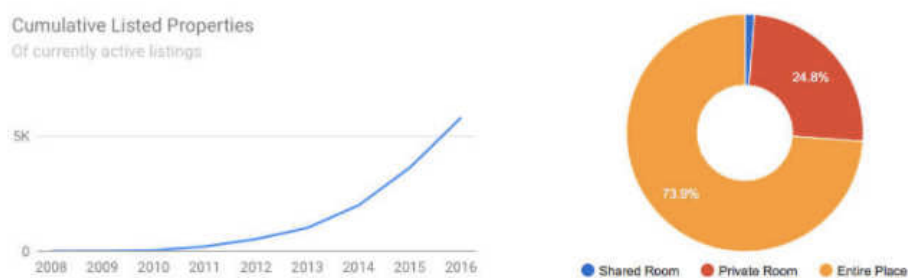
⁵ Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Museo Ebraico, Museo Storico Navale, Isola di Torcello, Sale Monumentali della Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana

⁶ Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Scuola Dalmata dei Santi Giorgio e Trifone, Scuola Grande San Giovanni Evangelista, Scuola Grande dei Carmini

⁷ Inside Airbnb is an independent, non-commercial set of tools and data that allows you to explore how Airbnb is really being used in cities around the world. Venice data are available here: www.insideairbnb.com/venice

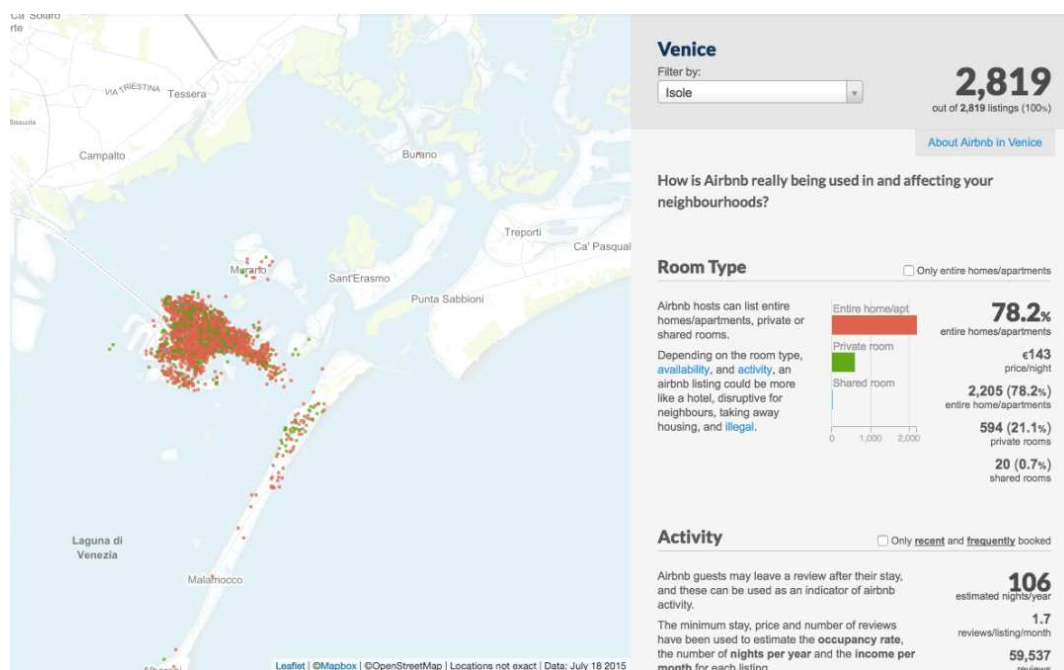
considering that some Venetian hosts manage more than 80 listings⁸ (thus unlikely living in the property), this situation does not represent a widespread phenomenon of sharing economy but rather a new expression of unlicensed hotel business, at the detriment of both the hospitality sector and the residential housing.

Figure 6 - The growth of Airbnb listings in the last years



Source: ResetVenezia.it, 2017

Figure 7 - Inside Airbnb data in Venice



Source: www.insideairbnb.com/venice/, 2017

⁸ Affitti turistici a Venezia – AirBnB dati aggiornati ad ottobre 2016, Resetvenezia.it, 9th November 2016; according to www.insideairbnb.com/venice/, Venice Airbnb are multiple listings for a 68,4% (9th February, 2017)

Underground accommodation represents a similar argument: its data are impossible to retrieve, but their evidence is clear in the growing lack of residential spaces for citizens in the city centre.

Together with hospitality, food & beverage constitutes another important part of the secondary product. As Zanini and Lando study⁹ underlines, in Venice this sector strongly developed in the last decades in parallel to the spread of mass tourism. They divided the offer into two main groups: standing-consumption businesses (bars, pubs, fast foods, take-aways, pastry or ice-cream shops...) and seated-consumption businesses (restaurants, pizzerias); the first one are likely addressed to tourists and workers, while the second one mainly to tourists. The researchers noticed a strong increase in particular in the latter, especially regarding the tourist zones of San Marco, San Polo and Cannaregio.

Table 4 - Growth of standing-consumption businesses between 1976 and 2007

					Δ 2007-1976	
	1976	%	2007	%	Total	%
S. Marco	109	24	99	19,60	-10	-9,17
Cannaregio	106	23	95	18,81	-11	-10,38
Castello	84	18	100	19,80	16	19,05
S. Polo	62	14	84	16,63	22	35,48
Dorsoduro	50	11	66	13,07	16	32,00
S. Croce	31	7	49	9,70	18	58,06
Giudecca	16	3	12	2,38	-4	-25,00
Totale	458	100,00	505	100,00	47	10,26

Source: Zanini & Lando; 2008

Table 5 - Growth of seated-consumption businesses between 1976 and 2007

					Δ 2007-1976	
	1976	%	2007	%	Total	1976
S. Marco	76	33	80	21,51	4	5,26
Cannaregio	47	20	78	20,97	31	65,96
Castello	47	20	81	21,77	34	72,34
S. Polo	21	9	50	13,44	29	138,10
Dorsoduro	18	8	29	7,80	11	61,11
S. Croce	12	5	47	12,63	35	291,67
Giudecca	9	4	7	1,88	-2	-22,22
Totale	230	100,00	372	100,00	142	61,74

Source: Zanini & Lando; 2008

⁹ Zanini F., Lando F., L'impatto del turismo sul commercio al dettaglio. Il caso di Venezia, 2008

As for business tourism infrastructures, Venice city centre does not own many spaces to hosts conferences or conventions. As a matter of fact, during the last years the municipality focused on the creation of a scientific hub in the “mainland”, represented by the complexes of the Scientific-technologic Park VEGA¹⁰ in Marghera and the Ca’ Foscari Scientific Campus in Mestre. Besides some Ca’ Foscari University halls, the most suitable venues for conferences are the Scuole Grandi¹¹, among which the most used for this purpose is the one of San Giovanni Evangelista¹².

2.1.2 Venice image

Understanding Venice perception in tourist’s mind is fundamental for the overall analysis of the typology of tourism characterizing the city.

The average tourists’ knowledge of Venice is general and essentially based on the iconic value the city has in their mind¹³. Some world-wide known symbols have contributed to the creation of such an image: gondolas, canals and bridges, carnival masks, the landscapes of Rialto, the Grand Canal and San Marco. All these elements compose the atmosphere the tourist expects to find once arrived at the destination, often probably only for a short day-trip. If the motivation is undifferentiated, the experience will be superficial: the visit to the city is limited to the satisfaction of this kind of expectations¹⁴. Thus, once these are confirmed, the tourist acquires an idea of the city which is far from the reality and result of a widespread standardization.

This is also connected to souvenirs merchandising: it enforces the theming of Venice as “the city of gondolas and carnival” at the detriment of the authenticity of local products. The same happens with the common culinary offer, which proposes a series of low quality “Italian dishes”.

¹⁰ Venice Gateway for Science and Technology; www.vegapark.ve.it/

¹¹ See paragraph 2.2.1 *The Scuole Grandi in Venice*

¹² Congressi e Banqueting, www.scuolasangiiovanni.it/index.php?page=18

¹³ S. Meneghello, Università Ca’ Foscari - Ciset, Tourism in Venice: cultural productions impact on induced image and authenticity, Hypertrophic Tourism, Venice, 11th November 2016

¹⁴ “Venice is an invisible city, what is not known does not exists”, President of Venice Tourist Guide, Hypertrophic Tourism, Venice, 11th November 2016

According to Russo (2002), Venice has a bad reputation in terms of prices and treatment in restaurant, gondolas and other tourist facilities, a factor that he sees as a non-explicit means of regulation actualized by residents annoyed by tourist crowds.

Tourists' perception can also be influenced by cultural productions (S. Meneghello, 2016). In English and North-American literature, for instance, the entire story is focused on the tourist's point of view and Venice is often seen as an escape from daily life. Byron's works connected the city to romanticism, while the stories around Casanova to the theme of love. After the distribution of some movies, like "Don't Look Now"¹⁵, Venice has also been seen as a gloomy and crumbling place.

2.1.3 Venice external & internal accessibility

Accessibility is a crucial question for Venice as a tourism destination, since both external one and internal one are very peculiar.

The former directly depends on the fact that Venice has only two overland access points¹⁶: Piazzale Roma and Santa Lucia station, situated in a close distance in the north area of the island. This means that all tourist flows converge in this zone, creating overcrowding problems on the paths towards the main attractions originating from there. Piazzale Roma is the unique car, taxi, buses and tram arrival point of the island; it was developed in the '30s as a result of the construction of the car bridge, which, in parallel to the train one¹⁷, connects the island to the mainland.

The service of the buses and trams circulating here is widespread and adequate¹⁸, however they are often overcrowded and offer a scarce covering of some zones of the "mainland" especially at night time.

Despite Venice access peculiarity, progresses have been made in order to make Venice accessible from external regions in the last decades. As a matter of fact,

¹⁵ *Don't Look Now* is a 1973 British-Italian movie directed by Nicolas Roeg. It is a physiological thriller about the story of a married couple who travel to Venice following the recent accidental death of their daughter.

¹⁶ excluding the port, for sea connection

¹⁷ Instead, it dates back to 1860

¹⁸ Venezia e la sua Laguna, Patrimonio Mondiale Unesco, Piano di Gestione 2012-2018

according to WHS Management Plan 2012-2018, Venice can count on a high level of accessibility and infrastructures (ports and airports)¹⁹.

Although a real high-speed train railway is still not existent, the station is the point of arrival and departure of trains covering great part of Italian peninsula and connecting Venice also to some European cities. Venice Marco Polo and Treviso Canova Airports are main international gateways to the city, as well as highways, which connect not only Italian demand basin but also the Central Europe one.

Furthermore, Venice is the first cruise home port in the Mediterranean, besides offering connections by ferry boats, fast boats from/to Croatia and yacht.

As far as internal accessibility is concerned, except taxis, which are very expensive, and private boats, the unique transport means in Venice are the water buses. For non-residents, the price is high²⁰, thus, also considering they are relatively slow and often overcrowded, it is not always convenient to use them. Most venetian people move by foot, however, orienting in Venice can be difficult for foreigners. Traditional tourist signs are widespread all over the city addressing visitors to the main tourist attractions. However, they identify some paths in the city, leaving other zones apart: the white or yellow signs are themselves responsible of the overcrowding of some itineraries (Cavallo, 2014).

Figure 8 - Traditional tourist signs in Venice



Source: www.vivovenetia.com/, 2016

¹⁹ Venezia e la sua Laguna, Patrimonio Mondiale Unesco, Piano di Gestione 2012-2018

²⁰ A ticket costs 7,50 Euros

Neither cars nor bicycles are allowed in the city. Cars can be parked in Piazzale Roma, where fees are very high, or in Tronchetto²¹, an artificial island connected to the “mainland”, from where maritime station and Piazzale Roma can be directly reached through a monorail train, called People Mover.

Tourist information offices are located in the main arrival points, Piazzale Roma, the station and in San Marco square. They are easily identifiable since they have on their signs the brand of *Venezia Unica* City Pass, the tourism destination official card which combines the purchase of public transport, attractions tickets and other services for travellers. Its website is the official online information source: it provides practical details, promotes the forthcoming events and proposes alternative itineraries too.

2.1.4 Local government and tourist industry strategies

In 2002, Antonio Paolo Russo²² stated that the rich set of cultural resources in Venice was not working as a true “system”, since management and ownership bodies did not have a common strategy or a unique selling point. Thus, in order to solve this long lasting fragmentation, he wished for the success of pro-active marketing projects for the promotion and commercialization of the cultural assets as an integrated system based on common ticketing, coordination of events, websites, creation of marketing structures. At that time, those ideas were a novelty for a city that used to consider its international fame enough to attract a steadily growing flow of visitors (Russo, 2002).

Today, a similar tentative is represented by *Venezia Unica* City Pass, Venice actual official tourist information and booking portal. Through this card, besides acquiring detailed information on the city tourist offer, the travelers can build and book their own visit to the city from transports to cultural attractions.

²¹ Tronchetto arranges a large parking for tourist coaches, which are not allowed to reach Piazzale Roma

²² Cultural Clusters & Tourism Development: the Challenge of Venice, in *Culture: A Driving Force for Urban Tourism – Application of Experiences to Countries in Transition*, Dubrovnik, 2002

Figure 9 - Venezia Unica City Pass Logo



Source: www.veneziaunica.it/it, 2017

The card was released in 2013, after the past experiences of Carta Venezia and Imob, and addressed not only to tourists but also to residents, who can top it up with bus and water bus tickets. Its aim is the integration of different services in a virtual and e-commerce environment: it is connected to a free app which allows to consult public transport timetables and news and to be constantly updated on city events. By creating their own “package”, tourists are free to organize their visit according to their wishes and interest. Hence, the information offered by *Venezia Unica* should address the visitors towards differentiated paths, relieving in this way the pressure on the most crowded areas.

Venezia Unica City Pass is managed by Vela S.p.A. upon commission from the City of Venice. This company, set up in 1998 by ACTV S.p.a.²³ to develop its commercial activities, currently manages numerous different products and services aimed at maintaining a relationship among the brand, the local area, citizens and tourists. In 2013, Vela incorporated Venezia Marketing & Eventi Spa and Lido Eventi e Congressi Spa, becoming the most important events organizer and local tourist marketing promotor in Venice. According to its website²⁴, *Venezia Unica* is a unique case of systems integration involving ticketing and access to public and private services in Italy. The portal aims at offering citizens a reliable reference point with an extensive presence throughout the city and at providing visitors with high quality and reliable services with an easy and secure bookings and purchase procedure.

²³ Venice Public Transport Company

²⁴ www.vela.avmspa.it

Therefore, although Vela S.p.A. is a subsidiary company of Venice Municipality, practically the territorial marketing and cultural management is totally entrusted by the Municipality to an entity which operates as a private company.

As far as the hospitality sector is concerned, there are no meaningful collaboration neither with *Venezia Unica* portal, nor among the hotels themselves.

To conclude, as the WHS Management Plan 2012-2018²⁵ underlines, Venice tourism system is still characterized by important weaknesses. Among them, the lack of a territorial coordination in tourism policies and a tourist operator scarce inclination in introducing new technologies and in spreading information and new proposals represent the crucial points.

As for cultural heritage preservation and valorization, problems often derive from the presence of laws which are not calibrated to Venice urban specificity and from the institution competences overlaps, which bring to an *impasse* of administrative activity.

2.2 The Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Misericordia: historical context

Before analyzing the competitiveness of the site chosen as case study, a brief contextualization around the building is required to better understand the dynamics characterizing its actual situation and the value it represents for the community and the city itself.

2.2.1 The Scuole Grandi in Venice

The *Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Misericordia*, also simply known as *Scuola Grande della Misericordia*, is a majestic (rather, out of the proportions) building situated in the north of Venice, in Cannaregio *sestiere*²⁶. Despite its external appearance and its “roman” architectural style assimilate it to a church, its original function was to host the headquarters of the same name confraternity.

²⁵ Venezia e la sua Laguna, Patrimonio Mondiale Unesco, Piano di Gestione 2012-2018

²⁶ Venice is divided into 6 *sestieri*, which can be identified as quarters. They are: Castello, Cannaregio, Dorsoduro, San Marco, San Polo, Santa Croce.

Figure 10 - Scuola Grande della Misericordia façade



Source: www.ppan.it/stories/misericordia/, 2016

In the second half of the XIII Century a movement of fanatic religious wanderers coming from the center of Italy started to integrate itself in Venice social life. They soon acquired both laical and religious functions and founded the so-called *Scuole*, divided into two categories: “*grandi*” and “*piccole*”²⁷. The *Scuole Grandi* were dedicated to a saint’s worship; the first ones were San Giovanni Evangelista, San Marco, Santa Maria della Misericordia, San Rocco, Santa Maria della Carità. The *Scuole Piccole* were instead related to arts & crafts corporations (shoemakers, tailors, bricklayers, goldsmiths...). Both kinds of confraternities were originally born with a charitable aim: giving assistance to poor and infirm people, providing them primary goods, free houses or hospital structures. Since both institutions were laical confraternities, and not cloistered monasteries, their influence in the society and in

²⁷ In Italian “*grandi*” means big, while “*piccole*” means small.

the politics of the city was more widespread. The *Scuole Grandi* were financed by bequests, donations and members' percentages (Morresi, 2016). With the time their wealth increased also thanks to property investments; for this reason, from the end of the XV Century the *Scuole* started to compete for the sumptuousness of their headquarters and the beauty of the pictorial cycles in their interiors²⁸. The charitable functions were still pursued; however, the main beneficiaries were the confraternities' members and their families. In this framework, the social status of the *Scuole* was codified: they had to be governed by citizens and their activity had to be controlled by the *Consiglio dei Dieci*²⁹. In the 16th Century the *Scuole* became one of the main political and social power in the city (Howard, 1999) and they had a prominent role in institutional ceremonies.

Since they had to represent the citizen power in the Republic, their headquarters had to be wide and magnificent: they were traditionally composed by a courtroom divided in naves by single columns on the ground floor, a superior room, an *albergo*, which was a room for the executive bodies meetings, and a huge staircase at the exteriors (Morresi, 2000).

With the collapse of Venice Republic in 1797, the *Scuole* were abolished by Napoleon's edict. However, during the following century some of them reformed, like the *Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista*, the one of *San Teodoro*, the one of *Carmini* and the *Scuola Dalmata dei Santi Giorgio e Trifone*. These institutions still exist and besides pursuing the original charitable ends, they aim at conserving and valorizing their cultural and artistic heritage. Others have now different uses, for example the *Scuola di San Marco* hosts now the civil hospital.

2.2.2 *The origins of the Scuola Grande della Misericordia*

The confraternity of the *Scuola Grande della Misericordia* was originally founded in 1261 inside *Frari* church³⁰ for *Virgen Mary* and *San Francesco* worship. In 1308 it was moved into *Santa Maria della Misericordia Abbey* in *Cannaregio*

²⁸ This phenomenon regards the *Scuole Grandi*; the headquarters of the *Scuole Piccole* were hosted in simpler buildings because of the local provenience of their members

²⁹ One of the major governing bodies of the Republic of Venice

³⁰ One of the major churches in Venice, dedicated to the Assumption, in *San Polo sestiere*.

sestiere and two years later its first separated headquarter was built next to it. The building was enlarged many times due to the strength of the popular devotion at those times. However, in 1489, it was declared unusable by the executive bodies and the Consiglio dei Dieci authorized the construction of a new headquarter. Here a long and rough story begins (Morresi, 2016). Considering, in particular, the new projects for the staircase of the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista (already competing with the just built one of Scuola di San Marco), the confraternity voted to erect the new Scuola to another site, in front of the Abbey, next to the hospital and the charity houses. The old building was supposed to become a lodging to substitute the demolished one. The beginning of the ambitious project was however slowed down by general doubts about the choice of the architect who would have executed it, by *Scuola's* financial difficulties and by military circumstances. After more than thirty years, in 1531, when also the *Scuola di San Rocco* was completed and the contrast with the empty construction site of the Misericordia one was evident, the confraternity commissioned four new models for the reconstruction of the *Scuola*, also taking into consideration the reconquering of the mainland by the Republic and the rearranging of the *Scuola* finances. In a situation characterized by a scarcity of architects in the city, the choice fell on Jacopo Sansovino, a Florentine sculptor³¹ who just came to Venice from Rome, sustained by the Doge Gritti (the inspirer of the *renovatio urbis*³² of Venice).

The project was ambitious and shattering: the monumental building had to impose itself beyond venetian horizons and being known also outside Republic borders. To fulfil this aim he took inspiration from the roman language and designed an antic-style building with majestic dimensions (21 x 49 meters), totally extraneous if compared to the already existing architectures in Venice. Sansovino's original idea was to complete the building with a barrel vault, as he had already done in the Biblioteca Marciana in San Marco Square. However, in 1545 this latter collapse, provoking the architect's imprisonment and a reconsideration on the creation of a more traditional hut roof. At those times the ground floor walls had

³¹ Misericordia original intention was to adorn the building with rich sculptural decorations

³² Process of renewal of the city

already been built to sustain the initial barrel vault: this is why the building seems so disproportionate to today's eyes (Torsello, 2016).

The project was criticized and changed numerous times for different reasons by both the *Scuola* itself and family Moro, member of the confraternity and owner of the land. The main explanation of these continuous reconsiderations depended on the governmental system of the confraternity, according to which every year a new executive body had to be elected by the members' assembly, creating different power balances and, as a consequence, contradictory choices on the construction site (Morresi, 2016). In particular, the discussion on the columns system and the staircase continued also after Sansovino's death in 1570.

From 1606 to 1609 the walls were decorated by Paolo Veronese's school with a frescos cycle on Old Testament Prophets, which is still partly visible today.

Around 1640 the idea of completing the exterior with Corinthian semi-columns was abandoned and the building lingered incomplete as in the nowadays state. The second half of the XVIII Century and the XIX Century were characterized by small maintenance interventions and a general decline and abandon of the structure.

2.2.3 *The Scuola Grande during Contemporary Age and the Reyer*

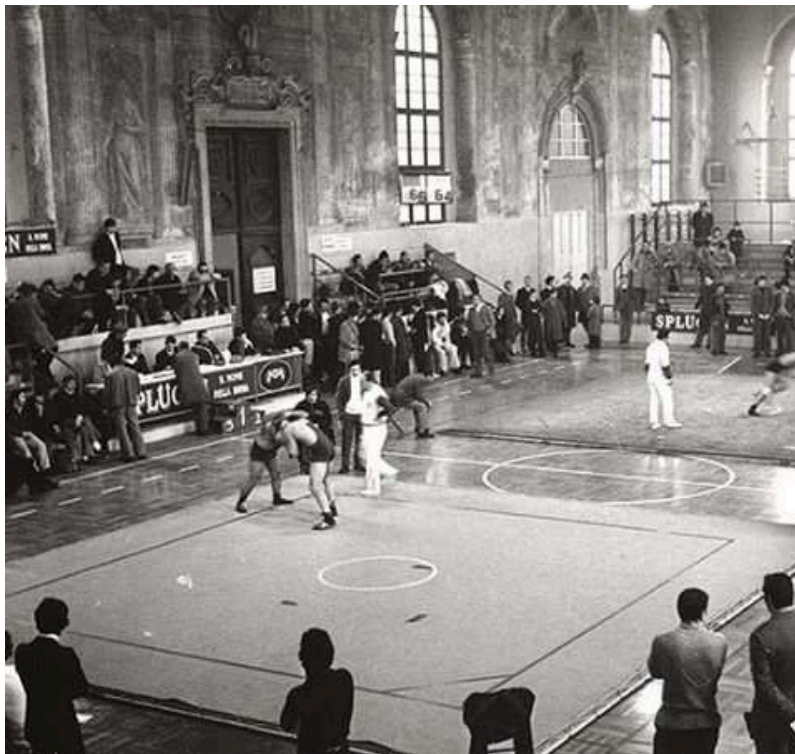
At the beginning of 1800 the *Scuola* was used as a military depository and a lodging for Austrian troops. In 1806 Napoleon abolished confraternities: after French Revolution and the industrial progress of those years, modern cities required more buildings or an adaptive re-use of the already existing ones. For this reason, the *Scuola Grande della Misericordia*, like several other similar structures, was spoiled of its decorative elements, pavements and marble coverings and used as a storage. Its end use kept on being uncertain; hospital and post station are just some of the proposed hypothesis. At the end of the century it was used by the municipality as Labor Chamber and as meeting place.

This decay period finished in 1921, when the *Scuola* was assigned to the sport association Reyer³³, which needed a large space to host its activities. The adaptation

³³ Today, Umana Reyer - Basket Venezia Mestre, henceforth more briefly indicated as "Reyer Basket"

works for the first floor room started in 1927, while the ground floor one was used as municipal archive. In 1930 Reyer basketball team had its debut in Italian Major League: its successes made the *Scuola* become the “temple of venetian sport”, known not any more as *Scuola Grande della Misericordia* but as “*Reyer alla Misericordia*”.

Figure 11 - The Scuola Grande della Misericordia as Reyer Basketball gym



Source: www.facebook.com/MisericordiaDiVenezia/?fref=ts, 2016

However, this new activities and collective interests brought to the emergence of a deep conflict between modernization needs and conservation ones. Despite the *Soprintendenza*³⁴ contrast, the Municipality, under the public opinion pressure, continued a project of adaptation which brought to several damages of the original structure. Reyer activities continued till 1989, when the Municipality decided to close the building due to a confluency of different factors: the construction of another *Palasport*³⁵ in the mainland, the pressure of cultured public

³⁴ *Soprintendenza* is an organism of the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism which deals with the safeguard of Cultural Heritage of a specific territory

³⁵ in Italian, an indoor Sport Arena mainly used for basketball matches

opinion, a serious collapse situation and security problems, the allocation of state funding for restoration and a weakening of public demand of sport activities.

2.2.4 Gianni Fabbri's project: an auditorium and a multimedia centre

Therefore, the municipality, owner of the structure, began to search a new use for the *Scuola Grande*. The decision was not easy, since many factors had to be considered: the building had to have an urban character and to correspond to an idea of Venice as capital of culture. Furthermore, its physical features could not be neglected: extraordinary dimensions (the first floor room is the biggest one in Venice after Sala del Maggior Consiglio of Doge's Palace) and a peripheral location but with a good external accessibility.

In parallel to other re-use interventions and to a wider idea of artistic-cultural relaunch of Venice, the Municipality decided for the realization of a musical multimedia center and entrusted the works to the venetian architect Gianni Fabbri. The project was based on two main units: on the ground floor a music informational and listening center (Centro di Informazione e di Ascolto Musicale – CIAM) was supposed to offer on a daily basis a series of PC positions, from where listening and visioning multimedia materials about traditional venetian music, and a shop for the sale of books, CDs, instruments; on the first floor an *Auditorium* for symphonic and chamber music, also able to host other events (conferences, performances, shows...).

Fabbri's project objective was to reestablish the extraordinary noble character of the interiors, reclaiming the original Sansovino's idea and valorizing it with new architectural elements. Despite these good intentions, the project faced profound and not-easy reversible alterations (above all the realization of another reinforced concrete external stair) as well as a fragmentation of the original units of the space and an inconsistent functional use (Morresi, 2000).

The project was approved by both Soprintendenza and the municipality, whose intention was to finance the interventions through fund dispensed by the

Special Law for Venice Safeguard³⁶. However, in August 2003 these funding were inconsistent and the project was suspended.

2.2.5 A new idea for the Scuola Grande della Misericordia

In 2008 the Municipality announced a tender³⁷ for the concession for the planning and execution of restoration and renovation works and the management of the Scuola, through the instrument of project financing. Through this concession, a private entity commits to finance the restoration of the building in return for the right of managing and economically exploiting the space. In particular, the concession envisages the possibility to manage a bookshop and café/restaurant enjoyable for the structure users and to rent the rooms for promotional events, corporate meetings and exhibitions. At the end of the concession period, lasting 42 years and 20 days, the private company commits itself to return an improved building thanks to conservation and valorization interventions.

The tender was won by Scuola della Misericordia Venezia S.p.A. (SMV S.p.A.)³⁸ – a company created on purpose by Umana S.p.A. and Consortium Aeders³⁹ - the only business entity participating in the call. At the time its honorary president was Luigi Brugnaro, already president of Confindustria Venezia⁴⁰, Umana S.p.A. and Reyer Basket, nowadays also Venice mayor.

Actually, the Scuola re-opened even before the signing of the contract⁴¹, in June 2009, in order to host Lithuania, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan Pavilions, as well as works of the artists Luigi Voltolina and Dario Milana, for the 53rd Venice Art Biennale. The operation was announced with great enthusiasm by the Municipality,

³⁶ Law 5th February 1992 n. 139, Law 20th December 1995 n. 539, Law 4th October 1996 n. 515, Law 2nd October 1997 n. 345, Law 3rd August 1998 n. 295, Law 28th December 1998 n. 448.

³⁷ Tender 24th January 2008, n. 6

³⁸ In Italian corporate law S.p.A. corresponds to joint-stock company, a business entity where different stocks can be bought and owned by shareholders

³⁹ *Misericordia: la giunta fissa i "paletti" a Brugnaro*, Enrico Tantucci, La Nuova di Venezia e Mestre, 18th March 2013

⁴⁰ Confindustria Venezia is the main association representing industries in the province of Venice and Rovigo. Luigi Brugnaro was its president from 2009 to 2013.

⁴¹ The contract was stipulated on the 16th November 2009 and registered on the 19th November 2009

which connected it to other important re-openings in the city, such as the ones of Magazzini del Sale, Italian Pavilion at Biennale Gardens, Punta della Dogana, Ca' Giustinian. The idea behind all of them was to a re-launch of Venice as a cultural and innovative capital⁴².

That opening period was however just a short parenthesis: the construction site was still open and the restoration needed further interventions. Thus, Scuola della Misericordia Venezia S.p.A, under Superintendence supervision, entrusted the project to the architect Alberto Torsello, whose concept was to make the building the most functional and flexible possible while keeping the ancient structure, but also according to an idea of an economic sustainability able to allow a return to the backer. Despite these good proposals, the works started only some years later, in July-September 2014, arising various controversies against the Municipality and the S.p.A. The main one dealt with the private use of the public building for hosting parties for millionaires, private concerts, marriages and corporate events. For the private entity, using the building without restoring it would have meant obtaining free benefits without charging costs; while for the city it would have coincided with the loss of the public use, thus nullifying the aim of the concession. The situation was also exacerbated by the lack of penalties payment linked to the delay in starting the planning and the conservation works.⁴³ At the project official presentation meeting, on the 6th of June 2014, Luigi Brugnaro explained that the delay was caused by an issue about the loan warranty from the bank which was finally paid by the company⁴⁴.

After less than one year, in March 2015, Brugnaro presented himself as candidate mayor for the city of Venice, raising polemics about a possible conflict of interest in the management of the Scuola, since Umana S.p.A. holds 80% of the SMV

⁴² *Riapre alla città la Scuola Grande della Misericordia*, Comune di Venezia, 27th May 2009

⁴³ *Patrimonio pubblico e profitti privati: La Scuola Grande della Misericordia*, www.beppegrillo.it, 20th August 2013

⁴⁴ *Restituiremo la Misericordia alla città*, Alberto Vitucci, La Nuova di Venezia e Mestre, 7th June 2014

S.p.A. shares⁴⁵. The presentation of Torsello's restoration interventions in the Scuola took place on the 11th June 2015, at the conclusion of its campaign - just three days before Election Day -, in order to demonstrate citizenry that the works were concluded as expected by the concession and the project financing⁴⁶.

After the last interventions, tests and electric settlements, the Scuola opened finally on the 13th March 2016. The official inauguration took place on the 23rd of April 2016 with an exhibition on the story and the restoration of the building, and on the 29th with an event dedicated to Reyer Basket, showing the documentary "La Palestra più bella del mondo" – The most beautiful gym in the world –.⁴⁷

The first months after the end of the restoration saw a constant and free opening of the building, which also hosted from 27th May to 20th June a collateral event of Architecture Biennale called "Designing the complexity: Materials Colors Textures" by the architect Marco Piva, on materials, colours and textures of architectural projects. Successively, in July the Scuola was opened just from Friday to Sunday and from the end of August public visits were possible just during the weekend. Besides Ca' Foscari Art Night and a conference about restoration, no other exhibitions or events have been hosted at its interior during this period.

From 4th February to 25th March 2017 the Scuola will host the exhibition Genesis by the Venetian artist Gianfranco Meggiato. It will be open from Wednesday to Sunday (10.00-18.00) and the entrance is subjected to the payment of a 5 euros ticket (except for students, who can obtain a 50% reduction, and residents, who can enter for free).

⁴⁵ *Restauro "minimalista" per la Misericordia*, Mitia Chiarin, La Nuova di Venezia e Mestre, 1st October 2013

⁴⁶ *Scuola Grande della Misericordia, tutti i segreti del restauro*, Francesco Bottazzo, Corriere del Veneto, 12th June 2015; *Torna la Misericordia, sarà spazio polivalente: affreschi e pavimento d'acciaio*, La Nuova di Venezia e Mestre, 12th June 2015

⁴⁷ *La Misericordia apre nel segno del basket*, Alberto Vitucci, La Nuova di Venezia e Mestre, 21st April 2016

Figure 12 - Marco Piva's Designing the complexity installations in Scuola Grande della Misericordia



Source: www.facebook.com/MisericordiaDiVenezia/?fref=ts, 2016

2.3. The Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Misericordia: the actual structure and use

As aforementioned, the restoration of the Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Misericordia has been entrusted by SMV S.p.A. to Alberto Torsello, a venetian architect who has been active in the field of cultural heritage safeguard and valorisation since 1994⁴⁸.

The investment consisted of around 10 million euros and has been concretized in a tender of 6.300 million euros for the restoration, settlements and construction works⁴⁹. It was won by a cluster composed by the companies Lares, Lithos and Setten, which were already famous for Rialto Bridge restoration, and Fiel, which dealt with the electric settlements. The total intervention lasted almost one year and a half.

Torsello's project was based on three main principles: building safety, respect of the historical layering and re-functionalization. Pursuing the three of them at the same time meant dealing with trade-offs and conveying them into a unique solution able to integrate all these aspects (Torsello, 2016).

⁴⁸ Conoscere per progettare, www.taarchitettura.it, 2016

⁴⁹ *Restauro "minimalista" per la Misericordia*, Mitia Chiarin, La Nuova di Venezia e Mestre, 1st October 2013

Proceeding by steps, the first interventions aimed at removing the main degradation causes, such as structural failures, rainwater and humidity. The second phase consisted in resolving Sansovino and Fabbri's projects static criticalities, which mainly regarded the external walls bricks, the roof, the columns. In particular, the external staircase was covered by a weathering steel⁵⁰ structure.

Successively, after various studies and assessment, the architectural idea at the basis of the re-functionalization of the building was found in a new concept for the floor, which consequently became the project supporting element and raised greater resonance on the local newspapers. Being the most compromised surface of the structure⁵¹, it was also the one on which they could operate the most. For this reason, the floor, composed by 6mm treated steel sheets, has been used as a stratagem to hide the laying of all settlements: heating, air-conditioning, electricity, alarms, internet, lighting. Furthermore, it makes the building particularly flexible thanks to wells with technical features which can be opened and used in case of exhibitions or other events. This kind of device would have created a greater impact if put on the rooms walls. The same criterion has been used to set the reinforced concrete external staircase, one of the most invasive interventions of the previous project: it has been upholstered by steel sheets similar to the floor's one from which the old rough surface glimpses.

The intention of keeping time signs is perceptible also in the frescos, whose lacks and deformations have been maintained to give a certain uniformity to the whole cycle.

Being reversible and flexible to different functions, Torsello's idea also aimed at guaranteeing environmental and economic sustainability, thanks to the use of natural and setting-compatible materials able to provide energy-saving and long-term solutions⁵². It has been appreciated for its minimalism and because it left the

⁵⁰ Weathering steel, best-known under the trademark COR-TEN steel, is a group of steel alloys which were developed to eliminate the need for painting and form a stable rust-like appearance if exposed to the weather for several years. The name is short for "corrosion resistance" and "tensile strength".

⁵¹ The original marble floor was moved to Marciana Library in S. Marco Square in 1815

⁵² *Scuola Grande della Misericordia, Restauro e riqualificazione funzionale*, www.taararchitettura.it, 2016

tracks of Sansovino's failures which otherwise would not have been recognizable (Morresi, 2016).

The functions for which the project has been thought does not correspond to a specific end use, rather it aims at being a multi-purpose space. The management identified four macro-categories of functions for the new Scuola: business events, art, dance, fashion exhibition; conferences and corporate parties; performances and happenings⁵³, which should vary according to clients' intentions.

Figure 13 - Scuola Grande della Misericordia backside and the Weathering steel staircase



Source: www.ppan.it/stories/misericordia/, 2016

⁵³ Events area, www.misericordiadivenezia.it, 2016

Figure 14 - Frescos restoration in Scuola Grande della Misericordia



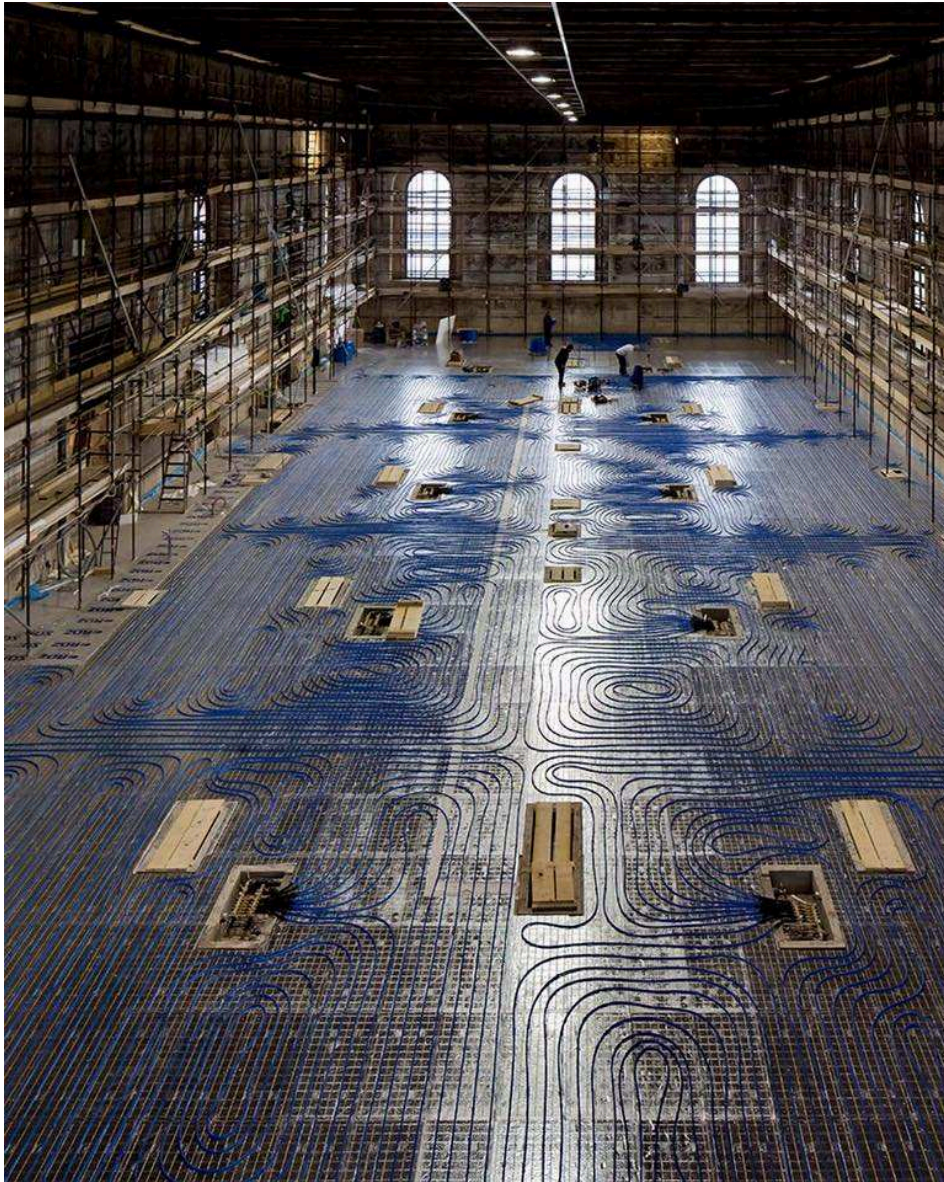
Source: www.facebook.com/MisericordiaDiVenezia/?fref=ts, 2015

Figure 15 - The Scuola Grande della Misericordia during restorations



Source: [/www.facebook.com/MisericordiaDiVenezia/?fref=t](http://www.facebook.com/MisericordiaDiVenezia/?fref=t), 2016

Figure 16 - Interventions to the floor



Source: www.facebook.com/MisericordiaDiVenezia/?fref=ts, 2016

Figure 17 - Scuola Grande della Misericordia interiors, first floor



Source: www.ppan.it/stories/misericordia/, 2016

Figure 18 - Scuola Grande della Misericordia interiors, second floor



Source: Camilla Ferri, 2016

2.4 Jansen-Verbeke model applied to *Scuola Grande della Misericordia*

For an evaluation of its tourism potential, Scuola Grande della Misericordia has been firstly analyzed according to the framework offered by Myriam Jansen-Verbeke, whose theory has been explained in chapter one.

The model versions of 2010, shaped for UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and 2012 have been adapted to the characteristics of the site in order to make the study as complete as possible.

Table 6 - Jansen-Verbeke Model applied to Scuola Grande della Misericordia

HARDWARE			SOFTWARE				ORGWARE			
Of the Heritage Site		Of the tourism destination	of cultural tourism product			Agent & Organization				
Location	Spatial characteristics	Robustness		Presentation & Interpretation	Tourist appeal	Experiencescape	Organization	Stakeholders	Management	Policy
Although out of proportion if compared to Venice urban landscape, it is integrated in an architectural system composed by Misericordia Church and the Scuola Vecchia della Misericordia	Size of the site: Individual monument, local scale	Fragility of tangible assets – monitoring physical impacts (robustness-fragility): good degree of robustness thanks to recent monitoring and restoration interventions	Tourist space-use pattern: station & P.le Roma - main tourist attractions. Shared space between tourists and locals, but in these areas tourist use often exceed locals one, becoming a tourism monoculture	Type and quality of interpretation and which story/stories to be told: very weak presentation and interpretation. Presentation is connected to the glory sport past of Reyer Basket	Secondary place in Venice attractions' hierarchy; Appealing for alternative tourists	Desired message(s): history and modernity, the past as Reyer gym. Theming: not present but identifiable in a trail about <i>Scuole</i> history in Venice or adaptive re-uses for modern art exhibition (in case of this kinds of events)	Single overriding agency: Scuola della Misericordia di Venezia S.p.A.	Single internal stakeholder with a clear focus	Site Management structure: concession from public sector to a private company	Presence of effective national legislation: interventions are subordinated to the direct safeguard of Venice Architectural, Arts and Landscape Superintendence
Part of a contiguous destination area: the whole Venice island can be considered a destination	The internal spatial structure of the site is compact and composed by a single node since there are two rooms, one on the ground floor and one on the first one, not fragmented in other units neither filled in with other elements	Risk that tourism pressure may compromise cultural value: if the use is compatible with the structure there should be no risk; accesses are easily controllable.	Sustainable development of tourism infrastructures: in most cases, tourism infrastructures development did not impact architectural heritage, but it has not been socially sustainable	Valorising link between tangible & intangible heritage: no valorisation, except a link with Reyer basket	Reputation: nowadays the building is mostly known because of its past usage as gym for Reyer Basket. Not very known by tourists, no reviews on Tripadvisor.	Type of tourist attracted to the site: cultural and alternative tourists Type of experience sought: immersion in the history and in the architecture	Ownership: public, Municipality of Venice But: concession to Scuola della Misericordia di Venezia S.p.A. (private)	Power balance between stakeholders: exclusion of external stakeholders in decision making	Presence and effectiveness of formal conservation, management and security plan according to Italian legislation	Level of government & management of the site: local
The location is peripheral (off the most beaten tracks) but has an easy and external accessibility (not too far from Station and P.le Roma and extraordinarily accessible by waterways – from the airport and the rest of the lagoon)	Presence of iconic features: the building itself can be considered iconic for its proportions. Other important features are Corinthian capitals and Veronese atelier's frescos		Clustering: tentative towards the creation of a coordination in the tourism production chain in loco can be represented by <i>Venezia Unica</i> City Pass.	Visitor centre and other facilities: no visitor centre, but facilities for disabled people, nursery, restrooms.	Usage and affinity with the site: meant to host different kinds of events and to promote Veneto excellences. Theoretical affinity with the original use.	Connectivity to the site: - for local visitors: a way to remember the past glory of Reyer Basket - for foreign tourists: difficult to find because of a lack in interpretation	Partnerships: business, cultural and religious sector (mainly at a local level)	No external stakeholder consultation	Revenue source for conservation: project financing (private). No reliance on tourism to provide funds	Pursuit of WHS for conservation goals
Located inside the WHS "Venice and its Lagoon"			Zoning: - tourist zone (concentration Strada Nuova- Rialto-San Marco) - residential zone (mostly displaced to Mestre) - administrative zone (Santa Croce-Dorsoduro)	Presented as it is with little commodification vs. heavily commodified: risk of commodification in case of exclusive use for private events	Marketing strategy & social media: target is composed of corporates or art/culture organizations. Official website with a strong impact; social networks are constantly updated but have few followers	Focus on 'edutainment' or education: to be defined according to exhibitions; not present during normal opening		Awareness of tourism potential: yes, but it does not seem a priority	Perceived role of tourism: ancillary use	Public local - regional management of WHS
Presence of a buffer-zone around WHS: yes				Financial resources for <i>Software</i> : Scuola della Misericordia S.p.A., which is in charge with the management and the "opening to the public in the defined hours".	Venice and its Lagoon was already famous prior the WHS designation	Visitor management: to be defined according to exhibitions; not present during normal opening				

Source: Personal elaboration based on Jansen-Verbeke 2010

2.4.1 Venice as a World Heritage Site

Table 7 - Key issues in tourism in Venice and its Lagoon WHS

Hardware	Software	Orgware
Located in proximity of other WHSs	Already famous prior the WHS designation	Pursuit of WHS for conservation goals
Presence of a buffer-zone around WHS		Public local - regional management of WHS

Source: Personal elaboration based on Jansen-Verbeke 2010

As the question about WHS is concerned, the case study is rather particular, since the building itself is not a WHS on its own, but it is positioned within the WHS *Venice and its Lagoon*. Although for the study purposes the Scuola has been considered as a 'normal' site, the presence of such a designation cannot be overlooked.

Venice has been inscribed in the World Cultural Heritage List in 1987. The goals pursued with this status are based on serious conservation problems which had been already worldwide known in 1966, when UNESCO launched the *Campaign to Save Venice* as a consequence of the disastrous floods which, that year, threatened the survival of its architectural and artistic heritage. However, despite the designation, conservation problems are still nowadays affecting the site: in October 2015 World Heritage Committee sent a joint UNESCO, ICOMOS, RAMSAR monitoring mission to assess the condition of the property. Following the discussion of the report in July 2016, the Italian Government was required to implement the necessary measures to avoid the actualization of the potential threats, as well as to protect the Outstanding Universal Value, the integrity and the authenticity of the property. Among them: the prohibition the largest ships and tankers to enter the Lagoon, the prioritization of the development of a sustainable tourism strategy, the regulation of water traffic and the obligation of Environmental Impact Assessments on physical and cultural heritage before planning investment in large-scale developments. According to WHC's decision, if no substantial progress is accomplished by 2017, the inscription of *Venice and Its Lagoon* in the List of the World Heritage in Danger will be considered. For the achievement of these objectives, the signing of a Management Plan and the establishment of a Steering

Committee are not sufficient: they must be integrated and strengthened through changes to the Special Law of Venice and the Statute of the Venice Metropolitan City, taking into account the need to preserve the city and to ensure adequate living conditions for its inhabitants⁵⁴.

The management of the site is devolved to a Steering Committee, coordinated by Venice Municipality and composed of different institutions, with specific competences: Veneto Region, Province of Padua, Province of Venice, Municipality of Venice, Municipality of Campagna Lupia, Municipality of Cavallino-Treporti, Municipality of Chioggia, Municipality of Codevigo, Municipality of Mira, Municipality of Musile di Piave, Municipality of Jesolo, Municipality of Quarto D'Altino, Regional Department of Cultural Heritage and Landscape of Veneto, Superintendence of Architectural Heritage and Landscape of Venice and its Lagoon, Superintendence of Archaeological Heritage of Veneto, Superintendence of Historical and Artistic Heritage of Venice and of the municipalities in the lagoon boundary area, Superintendence of the Archives of Veneto, State Archive of Venice, Diocese of Venice, Venice Water Authority and Port Authority of Venice. The development of the current Management Plan (2012-2018) has been based on a participatory approach at local and public level, which involved all these responsible institutions. Among its strategic objectives: the safeguard, restoration and valorization of architectural, archeological, historical, artistic, ethnic and archive heritage, which have to be realized through the specific Action Plan "heritage safeguard and conservation". Sustainable tourism strategy is another Management Plan priority, whose aim is offering alternative and complementary options to traditional tourism by creating a network among the lagoon municipalities and other key stakeholders that are operating within the property.

The Plan also established the presence of a buffer-zone besides the WHS's borders. In this area, activities have to be regulated in order to avoid negative impacts on the site and alterations of the landscape. The buffer-zone is also defined in order to support logistically the functions and the services connected with the site fruition, such as accessibility and tourist flows regimentations.

⁵⁴ *State of Conservation, Venice and its Lagoon - UNESCO, 2016, wwwwhc.unesco.org/en/soc/3428*

It is widely assumed that the words “World Heritage Site”, accompanied by the name UNESCO and its logo, have a positive brand equity that attracts tourists to the designated site (Poria, 2011). Nonetheless, in the case of Venice, its outstanding value was already recognized before the inscription in the World Heritage List. On the contrary, the designation should have raised awareness on the necessity to preserve its natural and cultural value from excessive tourist flows impacts. However, as the Management Plan underlines, such a social awareness lacks among both tourists and residents. For this reason, its Action Plan “Communication, promotion, education” forecasts various projects regarding the use of UNESCO quality brand, the realization of information points about UNESCO values in strategical access locations and the creation of signage for a better identification of the site.

The revenue sources for the actualization of the Management Plan projects mostly derive from European Projects and The Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, however the main part has still to be found.

As far as its location is concerned, *Venice and its Lagoon* is situated in the proximity of other World Heritage Sites, such as Padua Botanical Garden, City of Vicenza and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto, City of Verona, Archaeological Area and the Patriarchal Basilica of Aquileia, Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps.

2.4.2 Hardware of the heritage site

Table 8 - Jansen-Verbeke model: Hardware

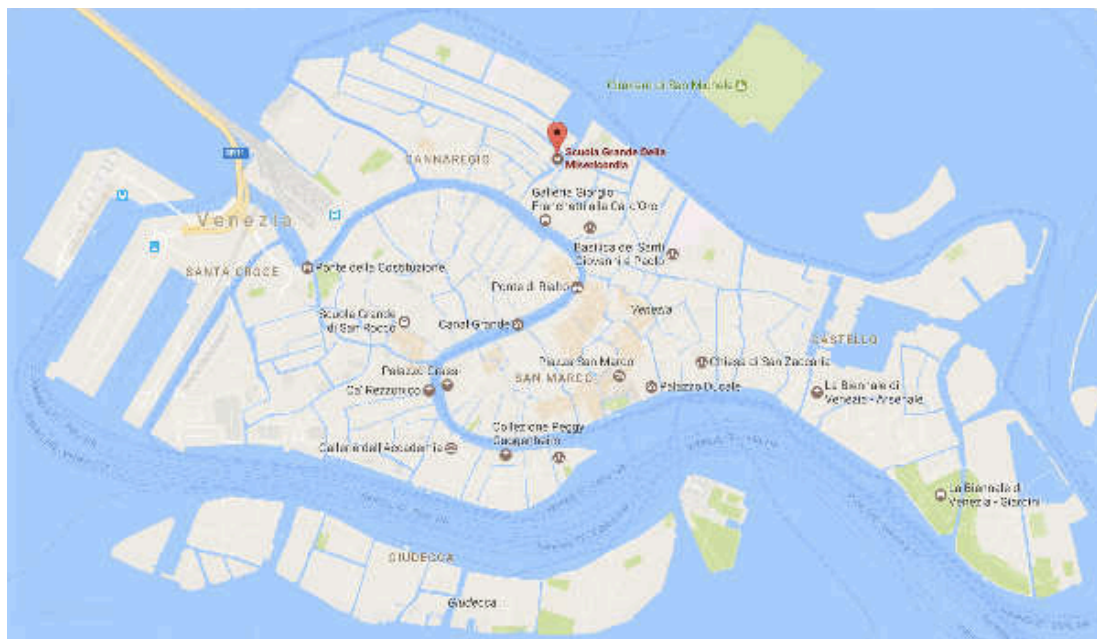
HARDWARE			
of Heritage Site			Of Tourism Destination
Location	Spatial characteristics	Robustness	
Although out of proportion if compared to Venice urban landscape, it is integrated in an architectural system composed by Misericordia Church and the Scuola Vecchia della Misericordia	Size of the site: individual monument, local scale	Fragility of tangible assets – monitoring physical impacts (robustness-fragility): good degree of robustness thanks to recent monitoring and restoration interventions	Tourist space-use pattern: station & P.le Roma - main tourist attractions. Shared space between tourists and locals, but in these areas tourist use often exceed locals one, becoming a tourism monoculture
Part of a contiguous destination area: the whole Venice island can be considered a destination	The internal spatial structure of the site is compact and composed by a single node since there are two rooms, one on the ground floor and one on the first one, not fragmented in other units neither filled in with other elements	Risk that tourism pressure may compromise cultural value: if the use is compatible with the structure there should be no risk; accesses are easily controllable.	Sustainable development of tourism infrastructures: in most cases, tourism infrastructures development did not impact architectural heritage, but it has not been socially sustainable
The location is peripheral but has an easy and external accessibility (not too far from Station and P.le Roma and extraordinarily accessible by waterways – from the airport and the rest of the lagoon)	Presence of iconic features: the building itself can be considered iconic for its proportions		Clustering: tentative towards the creation of a coordination in the tourism production chain in loco can be represented by <i>Venezia Unica</i> City Pass. Zoning: - tourist zone (concentration Strada Nuova- Rialto-San Marco) - residential zone (mostly displaced to Mestre) - administrative zone (S. Croce/Dorsoduro)

Source: Personal elaboration based on Jansen-Verbeke 2010

For the analysis of the *Hardware* of the *Scuola Grande della Misericordia* two perspectives have been distinguished: heritage site and destination. This paragraph describes the former, which includes location related aspects, spatial characteristics and site robustness. Being located in the north of Venice island, the Scuola is far from city main attractions and, thus, off the most tourist beaten tracks. Nevertheless, it cannot be considered as an isolated attraction since it is part of a contiguous destination area represented by Venice city center itself. Observing closer the area in which it is situated, the structure visibly stands out for its proportions, which are majestic if compared to Venice urban landscape.

However, the Scuola is integrated in a precise architectural system composed by Misericordia Church and the Scuola Vecchia della Misericordia, which overlook a small *campo*⁵⁵ behind the Scuola Grande, the main building of the complex. Despite peripheral, the location has a good external accessibility, since it is easily reachable by foot from the Station and Piazzale Roma⁵⁶ and it is extraordinarily accessible by waterways, from the airport and the rest of the lagoon.

Figure 19 - Location of the Scuola Grande della Misericordia



Source: www.google.it/maps, 2017

⁵⁵ In Venice, *campo* means square

⁵⁶ Piazzale Roma, that is cars and buses arrival point, and the station represent the unique Venice gateway

Figure 20 - Scuola Grande della Misericordia is out of proportions if compared to the surrounding buildings



Source: www.misericordiavenezia.it, 2016

Figure 21 - Misericordia Church and Abbey in the backside of the Scuola Grande



Source: Camilla Ferri, 2016

As far as *spatial characteristics* are concerned, the site is composed by a single unity; the study is focused only on the monument on the local scale. The internal spatial structure is compact and represents a single node: the building is composed by two huge rooms, one on the ground floor and one on the first one. This design lets the space not to be fragmented and thus flexible for different functions. Furthermore, there are no other elements to fill the space except the structural ones (the Corinthian columns): the building and its dimension are icon features itself.

As a result of the recent restoration, the building has been monitored and secured. As aforementioned, the works had two purposes: the elimination of the main degradation causes - structural failures, rainwater, humidity - and the resolution of static criticalities - on walls bricks, roof, columns and external staircase -, deriving from the previous projects. Thanks to these interventions the building reached a good state of *robustness*, which has instead been lost during the period in which it was used as Reyer's gym. The carrying capacity is fixed on a number of 1080 persons⁵⁷. Thus, considering the accesses can be easily controlled from the entrances and the extent of the spaces⁵⁸, there should not be a relevant risk that tourist flows may compromise the physical cultural value of the Scuola. This argument is valid regarding the usages chosen for the Scuola according to its structure and do not impact on its physical features, such as the frescos on the walls and the columns.

2.4.3 Hardware of tourism destination

Being part of UNESCO World Heritage Site and almost totally urbanized, the development of tourist infrastructures in Venice city center has not involved the construction of new buildings, but instead the adaptive re-use of historic palaces and houses for hosting hospitality structures. Even if environmentally sustainable and generally respectful of city's architectural heritage, this phenomenon has implicated deep social issues, related to a progressive depopulation caused, among

⁵⁷ *Scuola Grande della Misericordia*, www.valorizzazioniculturuali.com

⁵⁸ "The new entrance located at the back allows for greater control over the stream of visitors", www.misericordiadivenezia.it/the-building/the-spaces

others, by the lack of residential spaces for the citizens in the city centre⁵⁹. A similar situation has been observed in the spread of a multitude of restaurants and other exclusively tourist-targeted businesses to the detriment of spaces enjoyable by locals⁶⁰. This kind of development has oriented some areas of the city toward a *tourism mono-culture*, which will be explained in details successively.

Tourist consumption of the city concentrates around the central tourist interest points and the paths which link them and the gateways, which are normally tracked by traditional tourist signage. As a result, these routes are congested and the main attractions are over-utilized (crowded and often subject to queues). On the other side, because of lack information and bad organization of the system, other cultural resources, situated out of these paths, are under-utilized and unknown.

This situation is exacerbated by a huge presence of '*false*' *day tripper* or *false excursionists* (A. P. Russo, 2002), among which a good share is also represented by *repeaters*⁶¹. Since hotel prices decrease constantly in relation to the distance from Venice historical center, tourist have started to prefer spending the night in its environs and visit it during the day⁶². As described by Russo in his "vicious circle of tourism development in heritage cities" theory, this phenomenon arises a regional scale conflict between the center and the surrounding areas because tourism revenues are spread to the rest of the region, while costs rest just on the core. This decreasing share of benefits for the historical city also causes a shrinking of the budget for its heritage maintenance, its cleaning and marketing. Thus, in the lifecycle of Venice as a destination three phases can be identified: a past one in which the tourist concentration was mainly on the central areas, the current one in which

⁵⁹ Other causes of depopulation are: rise of housing prices, lack of specialized jobs, physical characteristics of the central town, excessive cost of urban facilities, high prices of goods and services (one example is the cost of waste taxes, which is one of highest in Italy), public transport crowding due to tourists, change in use of some parts of the city (Lando, 2008)

⁶⁰ The last one can be observed in the renewal of Fontego dei Tedeschi, ex Venice Post Office, which has recently re-opened as a luxurious mall in the middle of tourist zone between Rialto bridge and San Marco square.

⁶¹ People who had already visited the destination once or more times.

⁶² This phenomenon is evident during the summer period too, when the "indirect" excursionists are seaside vacationers

there is a relative spread in the region, and a probable future stage of absolute dispersion (A. P. Russo, 2002).

Furthermore, as a consequence of the increase in the number of *false day trippers*, the aforementioned tourist spaces are crowded during the day, because of the limited time at their disposal, but almost desert during the evening and the night. This kind of tourism caused a decline in the quality of Venetian tourism product since cultural and high-quality experiences are replaced by bit-and-run visits.

As aforementioned, historical center congestion and tourists' tendency of visiting just some areas of the city brought to a change in the existent urban functions and commercial structures, which can be described as a real *zoning* phenomenon. According to the multivariate analysis carried out in 2008 by the researchers Francesco Zanini and Fabio Lando on retail commercial structures in Venice⁶³, at present days three main functions can be identified in the city: a tourist one, a residential one and a business related one. If the first one has incremented its importance and the second one has lost it exponentially, the third one has remained thanks to the administrative role of Venice in the metropolitan and regional area. The study underlines a clear distinction of the city in functional areas: generally, in the long period, one's strengthening has reduced the other one's relevance, avoiding any overlapping. The tourist use space pattern in Venice has been deeply influenced by the structure of the city, which has only two connection points to the mainland: the station and the more recent Piazzale Roma⁶⁴. The tourist paths start from these gateways and develop towards Rialto and San Marco areas, the worldwide known tourist attractions of the city and the goal of the most visitors. These zones are characterized by a "wild fire" diffusion of a *tourism mono-culture*, which materializes in a replacement of inhabitants' targeted retail shops into tourists' ones: hotels, B&Bs, souvenirs shops, luxury fashion stores, tourist restaurants and bars. Although spaces in a city should be multifunctional, in these areas tourist pressure is so high that, in most time of the day and the year, the tourist use exceeds the inhabitants'

⁶³ Zanini F., Lando F., *L'impatto del turismo sul commercio al dettaglio. Il caso di Venezia*, 2008

⁶⁴ Santa Lucia Station has been built in 1860, while the car bridge and Piazzale Roma in 1933

one⁶⁵, producing in this way a deep *zoning* of the Tourism Opportunity Spectrum to the detriment of traditional activities preservation, city's livability and quality of the tourism experience.

As far as the clustering of Tourism Opportunity Spectrum is concerned, a tentative towards the creation of a coordination in the tourism production chain *in loco* can be represented by *Venezia Unica* City Pass. As aforementioned⁶⁶, This card allows to compose one's own visit to Venice buying public transport tickets, museums and churches entrances, parking, Wi-Fi and toilet fees, specific tours and events tickets, or directly pre-definite packages according to age and preferences. In practice, the system integrates the public transport, which otherwise would be less convenient, with cultural attractions. Despite it includes discounts to some restaurants, there is no real collaboration with hospitality and food & beverage sectors.

⁶⁵ Locals often prefer choosing other routes in order to avoid mass tourist flows and often try to address their activities somewhere else

⁶⁶ See paragraph 2.1.3 *Local government and tourist industry strategies*

2.4.4 Software: interpretation & presentation

Table 9 - Jansen-Verbeke model: Software

SOFTWARE of Cultural Tourism Product		
Presentation & Interpretation	Tourist appeal	Experiencescape
Type and quality of interpretation and which story/stories to be told: very weak presentation and interpretation. Presentation is connected to the glory sport past of Reyer Basket	Secondary place in Venice attractions' hierarchy; Appealing for alternative tourists	Desired message(s): history and modernity, the past as Reyer gym. Theming: not present but identifiable in a trail about <i>Scuole</i> history in Venice or adaptive re-uses for modern art exhibition (in case of this kinds of events)
Valorising link between tangible & intangible heritage: no valorisation, except a link with Reyer basket	Reputation: nowadays the building is mostly known because of its past usage as gym for Reyer Basket. Not very known by tourists, no reviews on Tripadvisor.	Type of tourist attracted to the site: cultural and alternative tourists/type of experience sought: immersion in the history and in the architecture
Visitor centre and other facilities: no visitor centre, but facilities for disabled people, nursery, restrooms.	Usage and affinity with the site: meant to host different kinds of events and to promote Veneto excellences. Theoretical affinity with the original use.	Connectivity to the site: - for local visitors: a way to remember the past glory of Reyer Basket - for foreign tourists: difficult to find because of a lack in interpretation
Presented as it is with little commodification vs. heavily commodified: risk of commodification in case of exclusive use for private events	Marketing strategy & social media: target is composed of corporates or art/culture organizations. Official website with a strong impact; social networks are constantly updated but have few followers	Focus on 'edutainment' or education: to be defined according to exhibitions; not present during normal opening
Financial resources for presentation/tourism appeal/experience: Scuola della Misericordia S.p.A., which is in charge with the management and the "opening to the public in the defined hours".		Visitor management: to be defined according to exhibitions; not present during normal opening

Source: Personal elaboration based on Jansen-Verbeke 2010

Although less tangible than *Hardware*, the *Software* represents a critical success factor in heritage sites competitiveness. In fact, the comparative advantages deriving from built assets can just be reaped with the support of a creative use of intangible heritage and an innovative experience-scaping (Jansen-Verbeke, 2013).

In order to deepen *Software* characteristics of a site, three main aspects need to be analyzed: heritage presentation and interpretation, tourist appeal and *experiencescape*.

Interpretation is a process of communicating or explaining to visitors the significance of the place they are visiting. In particular, effective interpretation can play a central and critical role in sustainable tourism in general and, more specifically, in the effective management of visitors and conservation of built heritage sites (Moscardo, 1996). A good quality interpretation is indeed capable to make the visitor gain an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the area, its landscapes and people. In this way, tourists become concerned and, therefore, protective of the host area (Tilden, 1977). This kind of visitor is defined as *mindful*, since the interpretation helps him to be active, interested, questioning (Moscardo, 1996) and, thus, capable of understanding the value of the site and the consequences of his/her actions. Interpretation materializes at the tourists' eyes through presentation, which determines their impression and comprehension of the site, preparing the path for a deeper understanding of its value. However, being the audience heterogeneous, interpretation and presentation must be adapted according to visitors' different backgrounds, interests and abilities (Timothy and Boyd, 2003). The practical tools to actualize this process are tour guides, audio-visual programs, guidebooks, leaflet, brochures, maps, plaque, panels, visitor centers, interactive multimedia.

For its re-opening, Scuola Grande della Misericordia has been presented as an expositive space, however, as aforementioned, the building has not hosted exhibitions for a long period. In this way, during weekend opening times, the visitors entering the structure can observe just an empty space. No presentation is provided to help them understanding the history or the function of the place: there are no explanatory panels, no brochures at the reception desks, no signage at the entrance.

Figure 22 - Scuola Grande della Misericordia "empty" entrance



Source: Camilla Ferri, 2016

A careful visitor would just note Reyer plaque and bell at the side entrance: the only evident linking signs with the history of the place. Considering also that the inauguration was focused on the documentary about Reyer Basket, it seems that the interpretation of the site, at least *in loco*, is anchored to that past sport glory, rather to the original use of the building and the importance of the confraternity during the Republic. Apparently, this is the only existing link between tangible and intangible heritage of the site: it seems, thus, that the sense of pride correlated to the gym and its basket team, which had already obscured the collective awareness about the structure criticalities in the half of the last century (Fabbri, 1999), is what today remain in most citizens' memory.

Figure 23 - Reyer Sport Centre sign



Source: Camilla Ferri, 2016

Figure 24 - Reyer Gym bell



Source: Camilla Ferri, 2016

Figure 25 - A basketball match in the Scuola Grande



Source: www.ppan.it/stories/misericordia, 2016

On the other side, the presentation of the Scuola on its official website underlines especially its cultural value and its connection with history, stating that creating an event in the Scuola della Misericordia means “becoming part of its history”.

There is no visitor centre, however the building is endowed of restrooms, nursery and it is completely accessible for disabled people through a system of ramps and lifts. There are neither a café nor a bookshop, differently from what is stated in the concession contract.

Being presentation and interpretation very weak and almost absent, the commodification risk cannot be linked with a bad or excessive use of them. Rather, it can arise when the site is used for mainly private purposes, without being open to the public and just with profit-making aims. Actually, the probability this risk displays is exacerbated by the same lack of proper presentation and interpretation able to make the visitors aware and respectful of the place in which they find themselves, even if for non-cultural purposes.

Figure 26 - Accessibility measures in the interiors of Scuola Grande



Source: Camilla Ferri, 2016

2.4.5 Software: tourist appeal

If interpretation and presentation deal with the way in which the site addresses towards tourists, the *tourist appeal* analyses, instead, the perception of the site from the tourist's perspective.

Scuola Grande della Misericordia is a secondary place in Venice attractions hierarchy: it is neither one of the main tourist attractions of the city, nor it is collocated on the most beaten tourist paths. For these characteristics, it can be appealing for alternative tourists, seeking for uncommon itineraries in less crowded parts of the city.

The current site reputation at the tourists' eyes is difficult to measure, since the attraction is not included in "things to do in Venice – Historic Sites" section of

Tripadvisor.com⁶⁷, one of the most used website to review sites⁶⁸. In general, the lack of this data can be due to the rare openness of the site, as well as a general tourists' unawareness of its existence. On the other side, as aforementioned, the site fame in local people's mind is connected to the use as a gym for Reyer Basket, which, thanks to those years' successes, created a deep connectivity between the place and the community. Furthermore, the building re-opening had a great resonance on the local press, also because it has been linked with the new mayor campaign.

Figure 27 - Reyer's memory is still alive



Source: www.facebook.com/MisericordiaDiVenezia/?fref=ts, 2016

As far as the uses are concerned, as aforementioned, the place aims at being a multi-purpose space. Thanks to the structure flexibility and dimension, it can host business events, art, dance, fashion exhibition; conferences and corporate parties; performances and happenings. According to the mission and the words of the mayor, the Scuola aims at attracting the most important cultural events for the

⁶⁷ Other *Scuole Grandi* (San Marco, San Giovanni Evangelista, San Rocco) are instead included in this section.

⁶⁸ Web 2.0, social media and location-based user-generated content can be used to model and measure heritage reputation, thus being a relevant source for heritage studies (Monteiro, Painho, Vaz, 2014)

development and promotion of the excellence of Venice and Veneto Region: art & crafts, gastronomy, art and sport. Being again open to the citizenry, it should help in the creation of a new cultural network in the city⁶⁹. This claimed cultural and social use would be affine to the place, to its original idea and to the territory needs; however, in particular between summer and autumn 2016, it did not seem to be respected, since the venue was used almost exclusively for private events.

As far as marketing is concerned, the objective of Scuola della Misericordia S.p.A. is events organization. The customer reference target is composed by corporates, in case of business events and meeting, or by cultural and artistic organizations in case of exhibitions and performances. The website has a modern design, the videos and the images occupy the most part of the view with a strong impact on the user's eyes. Besides Italian, it is available in English, German, Spanish and French. The website constitutes the first and the unique official information about the Scuola on the Internet, together with the linked social network pages: Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram.

The Facebook page⁷⁰ is constantly updated every week. The posts, in English, mostly show pictures of the building, of the interior details, of the recent restoration interventions or the past use as a gym. The correlated description underlines the relationship between history and innovation, which characterizes the site concept according to the official interpretation. The posts are generic: they do not refer neither to any particular period of the year nor to specific events (neither to the inauguration). As figure 28 shows, some posted pictures regard past events which were not publicized before they took place, probably because not opened to the public. No link to specific pages or articles are posted.

The same posts are updated with the same timing and description on Twitter and Instagram⁷¹. Facebook has more users (220 likes)⁷², followed by Instagram (47

⁶⁹ A Living space for Venice, www.misericordiavenezia.it/events-area; *Restituiremo la Misericordia alla città*, Alberto Vitucci, La Nuova di Venezia e Mestre, 7th June 2014.

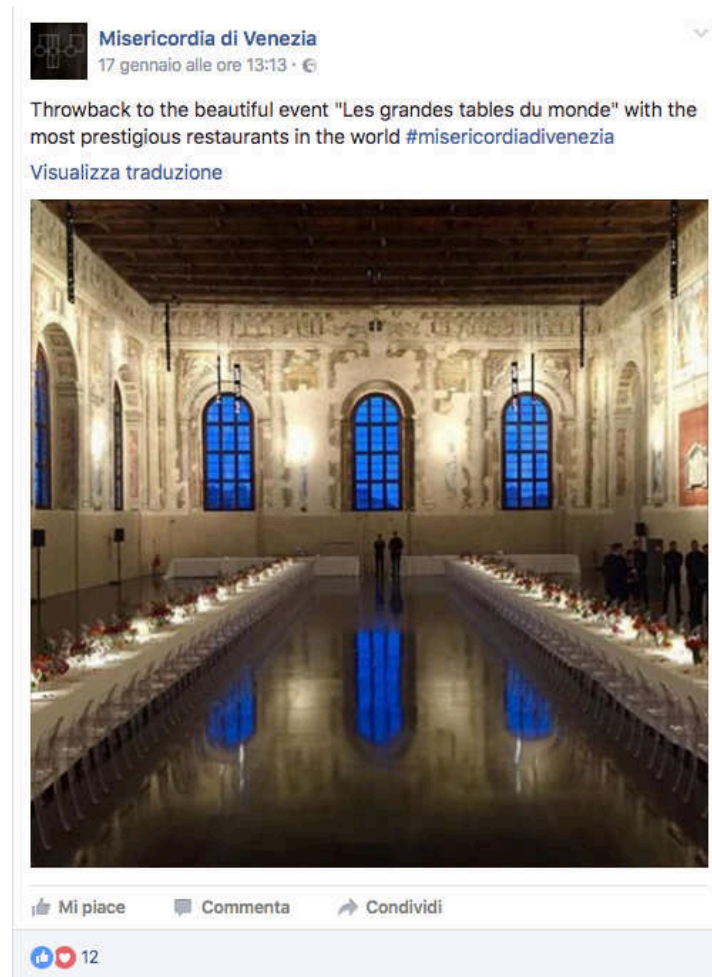
⁷⁰ www.facebook.com/MisericordiaDiVenezia

⁷¹ www.instagram.com/misericordiavenezia

⁷² on 1st of January 2017

followers) and Twitter⁷³ (8 followers). Observing also the low number of users' likes in all the pages, the presence of Scuola della Misericordia on social media is rather weak; however, this can also be due to recent launch of the pages⁷⁴.

Figure 28 - A Facebook post



Source: www.facebook.com/MisericordiaDiVenezia/?fref=ts, 2017

2.4.6 Software: *experiencescape*

Visiting a heritage site means essentially experiencing it. Tourism product is a bundle composed by relationships among actors and tourists, the territory in which the attraction is located and the emotions it arises in the tourist (Rispoli &

⁷³ www.twitter.com/SGMisericordia

⁷⁴ May 2016

Tamma, 1995). For this reason, when talking about *Software* the *heritagescape* turns into an *experiencescape*.

Considering the tourist use of the site, its main target is composed by tourists who are looking for alternative experiences off the most beaten tracks. In case of exhibitions, the audience would probably be more cultured, attracted by personal interests, the artist's name or the *brand* connected to their organization. This would happen, for example, when the Scuola hosts pavilions, separate exhibitions or events connected to Art or Architecture Biennale.

The experience sought by these kinds of tourists is an immersion in the history and architecture of a place, which is different both from churches and historical palaces because of its dimension and its past uses of confraternity headquarter and gym. People participating to events in this structure expect to find an atmosphere able to combine history and modernity in a luxurious and majestic venue. This also corresponds to the message the management wants to convey for the building: "a historic home ideal for hosting not only art, but also dance, cinema, fashion and photography", which revives "its ancient vocation of hospitality with a modern approach"⁷⁵. Since the community's memory of the previous sport usage of the structure is still very strong, Reyer Basket is an important part of this message too, as aforementioned in the previous paragraph about interpretation and presentation. This topic also contributes in creating a deep connectivity between the place and local visitors, which is however more difficult to arise in foreign tourists. According to Tilden (1977) this should be one of the task of the interpretation, which must connect the place "to something within the personality or experience of the visitors". Because of the lack of any sort of site presentation, at least on a physical level, finding a connection point between the venue and the tourists is currently not possible. The same is valid for an identification of a proper theming strategy able to add value to an eventual trail and to position the site in visitors' mind. An itinerary based on the Scuole Grandi in Venice and their history is existent, but Scuola della Misericordia is not included in it, probably also because of its reduced opening time.

⁷⁵ www.misericordiadivenezia.it

In case of art exhibitions or other similar events, another theming could be connected to the modern adaptive re-uses of architectures and spaces⁷⁶.

The entrance is free and the big dimensions of the place let the access of a high number of people: no visitor management has been settled so far, at least during normal opening periods. It would be a task of an eventual exhibition organizer, as well as the establishment of an education or *edutainment* path inside the Scuola, since now it does not exist in any case.

In conclusion, the financial resources necessary for the settlement of an efficient *Software* should derive from Scuola della Misericordia S.p.A., which is in charge with the management and the “opening to the public in the defined hours”⁷⁷.

2.4.7 Orgware

Table 10 - Jansen-Verbeke model: Orgware

ORGWARE			
Agent & Organization			
Organization	Stakeholders	Management	Policy
Single overriding agency: Scuola della Misericordia di Venezia S.p.A.	Single internal stakeholder with a clear focus	Site management structure: concession from public sector to a private company	Presence of effective national legislation: interventions are subordinated to the direct safeguard of Venice Architectural, Arts and Landscape Superintendence
Ownership: public, Municipality of Venice But: concession to Scuola della Misericordia di Venezia S.p.A. (private)	Power balance between stakeholders: exclusion of external stakeholders in decision making	Presence and effectiveness of formal conservation, management and security plan according to Italian legislation	Level of Government & management of the site: local
Partnerships: business, cultural and religious sector (mainly at a local level)	No external stakeholder consultation	Revenue source for conservation: project financing (private). No reliance on tourism to provide funds	
	Awareness of tourism potential: not a priority	Perceived role of tourism: ancillary use	

Source: Personal elaboration based on Jansen-Verbeke 2010

⁷⁶ Venice is already offering some examples: Arsenale for Biennale, Palazzo Grassi, Punta della Dogana

⁷⁷ From: Concession contract between Venice Municipality and SMV S.p.A., 16th November 2009

The result of the integration of *Hardware* in the territory and of *Software* investments depends on the organizational capacities in the region and in the community, the support of the public-private partnership and the actual involvement of different stakeholders. In fact, the strength and the efficiency of the *Orgware* has proved to be the most crucial success factor in the development of sustainable *tourismscapes* (Jansen-Verbeke, 2013).

The government of the site is realized on a local level: as aforementioned, the owner of the building is Venice municipality, which entrusted its restoration and management to a private entity - Scuola della Misericordia di Venezia S.p.A. -, through a public concession and, in particular, the instrument of the project financing. Thus, the organization is based on a single private overriding agency. This made the acquisition of information about *Orgware* particularly difficult, since numerous details are part of the S.p.A. corporate strategy and cannot be revealed (Christian Vio, Scuola della Misericordia di Venezia S.p.A., 2016). For this reason, the following statements are mainly suppositions based on an empirical observation of the reality and a research on local newspapers.

Besides S.p.A. shareholders and the Municipality, the main external stakeholder is represented by the community and the several associations composed of Venetian citizens, which are spread and very active in cultural field. However, so far an eventual consultation has never been considered and thus they have been excluded from any decision making. Hence, since the management is held exclusively by Scuola della Misericordia di Venezia S.p.A., it can be supposed that its board of directors represents the main stakeholder leading the decision-making process with a single clear focus.

The events occurred in 2016 were characterized by partnership with various cultural, business and religious actors: Carlo d'Alpaos for the inauguration documentary, the group Fratelli Navarra and Italiana Costruzioni for a convention about restauration and conservation, Cinema Biennale for the event-exhibition "Ciak", Corriere Innovazione for a conference on future energy, and Collegium Tarsicii, a Venetian catholic association which organized an initiative called "orien...TARSI" (Pamela Cauz, Scuola della Misericordia di Venezia S.p.A., 2017).

Hypothetically, specific rules to be followed in the management of the site were fixed during the project monitoring and assessment phase. The interventions have been executed in the respect of the “Codice dei Beni Culturali e del Paesaggio”⁷⁸, since the building is subordinated to the direct safeguard of Venice Architectural, Arts and Landscape Superintendence. Security and management-conservation plans are present according to Italian legislation (Pamela Cauz, Scuola della Misericordia di Venezia S.p.A., 2017).

Revenue sources for conservation come from the project financing and thus are totally due to Scuola Misericordia S.p.A.. Its financial resources are supposed to derive from the revenues related to the rent of the building for events, there is no reliance on tourism to provide funding in this sense.

The role of tourism is not perceived as primary, but it has a remarkable importance, considering the cultural vocation claimed to the site by the management⁷⁹.

2.5 Du Cros – McKercher Model applied to Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Misericordia

For a deeper analysis of the balances between conservation and tourist use of the site, Scuola Grande della Misericordia has been successively assessed according to McKercher-Du Cros model.

The tourism potential of the building has been measured following the implementation of the framework⁸⁰, based on four dimensions:

- Cultural and physical values for what *Robusticity* aspects concerns;
- Experiential and product values for *Market Appeal* evaluation.

⁷⁸ Rules on the cultural heritage and landscape in the Italian legislation, approved on 22nd January 2004

⁷⁹ Its vocation is cultural: exhibitions, events with opening to the city (Pamela Cauz, Scuola della Misericordia di Venezia S.p.A., 2017)

⁸⁰ For the theory see paragraph 1.3.7 *An implementation of the model*

For each dimensions a series of sub-indicators has been identified in the form of a question: the answer corresponds to a score from 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 to high. The overall assessment is the average of these scores.

Despite the authors recommend this evaluation to be done by a pool of external experts, for the purposes of this study, the assignment has been given just according to candidate's background and previous researches.

2.5.1 Robusticity

Table 11 - Du Cros – McKercher Model: Robusticity

ROBUSTICITY			
Physical values		Cultural Values	
Physical Robustness	5	Stakeholders awareness of site cultural values	4
State of repair <i>What is the physical state of repair (any wear and tear)?</i> - If interventions are needed: Ability of withstanding increased visitation without losing authenticity <i>Will its authenticity be damaged after repairs are made?</i>	5	Level of Aesthetic values	5
Ability of withstanding increased visitation without physical damages	4	Level of Historical values	5
Accessibility: bad/good <i>Can all areas be accessed?</i>	5	Level of Educational values	3
Safety for visitors: low/high <i>Does the site represent potential hazards for visitors?</i>	5	Level of Social values	5
Site (inside its physical boundaries) Tourist Appeal <i>Is it appealing to tourists?</i>	4	Ability of withstanding increased visitation without damaging its cultural values	3
Setting (its surrounds) Tourist Appeal to tourists <i>Is it appealing to tourists?</i>	4	Level of importance of the asset inside the territory <i>Is the asset of local, regional or international cultural significance?</i>	3
Possibility to modify the use of site <i>Can it be modified for use (legally, practically)?</i>	5	Ability to represent the community <i>Is the asset worth conserving as a representative example of the community's heritage? Does it have a significance for the community?</i>	5
		Ability to create an emotional connection with the individual	3
Average	4,6	Average	4

Source: Personal elaboration based on B. McKercher & P.S.Y. Ho, 2006

The first variable the model considers is *Robusticity*, which is observed through two different perspectives: *physical* and *cultural values*.

The former has obtained a high score, mostly thanks to the recent restoration, which let the building to be accessible and in a good state of repair and safety after many years of decay. For the same reason, at least in the short term, no particular physical damages are supposed, neither in case of an eventual increased visitation. The interventions did not undermine the authenticity both of the architecture and the frescos, since modernization works regarded almost exclusively the floor, which had already been removed in 1815⁸¹. Its technical characteristics make the building flexible and suitable of adaptation for different uses⁸². This possibility is feasible on both practically and legally, as foreseen by the concession contract⁸³.

From the physical point of view, the site tourist appeal is rather high, thanks to the majestic proportion of the architecture and its uniqueness. The same is valid for the setting, which is appealing to tourist thanks to the typical Venetian landscape and the general authenticity kept by that part of the quarter.

The *cultural values* obtained a lower grade if compared to physical ones. The Scuola can count on high aesthetic, historical and social values, whose stakeholders are deeply aware. Its level of importance is circumscribed to the local dimension of Venice. The Scuola represents indeed the community, even if it links its significance mainly to the more recent use as Reyer gym. For this reason, the building is capable to create a big emotional connection with local visitors, more difficult to arise in foreign people, who can just be fascinated by the dimension and the historical atmosphere of the place, rather by a specific meaning. One of the main criticalities regards the risks of an eventual increased visitation. This possibility could arise in case of an excessive use of the venue for private and non-cultural related events, which could distort the original cultural value of the Scuola.

⁸¹ The original marble floor was moved to Marciana Library in San Marco

⁸² See paragraph 2.3 *The Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Misericordia*: the actual structure and use

⁸³ Art. 5 Availability of the areas, in files.meetup.com/229945/contratto%20di%20concessione.pdf

2.5.2 Market Appeal

Table 12 - Du Cros – McKercher Model: Market Appeal

MARKET APPEAL			
Experiential Values		Product Values	
Level of relevance of the site to non-locals	2	Opening to public	2
Level of interests of the tourist in the visit <i>Does this asset have the potential to offer interesting experiences to tourists?</i>	4	Pre-visit information quality <i>Is there sufficient information available about the site (e.g. magazine, website, etc.)?</i>	3
Level of engagement in tourist experience: <i>Is this asset capable of providing a participatory, engaging and/or entertaining experience?</i>	1	Accessibility (distance from tourism nodes) <i>Is it easily reachable (quality of connection & information)?</i>	3
Ability to meet tourist expectations: <i>Is this asset capable of meeting different tourists' expectations?</i>	1	Size-capacity to attract tourists: <i>Is the site big enough to attract and retain tourists for a long time?</i>	3
Quality of interpretation	1	Level of time – cost – effort in visiting the site <i>Is the effort required by tourists to get to it too high to make a visit worthwhile (time, cost, effort)?</i>	2
Level of authenticity in site presentation	/	Proximity to other attractions and amenities <i>Is it near other attractions (similar or different types)?</i>	3
Level of authenticity perceived by tourists <i>How authentic would general tourists perceive the experiences offered by the asset?</i>	4	Presence and quality of facilities	2
Complementarity with other activities	2		
Level of harmony of the experience with the ambiance and landscape	5		
<i>Average</i>	<i>2,5</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>2,5</i>

Source: Personal elaboration based on B. McKercher & P.S.Y. Ho, 2006

If the first variable focuses on the intrinsic values of the site, *Market Appeal* analyses its relationship with a tourist audience, in particular through its *experiential and product values*.

Most *experiential values* sub-indicators obtained a low grade, although the asset has the potential to offer an interesting and original experience to tourists. As a matter of fact, thanks to the idea at the basis of the recent restoration project⁸⁴, the tourist experience in the Scuola could be considered in harmony with the ambiance

⁸⁴ See paragraph 2.3 *The Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Misericordia*: the actual structure and use

and the landscape of the surrounding area, by helping the tourist to perceive a good level of authenticity. Nevertheless, so far the site itself does not provide any involvement in the visitor, except for the entertainment delivered by particular events, generally private and not open to the public. Because of the lack of any interpretation and presentation capable to make the site relevant to non-locals, the experience cannot currently meet tourist expectations. Furthermore, at the moment, neither in the building nor in the surrounding area there are complementary activities to enrich the tourist experience, except for a series of typical restaurants on the *Fondamenta*⁸⁵.

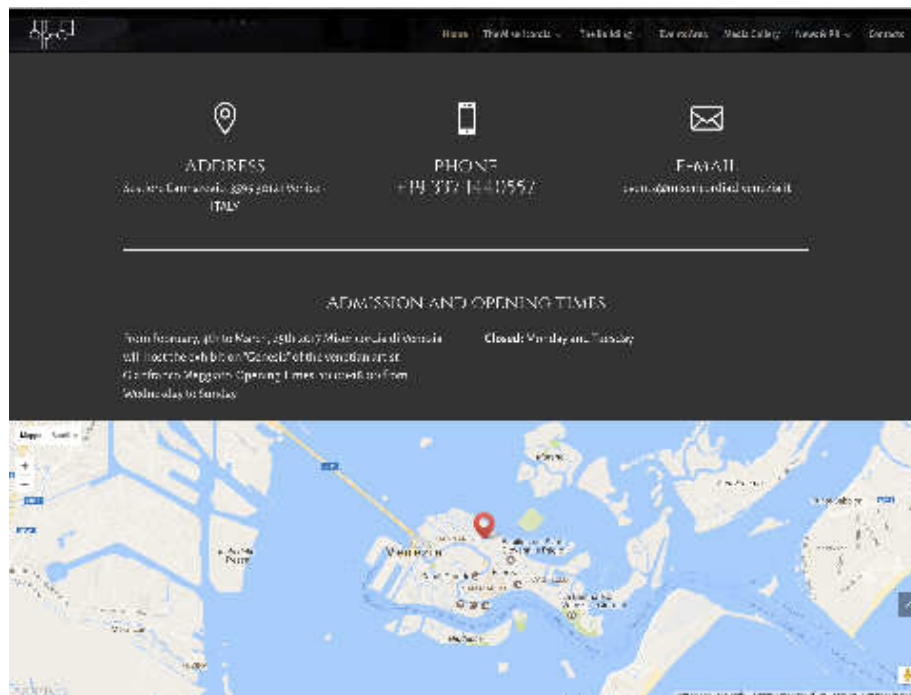
Market Appeal analysis ends with the measurement of site *Product Values*, which is around low/moderate level also in this case. The lowest grades have been assigned to opening to public, being the venue just opened on weekends, and to presence and quality of facilities, since there are no specific services, except restrooms, nursery and lift and ramps for disabled people. Nevertheless, the potential of the structure in terms of *Market Appeal* is high, since its dimension can attract a big number of tourists and, with an appropriate organization, also for a long time. At the actual state, however, the time the tourist spends inside the building cannot be long, since there are neither exhibitions nor site explanations to read. The information available in the pre-visit stage are provided almost exclusively by the official website, which carefully describes site history, restoration project and current possible end-uses in four languages. No other means have been thought for the promotion of the site in the city, for example at tourist information offices or at hotels receptions. This lack also affects the ease of reaching the site: although the position has a good accessibility, there are no signage to help non-locals to find the building. Thus, the effort required by tourists to visit the site is rather high, also considering its distance from the main tourist attractions: it requires a specific willingness of the tourist to reach it. Even if just some minutes far from Strada Nuova, the main tourist path from the Station to Rialto and San Marco, the absence of information and signage makes impossible the average tourist to find it “by chance”. An exception can happen when the tourist is lost and intrigued by the

⁸⁵ In Venice *Fondamenta* is a street which runs along a canal

proportion and shape of the structure itself, or already in the area for other purposes (like, for example, related to restaurants and bars).

In terms of cost, the visit is currently free of charge, but an entrance fee could be asked in case of exhibitions.

Figure 29 - Website visitor information



Source: www.misericordiadivenezia.it/it/, 2017

2.5.3 McKercher-Du Cros Model application results

In order to provide a meaningful result for the previous analysis, the average of the scores given to every sub-indicators have been calculated, producing these outcomes:

Physical Values: 4,6

Cultural Values: 4

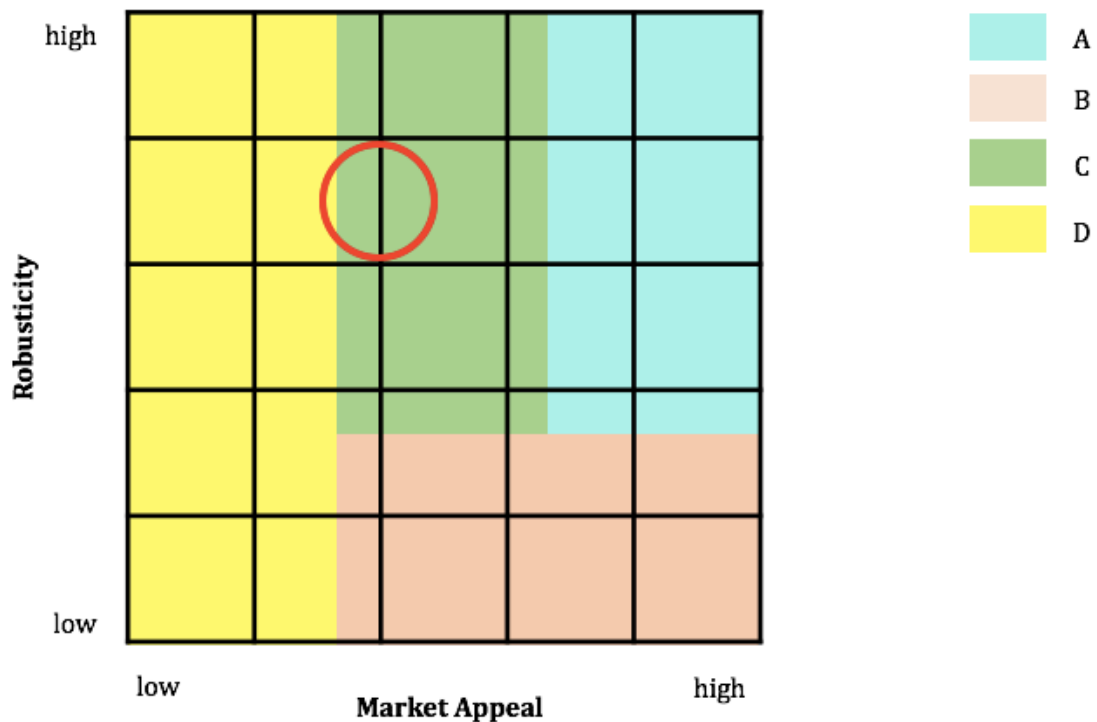
Experiential Values: 2,5

Product Values: 2,5

Therefore, the average score of *Robusticity* variable is 4,2, while *Market Appeal* one is 2,5. They have been plotted to position the asset in the following matrix, which

was built by gathering the squares of the first version of the model⁸⁶ and the five grades of the second one⁸⁷.

Figure 30 - Du Cros – McKercher Model: Robusticity-Market Appeal Matrix



Source: Personal elaboration based on B. McKercher & P.S.Y. Ho, 2006

As shown by the matrix, the Scuola Grande della Misericordia falls into square C, since it is characterized by a moderate/high *Robusticity* and a low/moderate *Market Appeal*. Thus, being rather high the potential offered by site *Robusticity*, the best option would be improving the *Market Appeal* of the Scuola through a precise marketing plan. However, actual managers’ strategy seems preferring to maintain this *status quo* and to accept limited tourist flows, rather focusing on hosting private events and, as a consequence, obtaining higher revenues.

To be complete, McKercher-Du Cros model has also to take into account the presence of site *fatal flaws*. In this case, they can be seen in the lack of information,

⁸⁶ see figure 5

⁸⁷ see paragraph 1.3.6 *A first audit model for assessing tourism potential of cultural and heritage attractions*

presentation, interpretation and, thus, the difficulty of providing an engaging experience for the visitor.

Table 13 - Results of Du Cros – McKercher Model application on Scuola Grande della Misericordia

ROBUSTICITY		MARKET APPEAL		Overall Assessment	Fatal Flaws
Physical Value	Cultural Value	Experiential Value	Product Value		
moderate/ high	moderate/ high	low/ moderate	low/ moderate	low	Lack of information, presentation and interpretation brings to a low quality tourism experience.

Source: Personal elaboration based on B. McKercher & P.S.Y. Ho, 2006

While Van den Berg, Van der Borg, Van der Meer Urban Tourism model allows to deepen the dynamics at the basis of the overall tourism destination, Venice, Jansen-Verbeke and McKercher-DuCros models give a clear picture of the different aspects characterizing the selected case study, the Scuola Grande della Misericordia. In particular, the former permits to understand the embeddedness of the site in the territory and its organizational implications, the latter relates the site conservation status with its tourism vocation, providing more precise results on its tourism potential. The outcomes of the three of them will be analyzed and used in chapter four in order to offer solutions for the future site management policy.

CHAPTER 3 – CASE STUDY: OUDE KERK IN AMSTERDAM

3.1 Urban Tourism Model applied to Amsterdam

Any analysis on the competitiveness of heritage sites has to take into account the context in which its tourism development has to take place. For this reason, in parallel with chapter 2, a brief framework on the tourism in the city of Amsterdam is provided following the Urban Tourism Model elaborated by the researchers Van den Berg, Van der Borg and Van der Meer⁸⁸.

Amsterdam is the main city of the Netherlands. It has a population of 847,176 within the city proper, 1,343,647 in the urban area, and 2,431,000 in the Amsterdam metropolitan area (MRA). The city is located in the province of North Holland in the west of the country.

For the purposes of the study, only Amsterdam city has been taken into account.

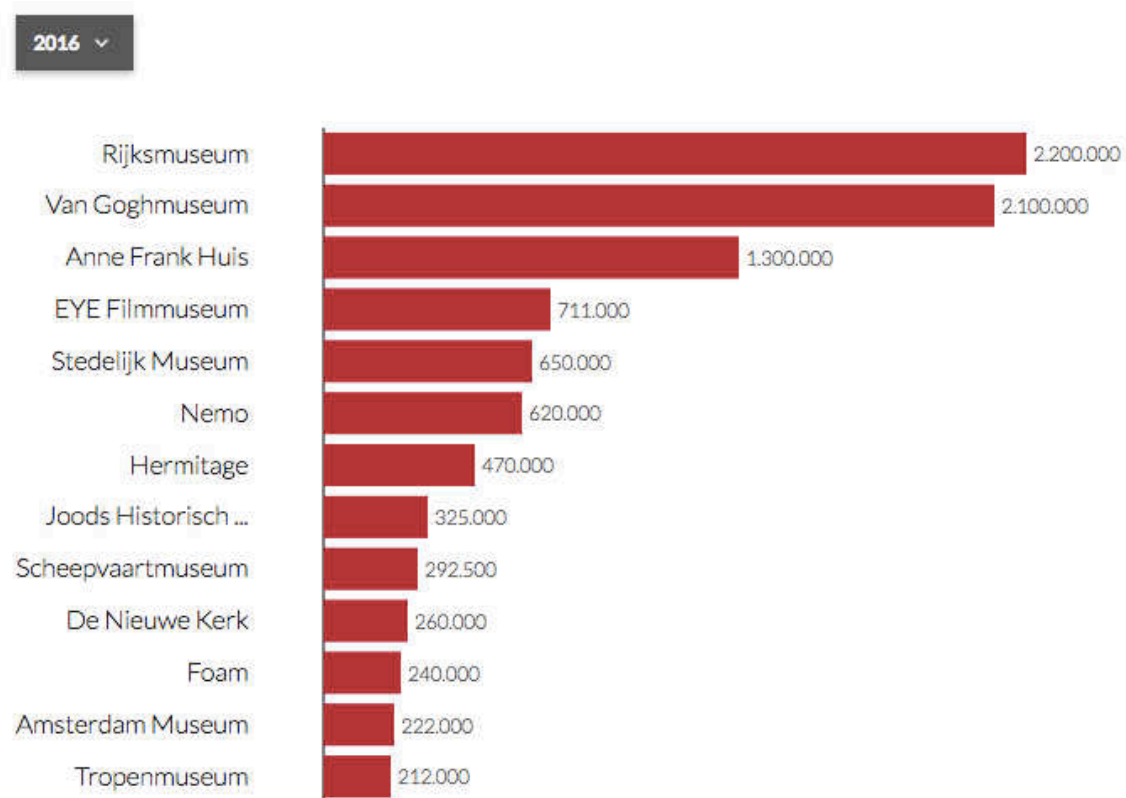
3.1.1 Amsterdam primary and secondary products

Besides being an important commercial and financial centre, Amsterdam is one of the main tourist destination in Europe for number of arrivals. Its primary tourism product is based of its architecture and canal structure, resulting from a 18th-19th century urban redevelopment of the medieval town. It constitutes the main reason to visit the city together with a wide cultural supply, which is characterized by a peculiar “bias towards activity rather than heritage”. As a matter of fact, Amsterdam is not famous for various and specific *landmark* monuments, - for instance it is one of the few European capitals without a famous cathedral or another large historical building connected with religious or political power - rather, its tangible heritage is a diffused element in the city centre. On the contrary, its strong intangible heritage is composed by a series of social norms and symbols that contribute the street city lifestyle and, thus, the *Amsterdam culture* in a broad sense (Russo & Van der Borg, 2005).

⁸⁸ For theory see paragraph 1.1 Van den Berg Van der Borg Van der Meer *Urban Tourism Product* model and the concept of *visitor-friendliness*

The most important cultural institutions in the city are Rijksmuseum, Van Gogh Museum, Anne Frank Huis, EYE Filmmuseum and Stedelijk Museum. Together, they compose a complete cultural supply since they represent different Dutch -but also international - art forms and historical testimonies from the Middle Ages to present days.

Figure 31 - Most visited museums in Amsterdam in 2016



Source: www.parool.nl/kunst-en-media/van-gogh-museum-zit-rijks-op-de-hielen-als-populairste-museum~a4441426, 2016

Besides museums, Amsterdam is famous for its long heritage in the diamonds, since Jews introduced the diamond cutting industry in the later 16th century. Nowadays the diamond factories in the city are opened to tourists and offer them guided tours.

Amsterdam attracts high tourist flows also thanks to various events. Besides countless small cultural festivals, concerts and other initiatives, Amsterdam is also a stage of important big events as King's Day, Holland Festival, Gay Pride,

International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam, Grachtenfestival⁸⁹, which involve all the city.

Amsterdam has also a sport vocation: besides the events related to football in the Amsterdam Arena, the city organizes every year the Amsterdam Marathon, it hosted European Athletics Championships in 2016 and it is currently bidding for 2028 Olympic Games.

As for secondary products, Amsterdam Metropolitan Area had 650 hotels, 41,000 rooms and 89,000 beds in 2015. Since 2014, the room capacity in the MRA has increased by 8%, in particular the growth of rooms in Amsterdam city has been of 11%.

Figure 32 - Hospitality data 2014-2015

	August 2015			year to year change 2014-2015	
	hotels	rooms	beds	rooms (abs.)	rooms (%)
Amsterdam	436	29.152	64.115	+2.865	+11
region	214	11.600	24.599	+253	+2
total MRA	650	40.752	88.714	+3.118	+8
total Netherlands	3.525	118.121	254.589	+204	+0,2

Source: Amsterdam City Council, Research, Information and Statistics, 2016

As figure 33 shows, their major concentration is in Amsterdam Centrum. This increase is parallel to the growing demand for accommodation and, in order to properly face this, the city council is also working on transforming empty offices into hotels, which will lead to a capacity increase within a relatively short period of time.

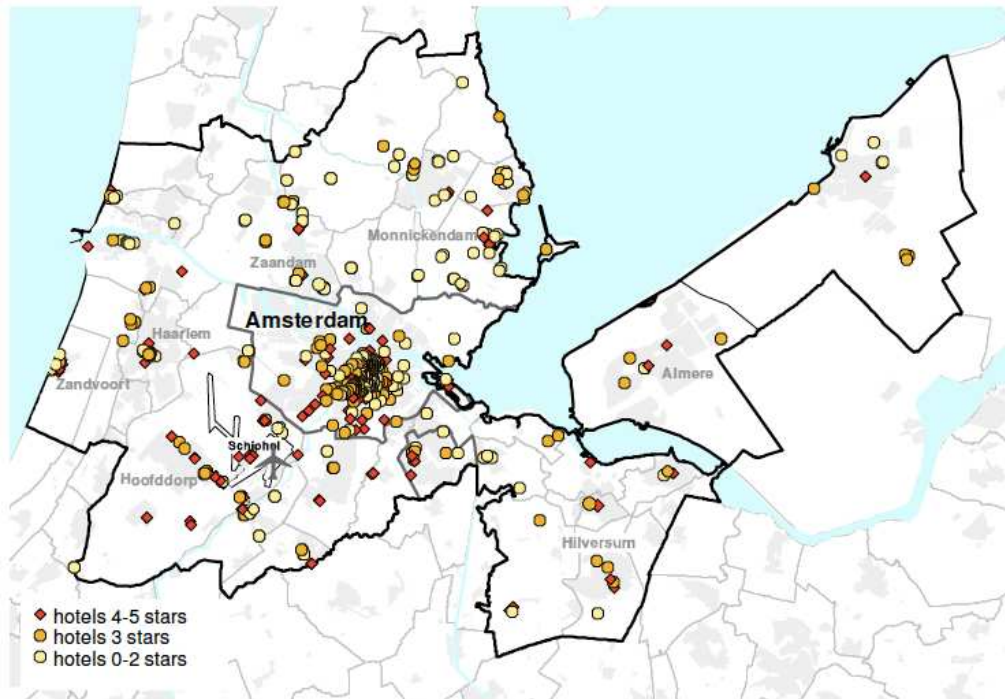
Furthermore, according to Amsterdam City Council⁹⁰, the emergence of the holiday rentals market (in large numbers since 2012) provides on one hand extra, flexible supply and, on the other one, more competition on the hotel market. Approximately 40% of the 0-3 stars hotels in the MRA has experienced competition from holiday rental of private homes. On the contrary, hotels with 4-5 stars experience competition with other hotels. In reaction to this situation, hotels try to specialize in row rates or luxury, in upscaling or small size, in total concepts or a unique experience. This has resulted in new developments, such as the emergence

⁸⁹ Ten-day festival of classical music played on stage located in the canals

⁹⁰ Tanja Fedorova, Merel van der Wouden, Tourism in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area: nights, accommodations and jobs in the Tourism Sector 2014-2015, Research, Information and Statistics (OIS), February 2016

of total concepts, small-scale boutique hotels, apartment hotels, low-budget (mega) hostels and luxury hotels.

Figure 33 - Hotels in the Amsterdam metropolitan area, August 2015

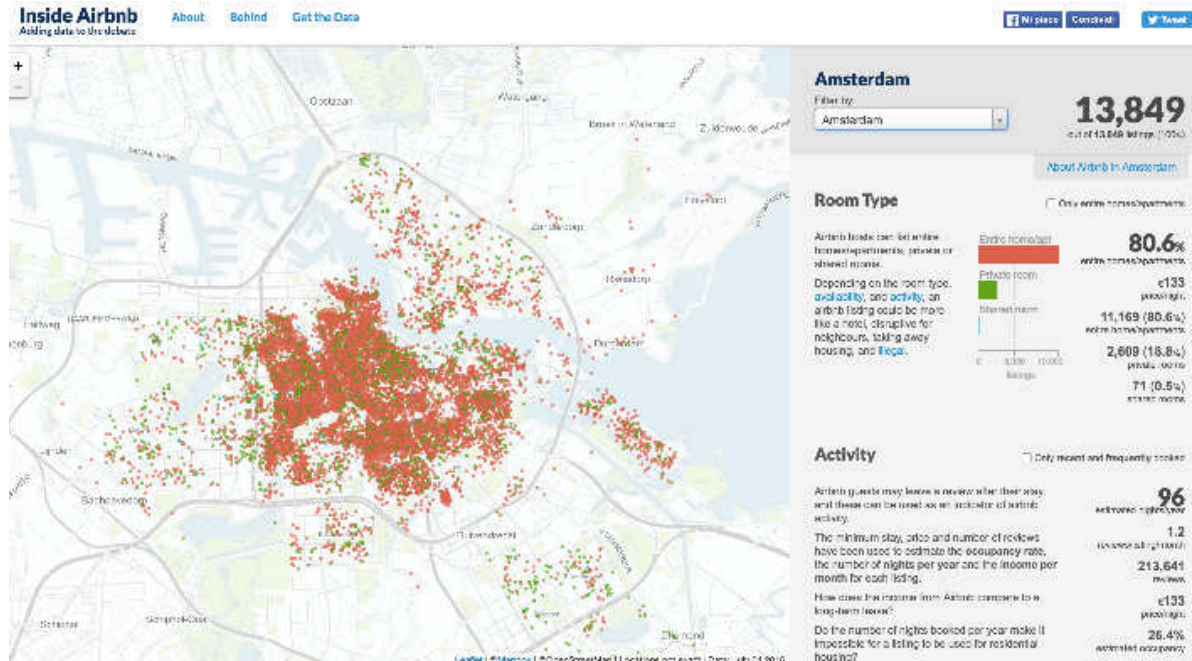


Source: Amsterdam City Council, Research, Information and Statistics, 2016

Another important competitor in the hospitality sector is Airbnb. Amsterdam counts 13,849 listings, whose majority is composed by entire apartments, rented for an average rate of 133 Euros per night and for 96 nights pro year on average. Although the percentage of hosts with multiple listings is not as high as in other tourist cities⁹¹, these characteristics assimilate Airbnb rents to hotel businesses. In order to avoid this trend and the negative effects it has on social cohesion and upon communities, from January 2017, in the Netherlands, the home-sharing firm complies with property rental regulations: homeowners in Amsterdam will only be able to sell time in their place for 60 days in a calendar year, unless they already have specific permission to offer more.

⁹¹ 24,6% on the 31st of January 2016

Figure 34 - Inside Airbnb data in Amsterdam



Source: www.insideairbnb.com/amsterdam/, 2017

Being also one of the most important commercial centres in the world⁹², Amsterdam is also equipped to host business tourism through various venues, from conference centers to museums or hotels⁹³. A good example is Amsterdam RAI Exhibition and Convention Centre, a complex of conference and exhibition halls in the Zuidas business district of Amsterdam, which is the first European convention venue to be awarded bronze status by Green Globe, the international sustainability quality mark for the exhibition industry.

3.1.2 Amsterdam image

In 1990 Ashworth and Tunbridge stated that Amsterdam image as a tourism destination was based on two major distinct but complementary themes. In a certain sense they can still be observed still nowadays.

The first one is related to the historical and cultural heritage composed by the 17th and 18th century canal cityscape, offering a romantic and cozy atmosphere.

⁹² According to *MasterCard Worldwide Centers of Commerce Index*, Amsterdam is among the top 10 most important commercial centres in the world and it is the fourth most influential business centre in Europe, following only Frankfurt, Paris and London.

⁹³ The Union of International Associations (UIA) named it one of the top 10 international convention sites.

It represents the view of Amsterdam in its Golden Age as a prolific artists' and trade city, too (Davies 1999).

The second one is the status of Amsterdam as the city of tolerance, connected in the 60s and the 70s with the hippie movement and now to the permissive Dutch policy regarding drugs and prostitution. This perception finds a reflection in the green cityscape, the *café culture*⁹⁴ and the idea on the Netherlands good governance⁹⁵ and high quality of life, capable to attract world's largest multinational firms.

This strong image fossilized despite changes, making especially difficult to distance tourists' perception of Amsterdam as the city of cheap drinks, commercial sex and available drugs. The city's marketing tentative towards a transformation of this positioning will be further analyzed in paragraph 3.1.4.

3.1.3 Amsterdam internal & external accessibility

Being a world-class international transport hub, Amsterdam has a very good external and internal accessibility.

First of all, Amsterdam can be reached to and from over 250 destinations thanks to the flights provided by Schipol Airport, the third busiest airport in Europe in terms of passengers⁹⁶, situated only 20 minutes away from the city center. High-speed trains such as the Thalys and Intercity Direct stop at Amsterdam Central Station, as many Dutch domestic intercity trains, making the station a central hub also for European traffic. The port of Amsterdam is the second largest port of the Netherlands, after Rotterdam one, in terms of cargo throughput; its Passenger Terminal welcomes about 200,000 passengers annually and serves as an event venue, too.

⁹⁴ The term *café culture* refers to personal contacts and a culture of sociality which is widespread in the numerous cafés of the city centre

⁹⁵ Amsterdam can really be seen as an exemplary illustration of democratic local government coupled with an innovative, sometimes visionary attitude for urban management (Russo & Van der Borg, 2005)

⁹⁶ Schipol Amsterdam Airport, Transport and Traffic statistics www.schiphol.nl/en/schiphol-group/page/transport-and-traffic-statistics/

As for the automotive traffic, Amsterdam can count on very good highways connections. However, reaching the city center by car is strongly discouraged by the local government, because of its compact layout and the limited number of affordable parking spaces. Thus, outside the city center there are car parkings with different fees. “Park+Ride” are car parks located on the city outskirts, near motorways, with an excellent public transport connection. Besides them, the car drivers can also rely on different parking apps on their smartphone, which makes the car spot research easier, thanks to the GPS connectivity. They often offer also other services such as current prices, discounting and online payments.

Internal public transport in Amsterdam is constituted by metro, tram, bus and ferry routes operated mainly by GVB, the city-owned public transport operator. Currently, there are 15 different tram routes and four metro routes; a fifth route, the North/South line, is under construction.

The GVB Tickets & Info office in Amsterdam Centraal offers a free public transport map and all the information tourists need to move around Amsterdam. *I Amsterdam City Card* includes unlimited use of the GVB public transport system for 24, 48 or 72 hours.

Canals constitute another connection way: private water taxis, water buses, electric rental boats (Boaty) and canal cruises are often used too. Canal cruises tours, organized by many companies, are currently a very widespread tourism product. Furthermore, in 2014 Amsterdam locals created the first boat sharing app, called “We are on a boat”, aiming at matching people who would like to be on a boat, with people who are willing to share theirs⁹⁷.

Despite the presence of all these transport possibilities, one of the best way to move around the city is by foot, since the main attractions are in a walking distance and good tourist information (both signs and info offices) are available all over the city.

⁹⁷ The app provides a series of simple steps to connect potential passengers with the captain of an available boat: defining user’s location using the map and finding the nearest boat, viewing captain’s profile, requesting a boat ride by sending a message to the captain. The system also includes a reward system and reviews. (www.weareonaboat.com)

The Amsterdammers' most used mean of transport is bicycle, thanks to the flat landscape and an excellent network of bike paths and cycle routes which make Amsterdam one of the most cycle-friendly cities in the world.

3.1.4 Local government and tourist industry strategies

As aforementioned, Amsterdam city image is currently related both to its urban structure and architecture and to its idea of tolerance, represented by coffee shops and Red Light District. Tourists coming to Amsterdam attracted by these fossilized images can be gathered in two main targets: high-middle class "cultural" tourists and young low-budget "alternative" tourists. Both targets create visible distortions at the destination level.

On one hand, Amsterdam cultural production suffers from the success of its world-famous tourist attractions: despite the lively cultural scene and the diversity of resources in the region, tourist programmes continue to focus on star attractions as the Van Gogh-Rembrandt circuit, the canal tours and the diamond factories. Secondly, the type of tourism attracted by the "sex and drugs" image of the city – reflected in the young low budget tourists mainly – is producing negative impacts in the city center: downgrading, substitution of resident activities with tourist businesses, criminality, insecurity, noise and gender discrimination, which came to clash with the original Amsterdammers' lifestyle.

In order to solve these problems, the city has used and is using two main instruments:

1. Legal and financial measures realized by the Municipality, aiming at reaching a better balance between the mass-tourist use of the city and the needs of the residents and other important city users, like businessmen, artists and the academic community. As for cultural policies, they became part of government's welfare policy from the 70s, but in the 80s the reliance of cultural institutions on public funding was put into question and in the 90s the government began to offer financial incentives, instead of providing across-the-board funding, encouraging cultural institutions to become more self-sufficient and market-oriented (Van der Borg & Russo, 2005). Today the municipality and the cultural enterprises follows

the objectives of the *Kunstenplan*, the Amsterdam plan for culture, which is updated every four years.

2. City re- branding, in order to highlight other aspects of its culture (the dynamic youth culture, the multicultural society and the related richness in gastronomy and music, the gallery scene) and to attract more types of visitors (besides the mass flows composed mainly by young tourists interested in coffee shops and Red Light District activities), aiming in this way at changing the image of the city and facing international destinations increased competition.

In the case of Amsterdam, city marketing can be seen as a powerful tool part of a “place management philosophy”⁹⁸ in a long term perspective (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005). Starting from this premise, in 2004 an organization of city marketing was set up and entrusted to a newly established public–private partnership called Amsterdam Partners, composed, among others, by seven departments of the municipality, the regional Chamber of Commerce and several private companies from large multinationals to small local companies. After Amsterdam Partners decided upon the main strategy, various main city marketing projects were elaborated:

1. cultural events, not aiming at attracting indistinct attention, but at creating and strengthening city’s associations with specific qualities;
2. hospitality, to make the city more hospitable to visitors and information widely accessible in and around the city, to stimulate attractive and recognizable routes to all interesting places in the city, while attempting to make the visitors feel well-treated;
3. international press policy, to initiate press attention;
4. a new internet portal, to upgrade the content of the information offered;
5. “pearl” projects, which consisted in some infrastructure projects selected to be linked with the city’s marketing and image.

However, what really completed the Amsterdam marketing re-organization was the development of a new branding campaign, launched in September 2004. Since there had never been neither an agreement on brand usage, nor a uniformity

⁹⁸ As one member of the city’s council put it, “city marketing is about loving your city and showing to other people why you love it” (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005)

of style and slogans, a ‘tangible’ new positioning for the city was necessary in order to typify the city’s benefits and values (City of Amsterdam, 2004). This was reached through the developing of a new logo and a new slogan capable of being versatile and implicit and of representing Amsterdam main benefits and values, without choosing just one of its “faces”. Thus, Amsterdam Partners chose *I Amsterdam* as the “motto that creates the brand for the city and the people of Amsterdam” (www.iamsterdam.com), since it was considered clear, short, powerful and easy to remember.

One of its major strengths is its connection with the existing base of the city: only residents could arguably feel that they ‘are’ Amsterdam and this could be very important for the whole marketing effort (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005). On the contrary, one of its shortcoming is that it represents a linguistic barrier for who does not understand the pun, and, at the same time, it heavily relies on a linguistic association in a language foreign to the city’s residents.

Today *I Amsterdam* is one of the first contact the tourist has with the city, starting from the pre-travel phase, since the *I Amsterdam* portal is a complete online guide on Amsterdam, for three different target group: tourist, residents and businesses.

Besides providing a complete series of information on the visit of Amsterdam, it gives the possibility to buy the *I Amsterdam* City Pass, which includes museums and attractions entrances, a canal cruise, the unlimited use of public transport (bus, tram & metro), free giveaways & discounts on concerts, theatre, rentals, restaurants and trips on the surrounding area and a city map.

Figure 35 – *I Amsterdam* city card



Source: www.iamsterdam.com/

Figure 36 - www.iamsterdam.com homepage



Source: www.iamsterdam.com/

To conclude, what Amsterdam is doing both in its cultural and in its re-branding strategies takes care of the residents as a living community, as it is underlined by Amsterdam Development Corporation's ambition: "to live and work in an attractive city"⁹⁹.

3.2 The Oude Kerk: historical context

Before giving a site competitiveness analysis, a brief contextualization about the building is required to better understand the dynamics characterizing its actual situation and the value it represents for the community and the city itself.

The Oude Kerk, the *old church* in Dutch, is the most ancient building and church in Amsterdam. It is situated in the Amsterdam Centrum and in particular in De Wallen quarter, better known as Red Light District.

⁹⁹ City of Amsterdam Development Corporation ("Ontwikkelingsbedrijf Gemeente Amsterdam", OGA) has the central responsibility of developing urban areas and real estate in Amsterdam. Its core tasks are preparation of municipally-owned land for construction, issuing long-term leases, property management, and financial and economic project supervision and management.

Figure 37 - the Oude Kerk today



Source: www.oudekerk.nl

The origin of the building dates back to the XIII Century, when some fishermen decided to build a wooden chapel where to pray and around which to bury their own loved people. The location corresponded to the point in which River Amstel flowed into IJ: the creation of a huge clay sediment had made it the sturdiest ground of that swampy zone. Sailors could moor their boats near the Church and find shelter in it. Therefore, it became soon a meeting point for inhabitants and merchants and the city hub. In the second half of the XIII Century people decided to replace it with a bigger stone building, which was consecrated in 1306 to Saint Nicholas, sailors' protector, by Utrecht bishop. In 1334 it became Amsterdam parish church. The building was supposed to belong to a Romanesque Architecture style, but it was transformed several times because of a growth in population and a further development of the city. Two lateral naves were soon added, making it the first Roman hall church in the Netherlands and in 1390 the still visible huge wooden vault coverage was realized. Due to an increase in the number of city residents, at the beginning of 1400 a new church entitled to Saint Catherine was built in Dam,

thus Saint Nicholas church started to be called Oude Kerk, old church. In 1565 the Oude Kerk received the bell tower and since then its architecture did not undergo many variations¹⁰⁰.

The church was so important for the city to be also called *Huiskamer van Amsterdam*, Amsterdam living room, since it was a sort of melting pot, a covered square, where people meet each other and where fishermen repaired their nets. After the recognition of Amsterdam Miracle of Unburned Host¹⁰¹, it also received many pilgrims' waves.

In 1566, Church interiors were seriously damaged by the iconoclast movement, aimed at revolting against the excesses of Roman Church through the destruction of religious icons and images. Only the paintings on the ceiling were spared, as they were out of reach for the protesters. After Dutch Revolt against Catholicism, the so-called *Alteratie*, in 1578 Calvinist Protestantism finally takes the power in the city government. As all other parish churches and chapels, the Oude Kerk became a Reformed Protestant church. Today it represents one of the unique buildings expressing national character of Dutch Protestantism¹⁰².

While in XVI and XVII centuries, Protestants thought the music was inappropriate for a church and they were not often used to give permission to build organs, this idea started to change at the end of the XVII Century. In 1577 the famous Dutch composer Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, at the age of 15, begin his fortunate career as organist¹⁰³, inaugurating a great tradition of organ concerts in the Oude

¹⁰⁰ Amsterdam Oude Kerk History, www.amsterdam.info/oude-kerk/history

¹⁰¹ On 13 March 1345, a dying man sent for a priest to administer the last sacraments. The man was so sick that he regurgitated the Host and then died. His vomit, including the Host, was thrown into the fire. The next day, the maid found that the Host had remained untouched by the fire, and took it to the priest of Amsterdam's Old Church. However, the next day, the Host reappeared at the dead man's house. The maid again took it to the priest, but the host returned to the man's house once more. This wondrous sequence of events became known as the Miracle of Amsterdam. A *stille omgang* ("Silent Walk") is still performed every year to commemorate the event.

¹⁰² Oude Kerk in Amsterdam, www.amsterdam.info/oude-kerk

¹⁰³ Starting as assistant, he was employed by the Protestant church council on full time in 1580. He soon became the Dutch leading composer of the early modern period; a bridge between the Renaissance and the Baroque. The municipality paid Sweelinck to play the church's organ for one hour on several days of the week: people were used to enter the church to listen to his concert, often results of improvisation. He played in the church for over 44 years, till his death, when he was buried there and a tombstone behind the choir dedicated to him.

Kerk, which lasts till today¹⁰⁴. As a matter of fact, in 1724 the church council commissioned the execution of a new gold plated oak organ to the German builder Christian Vater. During the restoration of the tower in 1738 the organ was dismantled since the spire began to subside. It was reconstructed by Johann Casper Müller, which added nine new registers, giving the instrument an unusual force and unique sound. The church Grand Organ is therefore often also named the Vater-Müller Organ, thus giving the credit to both of its builders. Besides this one, the Oude Kerk has other 3 smaller organs.

The Dutch Golden Age in XVIII Century represents a flourishing period for the church too, since it was the center of trade and economic prosperity, as wealthy guilds invested in it. In this period, it also had an important habitual visitor, Rembrant. It hosted his marriage, his sons' baptism and the tomb of his wife, Saskia van Uylenburgh, who was buried here in 1642 after her premature death caused probably by tuberculosis.

The Oude Kerk contains 12.000 graves and 2500 gravestones. Dutch government prohibited this unhygienic practice of church burials; however, since it was a lucrative source of income, the ban was implemented at Oude Kerk just in 1866. This is why the church is full of graveyards, still visible at present days. Buried here, it is worth to mention the Dutch sea explorer Jacob van Heemskerck, the mayor and regent of Amsterdam Cornelis de Graeff and the merchant Kiliaen van Rensselaer, who founded Dutch West India Company and New Amsterdam (the future city of New York), and Pieter van Dam, secretary of Dutch East India Company.

After years of decline, in 1951 the Church closed because of a serious risk of collapse. The alert was given by the *Vrienden van de Oude Kerk*¹⁰⁵ and the society Amstelodamum, which deals with the safeguard of the city of Amsterdam. They managed to collect enough funds for an accurate restauration, which started in 1955. For this purpose, in this year Dutch Reformed Church transferred the

¹⁰⁴ Currently the organ is however under restoration

¹⁰⁵ Friend of Oude Kerk, still active for the building preservation, see paragraph 3.4.6 *Orgware: Oude Kerk financial sources*

property of the church to the Stichting de Oude Kerk (The Oude Kerk in Amsterdam Foundation) for a nominal one guilder. The following five decades were characterized by thorough restorations, which have only recently been completed.

The first interventions, lasted till 1978, aimed firstly at securing the church basis and then involved a deep makeover of the interiors: the stained glass windows were brought back to their original beauty, the thick layer of gray-blue paint on the vault beam was removed, showing in this way paintings from the pre-reform period.

The second important restauration dates back to 1994 – 1998 and consisted in the drainage of the ground around and inside the church.

The last interventions began in 2008 and concluded in 2013. They mostly regarded the tombs and the granite floor: several gravestones were repaired and a new sand layer was added.

Figure 38- Last restorations in the Oude Kerk



Source: oudekerk.nl/over/monument, 2015

3.3. The *Oude Kerk*: the actual structure and use

During the several centuries at its backs, the Oude Kerk has always been a public space reflecting city's dynamics and adapting to historical change. Today it is in the middle of a metropolis whose characteristics are creativity and innovation¹⁰⁶. Starting from this premises, after the last restauration interventions in 2013, the Oude Kerk opened with a precise *mission*: making connections between heritage and art, past and present, offering an opportunity for contemplation and wonder¹⁰⁷, through a rich cultural programme. Therefore, contemporary art exhibitions and music performances regularly engage and dialogue with the authenticity of the building¹⁰⁸, which is still visible in different elements characterising the church: the stained-glass windows, the painting on the oak vaulted ceiling, the carving misericords¹⁰⁹ of the choir, the organs, the gravestones, the various chapels and the golden period rooms, like the mirror room¹¹⁰ or the warden's one.

Included since 1970 in the list of Netherlands *Rijksmonument*¹¹¹, in May 2016 the Oude Kerk was official registered as a museum: it is the first church building in the Netherlands to become such an institution. Furthermore, it has been included in Amsterdam Kunstenplan¹¹² 2017-2020, which will enable the site to receive a subsidy of 175.000 Euros per annum for the development of its cultural-artistic programme.

¹⁰⁶ Jacqueline Grandjean, Oude Kerk director and curator, from *Oude Kerk route map*, 2013

¹⁰⁷ Oude Kerk official website, *Organisation* www.oudekerk.nl/en/over/organisatie/

¹⁰⁸ Jacqueline Grandjean, Oude Kerk director and curator, from *Oude Kerk route map*, 2013

¹⁰⁹ *Misericordia* is a Latin word meaning mercy, here it indicates particular wooden carvings in the choir seats whose aim was to enable singers to lean back for support as they stood for long periods. Dating back to 1480, they depict everyday life, humorous scenes and many illustrations of proverbs and popular sayings: a newness if compared with the classical saints representations

¹¹⁰ The mirror room was the office of the Board of marital affairs and is so called because of the antique mirror located on the chimney

¹¹¹ A *rijksmonument* is a national heritage site of the Netherlands, listed by the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, a Dutch heritage organization acting for the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for the protection and conservation of National Heritage Sites.

¹¹² Amsterdam Plan for Art and Culture

Figure 39- Oude Kerk interiors with Marinus Boezem's exhibition



Source: Author's picture, Camilla Ferri, 2017

In fact, the Oude Kerk Foundation¹¹³ deals with the organization of a rich and precise cultural programme, which concretizes in a series of exhibitions, events cycles and projects.

First of all, every year one artist is invited and commissioned to make a new work, which should react and respond to the architecture of the building, enriching the church with a new present and meaningful value. This kind of exhibitions normally occur from November to March and to May/June to August. They are always accompanied for all their duration by a series of related events: concerts, video projections, performances, lectures. Among the most successful ones, *The Garden Which is the Nearest to God* by Taturu Atzu is worth to be mentioned. In summer 2015, the artist realised a temporary platform on the roof of the Oude Kerk:

¹¹³ For more information about Oude Kerk organisation see paragraph 3.4.5 *Orgware: Organization, Stakeholders, Management & Policy*

the traditional idea of the church as a meeting place, in this case “Amsterdam Living Room”, was revisited making it shifting gradually from a religious to a cultural space. The roof became the stage of city talks, lectures spanning from theology and philosophy to biology and astrophysics, sound performances, radio transmissions and other events, all gathered under a public programme named “come closer”. The memory of this extraordinary exhibition, as well as others’, is kept in a photobook in a chapel of the church.

Figure 40 - Tuturo Atzu's exhibition memories in the church



Source: author's picture, Camilla Ferri, 2017

The current exhibition has the name of its creator, the Dutch artist Marinus Boezem, considered as one of the founders of conceptual art in the Netherlands.

With this exhibit he has had the possibility to combine his fascination about Gothic Architecture, seen as metaphor for the human desire for spirituality, with the use of intangible elements such as wind, air and transparency. Its crux is the work *Into the Air*, which involves a temporary lift that is normally found on construction sites to carry visitors to the top of the church, allowing them to view the monumental building from a new perspective. Also in this case, the curators organized a specific public programme called “Come Closer”, to deepen with the

visitors the themes of the exhibitions over several nights, through music, performances and readings, with an open bar afterwards. Other specific events involve the artist himself, like for example the re-enactment of some of its artists' performance, as *l'Uomo Volante*.

Figure 41 - performance re-enactment of the Uomo Volante by Marinus Boezem



Source: www.facebook.com/oudekerkamsterdam/?fref=ts, 2017

In parallel with these exhibits, the church yearly organizes treasure talks with citizens, hunts for children, expositions of students' work (*Rietveld in de Oude Kerk*), periodical encounters cycles and other events. Among the most appreciated there is *Breakfast with Saskia*. Each year on March 9, at 08:38 am, a beam of light touches Rembrandt's wife grave: traditionally, the Oude Kerk honours this moment with music and experts' interventions about Rembrandt's works and life, accompanied by a small breakfast for every participant.

Aware of being located in the specific context of Amsterdam Red Light District, since its new reopening the Oude Kerk has organized some series of the so-

called *nachtelijke dwalingen*¹¹⁴: performances in and around the church, during which artists introduce a new perspective to the hidden, forgotten and obscure aspects of Oude Kerk as a building and as part of the surrounding Red Light District. Workshops and lectures regarded themes like the relationship between tourism and residents, prostitution and Amsterdam secret history and involved residents, local associations and academics.

Figure 42 - Saskia's tomb in the Oude Kerk



Source: www.oudekerk.nl, 2016

Furthermore, the church hosts the Pride Photo Award, an annual photo competition on sexual and gender diversity with the aim of fighting against stereotypes on LGBT community.

¹¹⁴ Nighttime vices, errors

The Oude Kerk also takes part to various art initiatives promoted throughout all Amsterdam city: the *n8 Museum Nacht*¹¹⁵, the *Amsterdam Art Weekend*¹¹⁶ and the Open Monumentendag¹¹⁷ always propose *ad hoc*-created exhibits and performances. For example, for the Amsterdam Art Weekend 2016 the church exhibition curatorial team involved some new generation artists in a special performances program considering the work of the artists' Marinus Boezem as a starting point¹¹⁸.

Besides art-related exhibitions and events, the Oude Kerk keeps on respecting its musical flourishing tradition due to the spectacular acoustic of timber ceiling, which makes the church worldwide known in particular for its organ concerts. After 150 years since its last preservation intervention, the world known Vater-Müller Organ was seriously damaged by erosion. The funding for this necessary intervention were finally found thanks to a campaign promoted after church reopening; on 13th September 2014, Organ restauration officially starts with a charity dinner inside the church. They should finish in 2017, assuring the organ to be preserved for the next 300 years. During these years, it has been used just occasionally, as during 2014 European Heritage Days, when Bach's Lullaby was played by Amsterdam Bach Ensemble in order to raise awareness about the necessity of these interventions. Each summer The Sweelinck International Festival of Organ Music is being held here.

¹¹⁵ The Amsterdam Museum Night takes place every year at the beginning of November; the Oude Kerk participates with video, performances and drinks till late night.

¹¹⁶ Amsterdam Art Weekend is a yearly four day event that, in the last weekend of November, turns the Dutch capital into an internationally oriented hotspot for art enthusiasts and professionals, thanks to an extensive program of over 100 exhibitions, performances, screenings and debates about the newest developments in contemporary art.

Amsterdam Art - About, www.amsterdamart.com/about-contact

¹¹⁷ During Open Monumentendag, the European Heritage Days in the Netherlands – every second weekend of September – thousands of historical buildings and sites are open to the public free of charge and often organize on-site activities like exhibitions, musical performances and guided tours. The Open Monumentendag is part of an international organisation, the European Heritage Days. The Netherlands was one of the first countries to participate and played a key-role in establishing this Europe-wide phenomenon in the 1990s.

¹¹⁸ *Oude Kerk - Marinus Boezem*, www.oudekerk.nl/en/programma/marinus-boezem-from-24-november-in-oude-kerk/

The church can also be rented for happenings, marriages, dinner and other private events.

Despite of it and its new contemporary art-related use, the Oude Kerk still keeps its religious meaning and function.

Every year in March the Oude Kerk is included in the *Stille Omgang*, a silent procession¹¹⁹ which commemorates the Amsterdam Miracle of Host¹²⁰ gathering still nowadays thousands of people from all the Netherlands.

Furthermore, analyzing religious themes from diverse cultural traditions points of view and future perspectives is another intention of Oude Kerk. This objective is currently being pursued through *Misericordia*, a program about a new sense of mercy: since autumn 2016, Oude Kerk aims at strengthening the relationship between art and society by involving a broad group of people in the exploration of ‘new mercy’ through art, political, economic, climate-related debates and research. The outcome has been leading to a series of new works of mercy in the form of ideas, visualizations or activities for new and alternative forms of mercy, which have been presented in the church through a series of public gatherings and blog posts¹²¹.

3.4 Jansen-Verbeke model applied to *Oude Kerk*

In order to follow the same path followed in chapter 2 for the *Scuola Grande della Misericordia* in Venice, Oude Kerk tourism potential has been firstly assessed according to Myriam Jansen-Verbeke Model, which has been adapted to the characteristics of the site in order to make the study as complete as possible.

¹¹⁹ The procession is silent since it was born as an informal ritual that served as substitute for the Roman Catholic processions that were prohibited after the Reformation in the Netherlands in the 16th century. After Catholic faith restoration in the 19th Century, the growing desire for emancipation among Catholics led to the plan for the Silent Procession launched in 1881. The idea originated among a group of friends, all laymen, and developed into the present day tradition, which is in fact the continuation of the Miracle Procession. From *Silent Walk Amsterdam*, www.stille-omgang.nl/index_eng.htm

¹²⁰ See paragraph 3.2 The Oude Kerk: historical context

¹²¹ *About Misericordia*, www.oudekerk.nl/en/over-de-misericordia-blog/

Table 14 - Jansen-Verbeke Model applied to Oude Kerk

HARDWARE			SOFTWARE			ORGWARE				
Of the Heritage Site		Of the tourism destination	of cultural tourism product			Agent & Organization				
Location	Spatial characteristics	Robustness		Presentation & Interpretation	Tourist appeal	Experiencescape	Organization	Stakeholders	Management	Policy
Integrated into an urban landscape, however the context of the Red Light District in which it is located creates a contrast in the functions of the quarter and the church	Size of the site: individual monument, local scale	Fragility of tangible assets – monitoring physical impacts (robustness-fragility): good degree of robustness thanks to recent restoration interventions	Tourist space-use pattern: the historic core and the main street which goes from the station to the museum area.	Interpretation and presentation aim at giving the idea of the importance of past and present. Peculiar brochures and audio tours make the visit interactive but leave the space to reflect on one's own.	Good place in attractions hierarchy for cultural tourism; but not mentioned in most of online "things to do in Amsterdam".	Desired message(s): present & past, opportunity for contemplation and wonder Theming: Saskia and Rembrandt life, Amsterdam oldest building	Single overriding agency: Oude Kerk Foundation	Single internal stakeholder with a clear focus	Site management structure: board of trustees & directorate model in accordance with the <i>Cultural Governance Code</i>	Presence of effective national legislation: yes
Part of a contiguous destination area: Amsterdam Centrum	Even if it is composed by three naves, a choir and various chapels and rooms, the internal spatial structure of the site is compact (high ceilings, absence of particular architectonic elements).	Risk that tourism pressure may compromise cultural value: there should be no risk except one connected an increase of improper behaviours of Red Light District visitors	Sustainable development of tourism infrastructures: now small interventions + cultural infrastructures and heritage well preserved and cared for + environmental sustainability in hospitality	Interpretation and presentation valorise the link between tangible & intangible heritage: around church iconic features a "story" is created in order to convey a meaning in an interesting way to tourist. Best example: Saskia's grave and breakfast.	Reputation: good positioning on Tripadvisor, but discordant reviews (main criticality: price - willingness to pay)	Type of tourist attracted to the site: families, couples, lonely travelers, groups, mainly interested in art, culture and history Type of experience sought: immersion in the building architecture and solemn atmosphere – surprising contemporary artworks, something new, events in a suggestive venue	Ownership: private, Oude Kerk Foundation	Active consultation of stakeholders + the community too, through events	Presence and effectiveness of formal conservation, management and security plan according to Dutch legislation	Level of Government & management of the site: local
The location is central and very close to the station, main city transport hub Not easily accessible by car Easy external accessibility	Presence of iconic features: organs, the misericords of the choir, the glass-stained windows, the painted wooden vault; even the building itself is an iconic monument of the city of Amsterdam		Clustering: Damrak-Calverstraat-Leidseplein (mass tourism), museum park, Jordaan (café culture), Oost (architecture cluster); Oud West (creative class)	Commodification: not heavily commodified	Uses and affinity with the site: link between past and present, affinity with the site respected (it has always been an active hub for the city)	Tourist connectivity to the site: spirituality, solemnity, contemplation	Partnerships: international, private and public partners in the cultural sector	Awareness of tourism potential: yes	Revenue source for conservation: donations from privates and business. Specific "fidelity" programmes	
Proximity to WHS: inside the buffer zone and urban conservation area of the Seventeenth-Century Canal Ring Area of Amsterdam inside the Singelgracht; close to the Defence Line of Amsterdam			Zoning: tourist-ridden consumption-oriented in the inner city; a predominantly elegant, middle-class; a relaxed "inner ring" around the canals; an increasingly unsafe outer ring which include some of the most deprived neighbourhoods of the Netherlands.	Visitor centre and other facilities: no Visitor centre, accessible for disabled people, restrooms, café, small shop	Marketing strategy addressed to cultured public. Complete Website; Social networks constantly updated to involve the audience in different ways.	Focus on 'edutainment': interactive audio-guide, brochure as a sketch			Perceived role of tourism: primary. Awareness of tourism sustainability.	
		Fragility of tangible assets – monitoring physical impacts (robustness-fragility): good degree of robustness thanks to recent restoration interventions		Financial resources for <i>Software</i> : revenues of entrance fees and gift from public and private partners		Visitor management: being the space very extended is not settled.				

Source: Personal elaboration based on Jansen-Verbeke 2010

3.4.1 Hardware of the heritage site

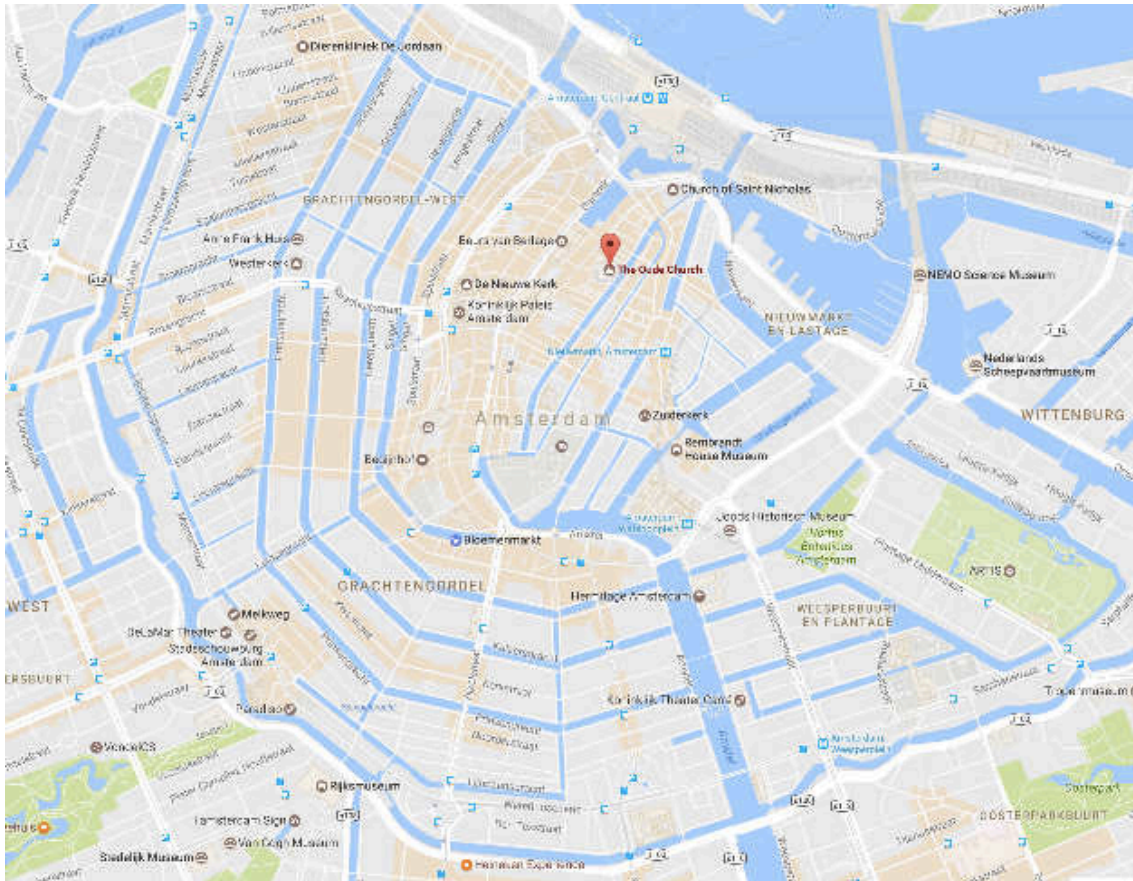
Table 15 - Jansen-Verbeke model: Hardware

HARDWARE			
of Heritage Site			Of Tourism Destination
Location	Spatial characteristics	Robustness	
Part of a contiguous destination area: Amsterdam Centrum	Size of the site: individual monument, local scale	Fragility of tangible assets – monitoring physical impacts (robustness-fragility): good degree of robustness thanks to recent restoration interventions	Tourist space-use pattern: the historic core and the main street which goes from the station to the museum area.
Integrated into an urban landscape, however the context of the Red Light District in which it is located creates a contrast in the functions of the quarter and the church	Even if it is composed by three naves, a choir and various chapels and rooms, the internal spatial structure of the site is compact (high ceilings, absence of particular architectonic elements).	Risk that tourism pressure may compromise cultural value: there should be no risk except one connected an increase of improper behaviours of Red Light District visitors	Sustainable development of tourism infrastructures: now small interventions + cultural infrastructures and heritage well preserved and cared for + environmental sustainability in hospitality
The location is central and very close to the station, main city transport hub Not easily accessible by car	Presence of iconic features: organs, the misericords of the choir, the glass-stained windows, the painted wooden vault; even the building itself is an iconic monument of the city of Amsterdam		Clustering: Damrak-Calverstraat-Leidseplein (mass tourism), museum park, Jordaan (café culture), Oost (architecture cluster); Oud West (creative class)
Proximity to WHS: inside the buffer zone and urban conservation area of the Seventeenth-Century Canal Ring Area of Amsterdam inside the Singelgracht; close to the Defence Line of Amsterdam			Zoning: tourist-ridden consumption-oriented in the inner city; a predominantly elegant, middle-class; a relaxed “inner ring” around the canals; an increasingly unsafe outer ring which include some of the most deprived neighbourhoods of the Netherlands.

Source: Personal elaboration based on Jansen-Verbeke 2010

Also in this case the analysis of the *Hardware* has been distinguished in two perspectives: heritage site and destination. This paragraph describes the former, which includes location related aspects, spatial characteristics and site robustness.

Figure 43 - Oude Kerk location



Source: www.googlemaps.com

The Oude Kerk is located in Amsterdam Centrum; thus, it is part of a contiguous urban destination area, which covers the most beaten tourist itineraries. However, in a certain sense, the church cannot be completely integrated in this urban landscape because of the peculiar ambiance offered by the neighborhood in which it is situated: De Wallen, better known as the Red Light District. Called the “wall” due to the dam the first medieval inhabitants built to defend the city from the water invasion, the area has always attracted both prostitution and migrant populations because of its proximity to the harbor, which also brought to a fast proliferation of bars, night and strip clubs. Prostitution was legalized in 1810 and brothels were recognized in 2000. Today the Red Light District resembles a modern open-air

shopping mall and a sex tourist's Mecca: besides the numerous display windows for prostitutes, the range of services for the leisure travelers includes sex clubs, sex shows, lingerie and S&M clothing shops, condomories, porno stores (Wonders & Michalowski, 2001). Furthermore, the quarter offers a high concentration of coffee shops, where cannabis can be sold under certain strict conditions, according to the Dutch policy of toleration since 1976¹²². Hence, even if it is rich of medieval testimonies, the zone is currently visited mostly for these different kinds of attractions, than for cultural tourism reasons. In 2007 the government introduced some measures for the installation of alternative activities such as fashion ateliers, art galleries, design shops and other creatives businesses, in order to reduce red light windows and cut crime¹²³.

However, the quarter still shows deep traits of commodification and mass *tourismification*.

As for accessibility, the Oude Kerk is situated ten minutes walking distance from the Central Station, Amsterdam's biggest public transport transfer hub, serving city inhabitants and visitors also thanks to convenient fast train connections with other European cities as Brussels, Paris and Cologne. Being very close to Dam Square, one of the main city spots, the tram, bus and metro connections are easy and frequent. On the other side, reaching the church by car is more difficult, since it is located in a semi-pedestrian area¹²⁴: the Oude Kerk website itself recommends to use public transport instead travelling by car. Besides tourist signs spread all over the city, the church carillon/tower is easily visible from the neighbours.

Amsterdam can boast the presence of two World Heritage Sites on its territory: the Seventeenth-Century Canal Ring Area of Amsterdam inside the

¹²² A coffee shop is an establishment where cannabis may be sold but no alcoholic drinks may be sold or consumed. According to this policy, the government allows the sale of soft drugs in coffee shops in order to prevent people who use soft drugs from coming into contact with hard drugs, since the former are less damaging to health than the latter.

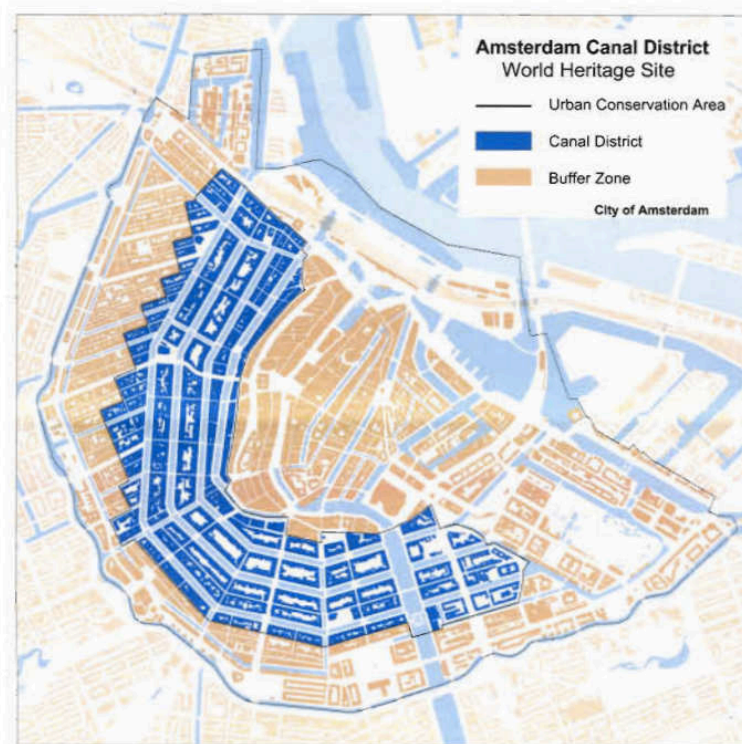
Government of the Netherlands - Drugs, www.government.nl/topics/drugs

¹²³ Amsterdam Tries Upscale Fix for Red-Light District Crime, The New York Times, 24th February 2008

¹²⁴ "You can reach to Oude Kerk by car from Oudezijds Voorburgwal. Until 11 a.m. the Oude Kerk can also be reached through Warmoesstraat. From 8 p.m. the area around the church is closed for cars. You can park your car at the Parking Bijenkorf or at the Parking Central Station". From Oude Kerk official website www.oudekerk.nl/en/visit

Singelgracht and the Defence Line of Amsterdam. The Oude Kerk is not included within their boundaries, but it is part of the buffer zone and the urban conservation area of the former. These measures aim at giving an additional level of protection to the World Heritage Site and this zone must be preserved in order not to ruin the authenticity and the integrity of the surrounding landscape. As aforementioned in the previous chapter¹²⁵, the UNESCO recognition can have a positive brand equity able to attract tourists to the designated site (Poria, 2011). However, also in Amsterdam case, the city was a prominent tourism destination already before the designations of the site “Seventeenth-Century Canal Ring Area of Amsterdam inside the Singelgracht”. Rather, this recognition has an importance on a long-period time for what the preservation of the homogeneity of this urban layout from further city developments or modifications concerns, which could otherwise diminish the attractiveness of the zone for future tourists.

Figure 44 – 17th Century Canal Ring Area of Amsterdam inside the Singelgracht WHS map



Source: www.whc.unesco.org/

¹²⁵ see paragraph 2.4.1 *Venice as a World Heritage Site*

As far as *spatial characteristics* are concerned, the size of the site is individual. Although the building is composed by three naves, a choir and various chapels and rooms, the general internal spatial structure appearance is compact thanks to its high ceilings and the absence of particular architectonic elements dividing the space. As mentioned in paragraph 3.2, the church has several iconic features at its interiors: the organs, the *misericords* of the choir, the glass-stained windows, the painted wooden vault (which is the largest in Europe), but even the building itself is an iconic monument of the city of Amsterdam.

Site *Robustness* has been ensured through the different restoration interventions occurred in the last decades. Thus, as for church interiors and tangible heritage, there should not be risks that tourism pressure may compromise the cultural value. Rather, this kind of problem can arise from the context in which the church is situated, in the eventuality of an increase of improper behaviours of Red Light District visitors.

3.4.2 Hardware of tourism destination

Amsterdam has a tradition of architecture for social uses, which is currently parallel to a social-centred urban development policy consisting in public-housing urban renewal projects, banning of office construction in the historic centre and “freezing” of its urban landscape. The result of this policy has been a businesses’ disinvestment in the historic center and its economic decline, which brought to a favorable condition for:

- gentrification, since the city’s social-housing policy focused in the rest of the city, consequently houses in the historic core became affordable only by higher-income households (Ozturk & Terhorst, 2012);
- urban tourism development: tourists space use patterns focus on the historic core and the main street which goes from the station to the museum area and the worldwide photographed *I Amsterdam Sign*. Thus, tourism pressure in this zones is high and it is revealed by a spread of tourist related businesses and restaurants.

As a result, a *zoning* of the city has emerged and can currently be observed:

- a hectic, tourist-ridden consumption-oriented in the inner city,

- a predominantly white, elegant, middle-class
- a relaxed “inner ring” around the canals,
- an increasingly unsafe outer ring which include some of the most deprived neighbourhoods of the Netherlands.

Despite the presence of high tourist pressure zones, Amsterdam is not characterized by a *tourism monoculture*, as other cities affected by tourism overuse (for instance, Venice). As a matter of fact, besides being a world class educational centre, Amsterdam and its outskirts are headquarter of various production sectors, financial services, music, new media and cultural industries.

More specifically, as for *sustainable development of tourism infrastructures*, after many regeneration and waterfront redevelopment projects, whose most notable example is the NeMo Museum of Technology in the port, Amsterdam now points to small interventions and architectural projects for residence. According to the current tourism policy, cultural infrastructures and heritage in general are well preserved and cared for, as demonstrated by the recent rehabilitation and expansion of the main museums, as the Stedelijk and the Hermitage and concert venues, as the Concertgebouw and the Opera (Van der Borg & Russo, 2005).

In particular, the development of environmental sustainability is pursued in hospitality sector: in 2007 a campaign was launched to encourage hotels in Amsterdam to obtain a ‘Green Key’ environment certificate. Its premise coincides with the fact that increasingly, hotel guests appreciate a climate-friendly stay. According to the municipality strategy for a sustainable future¹²⁶, the city offers hotels a special Menu for Sustainable Hotels, which provides hotel owners, project developers and other clients with some easily applicable, sustainable and energy-saving measures, which can be incorporated into the construction plans of new hotels.

As for *clustering*, Van der Borg and Russo (2005) identified a number of *cultural* clusters in Amsterdam according to Santagata’s (2003) cluster definition:

¹²⁶ Amsterdam in 2020, Sustainable Opportunities, Sustainable Future, City of Amsterdam, Environmental and Building department, 2009 www.dmb.amsterdam.nl

“a clustered network of cultural producers linked by formal working relations or informal knowledge flows”. Among the most important:

- the Damrak- Calverstraat-Leidseplein zone: virtually transformed in a shopping mall for tourists and associated with the image of liberal culture, it is highly commodified and generally not frequented by Amsterdammers
- The Museumpark, which gathers three world-famous collections and exhibition spaces (the Rijksmuseum of ancient art, the Stedelijk Museum of modern art, and the Van Gogh Museum), and one of the most celebrated concert halls and orchestras of Europe, the Concertgebouw.
- The Jordaan, a large neighbourhood at the south west of the centre, originally a low-class area for Jewish artisans and traders, is today the trendiest area of the city, representing the aforementioned image of *café culture* attracting wealthy households, and patrons to fashionable restaurants and galleries.
- The Oost neighbourhood in the old port area of the city, partly on the docks, is being redeveloped as an “architecture cluster”
- The Oud West, an artists’ neighbourhood, now attractive for a “creative class”, whose houses were recently rebuilt.

3.4.3 Software: interpretation & presentation

Table 16 - Jansen-Verbeke model: Software

SOFTWARE of Cultural Tourism Product		
Presentation & Interpretation	Tourist appeal	Experiencescape
Interpretation and presentation aim at giving the idea of the importance of past and present. Peculiar brochures and audio tours make the visit interactive but leave the space to reflect on one's own.	Good place in attractions hierarchy for cultural tourism; but not mentioned in most of online "things to do in Amsterdam".	Type of tourist attracted to the site: families, couples, lonely travelers, groups, mainly interested in art, culture and history Type of experience sought: immersion in the building architecture and solemn atmosphere – surprising contemporary artworks, something new, events in a suggestive venue
Interpretation and presentation valorise the link between tangible & intangible heritage: around church iconic features a "story" is created in order to convey a meaning in an interesting way to tourist. Best example: Saskia's grave and breakfast.	Reputation: good positioning on Tripadvisor, but discordant reviews (main criticality: price – willingness to pay)	Desired message(s): present & past, opportunity for contemplation and wonder Theming: Saskia and Rembrand life, Amsterdam oldest building
Not heavily commodified	Uses and affinity with the site: link between past and present, affinity with the site respected (it has always been an active hub for the city)	Tourist connectivity to the site: spirituality, solemnity, contemplation
No Visitor centre, accessible for disabled people, restrooms, café, small shop	Marketing strategy addressed to cultured public. Complete Website; Social networks constantly updated to involve the audience in different ways.	Focus on 'edutainment': interactive audio-guide, brochure as a sketch
Financial resources for <i>Software</i> : revenues of entrance fees and donations from public and private partners		Visitor management: being the space very extended is not settled.

Source: Personal elaboration based on Jansen-Verbeke 2010

As aforementioned in the previous chapter, one of the main factor contributing to heritage sites competitiveness deals with the so-called *Software*, which includes aspects related to site interpretation and presentation, its tourist appeal and the experience delivered to tourists through the visit.

As for the interpretation, the meaning the Oude Kerk aims at communicating to the audience is based on the relationship between present and past: the former is represented by the contemporary art exhibitions and performances that the church regularly hosts, the latter is provided by the building heritage and history. While for the first aspect the interpretation depends on the artists' conceptions, in designing the one for the building itself, the Oude Kerk has focused on its iconic features and has created around them a story to convey in an interesting way to tourist. This process can be seen as connection between tangible and intangible heritage.

One of the best example of the idea regards the figure of Saskia, Rembrandt's wife, who, according to the Oude Kerk Route Map, is the most famous woman of Amsterdam history after Anna Frank and one of the main church visitors' curiosity. As a matter of fact, most websites and guidebooks nominate the presence of her grave in their reviews about the Oude Kerk and its story is told in details during the audio-tour¹²⁷. But the interpretation does not stop just here: the Oude Kerk also organizes every year a specific event in her memory, the traditional *Breakfast with Saskia* on the 9th of March¹²⁸.

A connection between tangible and intangible heritage can also be noticed in the main presentation tools the church offers to tourist *in loco*: the brochure and the audio-guide.

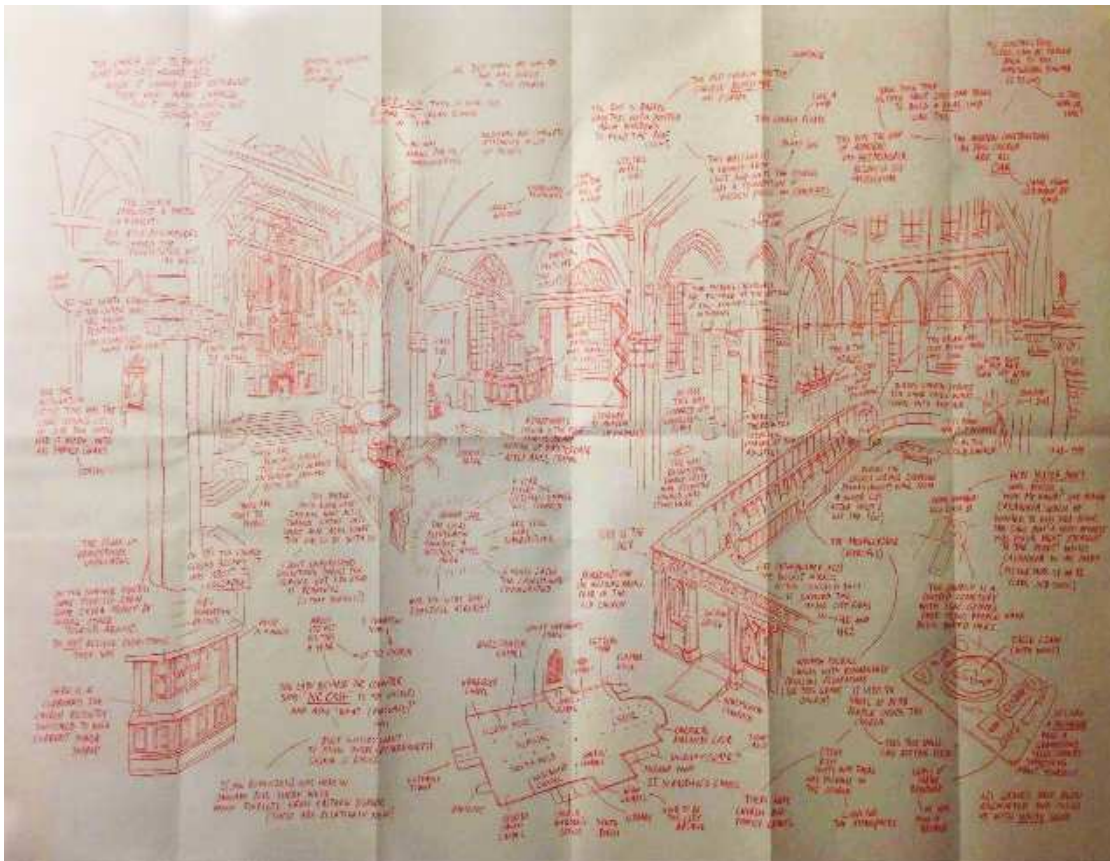
At the entrance, two brochures are given to visitors together with the ticket: one about the current exhibition and one regarding the church itself, called the *Oude Kerk Route Map*. Although the color is different, their layouts are similar. What surprises the user is surely the inner part of the latter: it is not a simple map of the building highlights, but is a real work of art, designed by the Dutch artist Jan Rothuizen. The map is a sketch of church interiors enriched by hand-writings providing information about the past and the present of the building, details on the architecture, curiosities and also artist's impressions and personal notes. The choice

¹²⁷ See later

¹²⁸ See paragraph 3.3. The *Oude Kerk*: the actual structure and use

of this artist was not casual: with his hand-drawn plans¹²⁹ Jan Rothuizen presents his stories in a non-linear and layered manner, which corresponds to the way in which information are processed in the digital age. It combines old and new media as well as the Oude Kerk bonds its past history with contemporary art¹³⁰.

Figure 45 - Oude Kerk Brochure



Source: author's picture, Camilla Ferri, 2017

The audio-tour is peculiar too: it is an accompanied walk in the church with the Dutch actress Halina Reijn, who tells anecdotes, hidden stories and curiosities about the Oude Kerk. It offers a deep visit experience not only thanks to her involving way of speaking, but also through noises, other characters' interventions and music. For example, listening to steps sound the visitors understand they have to move; the tour is made interactive through questions, anticipations and actress's

¹²⁹ "He visits cities, neighbourhoods, squares and houses: from IKEA showrooms to the Red Light District and from the bedroom of a soldier that died in Afghanistan to a detention center for illegal immigrants at Schiphol Airport or the secret annex of Anne Frank".

¹³⁰ The next speaker-Jan Rothuizen, www.thenextspeaker.com/en/experts/jan-rothuizen

personal life references. In this way, the *soundwalk*¹³¹ is accessible to everybody, easy to understand and enjoyable also for an audience which often tends to get bored and disinterested. The audio-guide perfectly incorporates the church idea of interpretation too: it does not just tell about the past and the history of the building, but it also refers to the idea of exhibiting contemporary art works in the church and to the context of the Red Light District in which it is located (even interviewing the founder of the Prostitution Information Centre, Mariska Majoor). Through the tour, the actress Halina Reijn explains the importance of contemporary art for the building present and future value, saying expressly *it is a place where non-believers can rest and reflect and that the visitor can be a part of the history of the place too*¹³².

Figure 46 - Audio Guide presentation



Source: www.oudekerk.nl/en/programma/soundwalk-a-special-audio-tour, 2016

Both the brochure and the audio-guide are able to provide a good quality interpretation, since through them the visitor is able to gain an in-depth

¹³¹ Oude Kerk-News: Oude Kerk launches new soundwalk (audio tour)
www.oudekerk.nl/en/news/oude-kerk-lanceert-vernieuwende-luisteroute-met-actrice-halina-reijn/

¹³² Soundcloud - Oude Kerk, Amsterdam www.soundcloud.com/oudekerk/sets

understanding, hence achieving that level of *mindfulness* which Moscardo wish for¹³³.

Besides these tools, the church offers guided tours through external guides, which are recommended on the website, and educational activities for elementary and high schools focused on contemporary art, through a platform called ARTViSiT from De Appel arts centre¹³⁴.

Except for a panel at the entrance on the artist's¹³⁵ biography and style (both in Dutch and in English), there are no other plaques explaining works and other highlights. This makes the space flexible, compact and authentic: the installations seem being a natural part of the building, since they integrate perfectly with the space. Thus, the visitors can acquire knowledge about the works and the building features only reading the brochures or listening to the audio-guide (which can always be paused): a *space* is left for their free reflections and personal interpretations.

The site does not show risks of *commodification*, considering the authenticity at the base of the interpretation and presentation and the studied integration of the contemporary art works within the church. The aim of this modern end-use is giving a present meaning to the heritage site: this implicates the development of activities which can distance from the original religious purpose of the place, but it does not bring necessarily to its *commodification*.

There is no visitor centre at the entrance, only a small hall where to buy tickets and small objects related to Amsterdam or the Netherlands and some postcards on the current exhibition. The Oude Kerk former sacristy is today occupied by *de Koffieschenkerij*, a café connected to the church but also accessible from outside. It often collaborates with the church activities and sometimes it hosts

¹³³ See paragraph 2.4.4 *Software: interpretation & presentation*

¹³⁴ De Appel brings is an Amsterdam based art organization which organizes exhibitions, performances, film screenings, lectures and gatherings that cross boundaries with regards to artistic and discursive disciplines. These programs are a means to facilitate artistically and socially relevant dialogues with various cultural and societal organizations, both in Amsterdam and beyond. De Appel Arts Centre – About, www.deappel.nl/about/general/

¹³⁵ Marinus Boezem, whose exhibition lasts from 24th November 2016 to 26th March 2017

part of the exhibitions in its garden too. A discount is offered buying the church ticket.

Figure 47 - De Koffieschenkerij



Source: www.sprudge.com/tag/the-netherlands, 2016

Furthermore, the Oude Kerk is accessible for disabled people and has restrooms at its interiors.

3.4.4 Software: tourist appeal

As aforementioned, the *tourist appeal* aims at analysing the perception of the site from the tourist's perspective.

The Oude Kerk is not generally mentioned among the main *things to do* or points of interest in the Amsterdam¹³⁶, however, being known as the oldest building of Amsterdam and being located in the city centre, it enjoys a good position in the attractions hierarchy, at least for cultural tourism. For those same reasons, it can be supposed¹³⁷ that the place is known by many tourists, but a percentage chooses not to enter it because disinterested or not willing to pay for it.

¹³⁶ From a research done on google.com writing "things to see/do in Amsterdam", January 2017

¹³⁷ It is also proved by a various Tripadvisor reviews

As for reputation, Tripadvisor has been used in order to have an idea of Amsterdam visitors' opinion on the church¹³⁸. The famous travel reviews website includes the Oude Kerk in the section "Things to do in Amsterdam", under the categories: *Sacred & Religious Sites, Historic Sites, Churches & Cathedrals, Sights & Landmarks*. The church occupies the 83rd position on 472 points of interest, has an overall visitors' rating of 3,5 on 5 and the most reviews evaluate it as "very good"¹³⁹. Despite this good positioning, the comments are rather discordant: the positive ones focus on its fascinating atmosphere and its unique character inside the Red Light District, the negative ones concerns most of all its emptiness and the price.

This topic is critical: lots of visitor decides to enter it exclusively because of the free entrance offered by the *I Amsterdam City Card* or the *Museumkaart*, as well as many prefer observing it just from the outside due to the high entrance fee. On the contrary, others state the price is worth the church offering. Thus, as occurring in many cases, the willingness to pay to enter a church is perceived in different ways among the various targets of city tourists.

Furthermore, the reputation of the Oude Kerk among Tripadvisor users is often linked with the presence of Saskia's grave rather than on the contemporary art exhibitions or events at its interiors.

As well as the uses are concerned, as aforementioned¹⁴⁰, the Oude Kerk aims at connecting past and present in a unique space, for both believers and non-believers. The religious use is maintained, but re-interpreted through art exhibitions and performances. Thus, in organizing them, the foundation points at respecting a certain affinity with the building, which has always been an active hub and meeting place in the city.

Oude Kerk Marketing Strategy addresses to an audience interested in culture, history and art. Oude Kerk official website is available in Dutch and in English,

¹³⁸ Web 2.0, social media and location-based user-generated content can be used to model and measure heritage reputation, thus being a relevant source for heritage studies (Monteiro, Painho, Vaz, 2014)

¹³⁹ Tripadvisor - Oude Kerk, www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g188590-d1597473-Reviews-De_Oude_Kerk-Amsterdam_North_Holland_Province.html, verified on 22nd January 2017

¹⁴⁰ For a more in-depth analysis see paragraph 3.3 The Oude Kerk: actual structure and use

despite some pages miss a translation. The homepage focuses on the current contemporary art exhibition, while the “visit” section is complete of all the information about the building, the location, the opening hours, the ticket different prices and the availability of the audio-tour. The communication is brief and effective; the contents surfing is easy and intuitive. The section “programme” offers an immediate idea on which events are planned and the activities the church organizes also through a rich archive of the past initiatives. Furthermore, the site makes publicly accessible the foundation organization team and promotes the support of the church through various initiatives¹⁴¹.

The Oude Kerk is active on social networks too. The Facebook page¹⁴² is updated constantly, almost every day. The posts, in general both in English and in Dutch, contain pictures about the exhibition and the events, links to articles (for example interviews related to them, or collaborations, but mainly in Dutch) and information about the projects the church is carrying out. They are specific and many pictures are linked to facts currently occurring in the church. The page also interacts with the audience through the creation of *Facebook events* and *albums*.

The Instagram profile¹⁴³ is updated constantly too with pictures which anticipate events or remember the past ones and videos of performances. Twitter¹⁴⁴ is managed mainly in Dutch, with the same regularity and manner of the other two social networks.

Facebook has more users (2111 *likes*), followed by Twitter (581 *followers*) and Instagram (556 *followers*)¹⁴⁵. The number of users’ likes is relatively low. Thus, the presence of the Oude Kerk on social network is not very strong, despite the good intentions of involving the audience in different ways.

¹⁴¹ see paragraph 3.4.6 *Orgware: Oude Kerk financial sources*

¹⁴² www.facebook.com/oudekerkamsterdam/

¹⁴³ www.instagram.com/oudekerkamsterdam/

¹⁴⁴ www.twitter.com/OudeKerk1012

¹⁴⁵ On the 22nd of January 2017

Figure 48 - A Facebook post



Source: www.facebook.com/oudekerkamsterdam/?fref=ts, 2016

3.4.5 Software: *experiencescape*

As aforementioned, visiting a heritage site means essentially experiencing it. Tourism product is a bundle composed of relationships among actors and tourists, the territory in which the attraction is located and the emotions it arises in the tourist (Rispoli & Tamma, 1995). For this reason, when speaking about *Software* the *heritagescape* turns into an *experiencescape*.

The main target which the Oude Kerk attracts is composed by families, couples, lonely travelers, groups, mainly interested in art, culture and history. Among this kind of audience, a distinction can be done according to the motivation of the visit: for some could be visiting the church interiors and historical features, for others the main purpose could coincide, instead, with the exhibition itself.

In the former case the experience sought is an immersion in the building architecture and solemn atmosphere mainly provided by the graves and the stained-glass windows. This kind of visitors will also expect adequate interpretation and presentation tools to support their understanding and, so, to satisfy their wish to get acknowledged of information about the church historical and architectonic features.

In the latter case, the visitors are probably more interested and expert of contemporary art. Hence, they would look for a place which can surprise them through the way in which the artist has integrated its works with the architecture and the way they communicate them to people.

As aforementioned, it is also conceivable that another percentage of tourists visits the building because it is included for free in Amsterdam City Cards or other similar cards: they may have bought the card for other reasons (other museums or attractions, canal cruises, public transport), but, finding themselves by chance in front of the church, decide to enter it. In this case the tourist would look for something new and unique, different from other attractions he/she has already seen in the city.

People participating to events in this structure would probably be a cultured audience whose aim is to experience a concert or a performance of high quality in a suggestive venue.

As it has already been mentioned, the message the site aims at communicating visitors is a modern use of a place in the respect of its past. Through art and heritage, the church offers an opportunity for contemplation and wonder. As its name suggests, the Oude Kerk is the oldest building of Amsterdam. This, together with the connection with Rembrandt's life, is the main theming through which the church is positioned in visitors' mind. No specific planned itineraries about these topics are known, however it is sure that the church is a must-see for tourists looking for Amsterdam historical monuments or for the ones following painters' life tracks – or similar curiosities. On the contrary, the theming about contemporary art and performances seems still not widespread as these previous ones.

Finding a tourist connectivity to the site is not easy, especially taking into account the building is a church - located in a Red Light District – in a contemporary

era is characterized by secularization. However, its atmosphere and solemnity can help in creating such a bond, also considering the presence of the graves gives a certain spirituality to the venue, arousing the aforementioned sense of contemplation which the place aims at giving. In this sense, a starting point towards the creation of a link within the personality or experience of the visitor is offered by the audio-guide, in the moment in which the actress remembers her father's premature death and invite the listeners to light a candle in case they find themselves in a similar situation.

The interpretation and presentation tools which accompany the tourist along its visit experience within the church¹⁴⁶ are mainly based on the idea of *edutainment*. The audio-guide is the clearest example, since the actress Halina Reijn stages different situations to communicate the story and the meaning of the building in an entertaining way. The same effect is obtained with the brochure created by the artist Jan Rothuizen, thanks to its unconventional way to present information: making an effort in reading all the scattered details around the sketch, tourist is involved and amused. *Edutainment* is not always appreciated: some Tripadvisor reviewers consider the audio-guide not serious and the brochure not useful.

The Oude Kerk does not have overcrowding problems, thus a visitor management has not been settled so far, at least during normal opening times.

To conclude, as for the financial resources the church needs for the staging of its programme and the settlement of an efficient *Software*, the church does not receive any governmental subsidies: all the funds come from the revenues of entrance fees and gift from public and private partners. For example, the audio-tour was made possible thanks to support from the Mondriaan Fund, a Dutch publicly¹⁴⁷ financed fund for visual art and cultural heritage. This topic will be deepened in paragraph 3.4.6.

¹⁴⁶ See 3.4.3 *Software: interpretation & presentation*

¹⁴⁷ The majority of its budget comes from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Mondrian Fund – about, www.mondriaanfonds.nl/en/about/

Figure 49 - A negative review on the audio guide

“Really disappointed.”

●●○○○○ Reviewed 22 November 2016

Every thing is under renovation. The audio-guide is a monumental farce. I have never felt so embarrassed from an audio-guide. They tried to make it funny, but really it does not work at all. When having an audio-guide, it has to go to the point and if you need more information you press on another button. Not a story about a girl calling her friend and telling people to stop the vacuum cleaner! Really, this is not a joke!! The audio-guide turned me so off, I did not enjoy my visit at all.

Visited November 2016

Source: www.tripadvisor.com, 2017

3.4.6 Orgware: Organization, Stakeholders, Management & Policy

Table 17 - Jansen-Verbeke model: Orgware

ORGWARE			
Agent & Organization			
Organization	Stakeholders	Management	Policy
Single overriding agency: Oude Kerk Foundation	Single internal stakeholder with a clear focus	Site management structure: board of trustees & directorate model in accordance with the <i>Cultural Governance Code</i>	Presence of effective national legislation: yes
Ownership: private, Oude Kerk Foundation	Active consultation of stakeholders + the community too, through events	Presence and effectiveness of formal conservation, management and security plan according to Dutch legislation	Level of Government & management of the site: local
Partnerships: international, private and public partners in the cultural sector	Awareness of tourism potential: yes	Revenue source for conservation: donations from privates and business. Specific “fidelity” programmes	
		Perceived role of tourism: primary. Awareness of tourism sustainability.	

Source: Personal elaboration based on Jansen-Verbeke 2010

The result of the integration of *Hardware* in the territory and of *Software* investments depends on the organizational capacities in the region and in the community, the support of the public-private partnership and the actual

involvement of different stakeholders. In fact, the strength and the efficiency of the *Orgware* has proved to be the most crucial success factor in the development of sustainable *tourismscapes* (Jansen-Verbeke, 2013).

Oude Kerk *Orgware* is based on a single overriding private entity: the Oude Kerk Foundation¹⁴⁸, which was established in 1955, with the aim of conserving the building and opening it up to a broad public in a meaningful manner. The Foundation is a cultural enterprise *pur sang* and is not supported by government. Thus, the level of government management of the site is local and the site management structure is private.

The Oude Kerk works with a compact team of permanent and flexible staff and volunteers. The organizational structure uses the board of trustees & directorate model and operates in accordance with the *Cultural Governance Code*.

The *Cultural Governance Code* is a Dutch normative framework which offers a series of practical recommendation and best practices for good governance and oversight in cultural organizations. Its first elaboration dates back to 2000 and was due to various stakeholders: directors, regulators, industry associations, the Dutch State, municipalities, which currently supports the Code and its spread in cultural organizations. The code incorporates the knowledge and experience of the industry sector and adapts them to the cultural world, with the aim of stimulating critical reflections between management and supervision, which is entrusted to a Supervisory Board. Besides its establishment, the main principles the code is based on are: a clear division of tasks and responsibilities between implementation, management and supervision; monitoring independence; avoidance of conflicts of interest; ensuring expertise and diversity in the composition of the Supervisory Board; a well-organized and independent financial control. The code also provides and promotes a framework for public accountability and openness: through reports, online information and open dialogues on social media, governments, public, sponsors, friends, organizations and other stakeholders can have insight on the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. This transparency policy aims at forming the basis for stakeholders' trust and cultural sector public support.

¹⁴⁸ In Dutch: *Stichting de Oude Kerk te Amsterdam*

Oude Kerk application of the *Cultural Governance Code* is evident in its internal organization and its transparency on the official website¹⁴⁹. The director and curator¹⁵⁰ operate in collaboration of a supervisory board, which can be assimilated to a company's board of directors. Below their direction, the organization gathers five main areas: Marketing & Communication, Public & Building, Project & Production, Safety & Conservation and Finance & Human Resources. The website includes these information in a transparent way, as well as details about the church financial sources¹⁵¹ and annual reports.

Oude Kerk Foundation operates with both Dutch and international, private and public partners, from which it also receives gifts for staging its programme.

Besides the Foundation, which is a single internal stakeholder with a clear focus and the leader of the decision making, the main stakeholders are the donors¹⁵², the partners and the community itself.

Every summer the Oude Kerk organizes a public event called *Discussion with the city*, an opportunity for the people to reflect on subjects that are relevant to the church's neighbourhood, the city and the surroundings and express their own opinion about the church end-use and cultural programme. Besides discussing about Red Light District related issues¹⁵³ the citizens are asked what the Oude Kerk ought to represent for the neighbourhood and the city and how to deal with heritage building in a modern-day city in order to prevent it to become a museum. In may 2014, soon after the church re-opening, the Oude Kerk organized an event exclusively to speak about the future use of the space with residents also through experts' lectures, live music and performances.

¹⁴⁹ Oude Kerk, Organization, on www.oudekerk.nl/en/over/organisatie/

¹⁵⁰ both figures are covered by the same person, Jacqueline Grandjean

¹⁵¹ see next paragraph 3.4.6 *Orgware: Oude Kerk financial sources*

¹⁵² see next paragraph 3.4.6 *Orgware: Oude Kerk financial sources*

Hypothetically, specific rules to be followed in the management of the site were fixed during the project monitoring and assessment phase, in the respect of national legislation.

Figure 50 - Discussion with the city



Source: www.oudekerk.nl, 2016

The role of tourism is perceived as primary, as a matter of fact, Oude Kerk initiatives are addressed also to an international public and for its execution the foundation also relies on revenue from entrance fees. The managers are aware of tourism sustainability and try to pursue this principle throughout the whole organization of the cultural programme.

3.4.6 Orgware: Oude Kerk financial sources

As aforementioned, the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam Foundation is not supported by government nor does it receive structural subsidies. Thus, the financial means the church needs for its maintenance and exhibitions derive from the support of individuals, businesses, other foundations and the municipality. In particular, the funds for the staging of its programme derives from entrance fees and gifts from public and private partners, while for the realization of the annual maintenance, they are channelled through the Oude Kerk Restoration Fund

Foundation¹⁵⁴. The Oude Kerk is a General Benefit Institution¹⁵⁵: this means that there are no taxes on donations and, furthermore, these latter are often deductible for the donor.

Figure 51 - Donation Request in the church



Source: Author's picture, Camilla Ferri, 2017

Besides occasional gifts, the church can count on a regular support of individuals and businesses. For both of them the foundation has elaborated two specific donation programs which offer specific treatments and activities in return:

- the *Vrienden van Oude Kerk* ¹⁵⁶ for lovers of heritage, art and music;
- the *Tien Gilden van de Oude Kerk* ¹⁵⁷ for organizations and companies.

The *Vrienden van Oude Kerk* can support directly the programme and conservation of the church through four kinds of annual contributions

- a low one: 10 Euros pro year
- a middle one: 75 Euros pro year
- a high one: 150 Euros pro year

¹⁵⁴ the Stichting Restauratiefonds Oude Kerk

¹⁵⁵ translation from the Dutch: Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling (ANBI)

¹⁵⁶ Friends of the Oude Kerk - *Vrienden van Oude Kerk*, www.oudekerk.nl/vrienden

¹⁵⁷ Ten Guilds of the Oude Kerk - *Tien Gilden van de Oude Kerk*, www.oudekerk.nl/gilden

- a special one: for who donates more than 1000 euros pro year (for example for those with a family history in the Old Church or any other special relationship with the building and its intangible heritage).

The higher the category the more are the services offered and the activities organized especially for the *Vrienden*: discounts on entrance fees, peculiar church tours, one day trips to the organ restoration venue, free participation in the annual Breakfast with Saskia, discounts in other museums and festivals, exclusive concerts, exhibition previews.

The donation programme *Tien Gilden van de Oude Kerk* brings back a medieval practice widespread in many European churches. The corporation, or guilds, were associations of tradesmen or workers of the same profession which were used to donate money for the construction of altars in the churches hoping for saints' protection in return¹⁵⁸. Today, the Oude Kerk Foundation aims at recreating a modern version of these associations through a cultural network in the city. Currently the community of the *Guilds* is composed by ten groups, gathered by specific professions or inspirations, which contributes with individual donations or collectively of 10.000 Euros pro year. The *Ten Guilds* are consulted for the planning of Oude Kerk cultural programme through specific dining events or church tours.

Dinners and similar activities were also organized for the supporters of the organ restoration. In particular during the Open Monument Weekend 2015, the Oude Kerk provided insight into the restoration process for the public through workshop and expert short talks¹⁵⁹.

Besides collecting funds, through the *Vrienden van Oude Kerk* and the *Tien Gilden van de Oude Kerk*, the Foundation realizes a sort of fidelity program specifically targeted towards a Dutch¹⁶⁰ audience with strong interests in heritage and culture. With it, the Oude Kerk aims at spreading knowledge about its cultural initiatives, creating a network of the city institutions, businesses and well-read individuals.

¹⁵⁸ The paintings on Oude Kerk arches still remind the saints who were called by the guilds

¹⁵⁹ Oude Kerk, open monument weekend 2015, www.oudekerk.nl/en/programma/open-monument-weekend-2015

¹⁶⁰ As a matter of fact, the information about these donation programmes are in Dutch only

3.5 Du Cros – McKercher Model applied to Oude Kerk

In parallel with what has been done in the second chapter, for a deeper analysis of the balances between conservation and tourist use of the site, the Oude Kerk has been also assessed according to McKercher-Du Cros model.

The tourism potential of the building has been measured following the implementation of the framework¹⁶¹, based on four dimensions:

- Cultural and physical values for what *Robusticity* aspects concerns;
- Experiential and product values for *Market Appeal* evaluation.

For each dimensions a series of sub-indicators has been identified in the form of a question: the answer corresponds to a score from 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 to high. The overall assessment is the average of these scores.

Despite the authors recommend this evaluation to be done by a pool of external experts, for the purposes of this study, the assignment has been given just according to candidate's background and previous researches.

3.5.1 Robusticity

The first variable the model considers is *Robusticity*, which is observed through two different perspectives: *physical* and *cultural values*.

The former has obtained a high score: the recent restauration ensured the safety of the building, making it accessible and robust after the decay which characterized it in the half of the XX Century. For the same reason, at least in the short term, no particular physical damages are supposed. Hypothetically, the part which could suffer more in case of an eventual increased visitation would be the floor, whose graveyard could erode on a long term and in case of a huge regular frequentation of the church. The interventions did not undermine the authenticity both of the structure and the interiors, except for those aiming at providing the church with the base visitor services and the café, which was built in the former

¹⁶¹ For the theory see paragraph 1.3.6 *An implementation of the model*

sacristy. As for the state of repair, the only lack is represented by the organ, currently under restoration.

Table 18 - Du Cros – McKercher Model: Robusticity

ROBUSTICITY			
Physical Values		Cultural Values	
Physical Robustness	4,5	Stakeholders awareness of site cultural values	5
State of repair <i>What is the physical state of repair (any wear and tear)?</i> - If interventions are needed: Ability of withstanding increased visitation without losing authenticity <i>Will its authenticity be damaged after repairs are made?</i>	4,5	Level of Aesthetic values	5
Ability of withstanding increased visitation without physical damages	4	Level of Historical values	5
Accessibility: bad/good <i>Can all areas be accessed?</i>	5	Level of Educational values	4
Safety for visitors: low/high <i>Does the site represent potential hazards for visitors?</i>	5	Level of Social values	4
Site (inside its physical boundaries) Tourist Appeal <i>Is it appealing to tourists?</i>	4	Ability of withstanding increased visitation without damaging its cultural values	4,5
Setting (its surrounds) Tourist Appeal to tourists <i>Is it appealing to tourists?</i>	3,5	Level of importance of the asset inside the territory <i>Is the asset of local, regional or international cultural significance?</i>	3,5
Possibility to modify the use of site <i>Can it be modified for use (legally, practically)?</i>	3,5	Ability to represent the community <i>Is the asset worth conserving as a representative example of the community's heritage? Does it have a significance for the community?</i>	5
		Ability to create an emotional connection with the individual	4
<i>Average</i>	<i>4,3</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>4,4</i>

Source: Personal elaboration based on B. McKercher & P.S.Y. Ho, 2006

Being a church and having strong heritage assets at its interiors, the possibility to permanently and deeply modify the use of the building is limited, at least on a legal and an ethical point of view. However, being the space huge and rather empty, the building can practically host various kind of uses in the respect of the structure, the interiors and the heritage, as it is currently happening with the cultural exhibitions and performances organized by the Foundation.

From the physical point of view, the site tourist appeal is rather high, although some visitors criticize the emptiness of the interiors. As for the setting, the

appeal can vary according to the kind of tourist: it can be appealing for people interested in the Red Light District businesses, while it won't be appreciated by people against this kind of tourism. Except for the context of the Red Light District, the setting is however appealing thanks for its medieval atmosphere and Amsterdam canals.

The *cultural values* obtained a high grade too. The Oude Kerk has high aesthetic and historical values. The stakeholders are deeply aware of them and try to communicate them to the tourist audience, thus highlighting its educational value too. The church should be able to withstand increased visitation without damaging its cultural values, also taking into account they are maintained and enhanced thanks to its actual use. The unique risk can derive from a potential exceeding contemporary use or interpretation of the structure, which is however currently not plausible considering the curator's vision.

Oude Kerk level of importance is recognized at least on a local level, but it is supposed to be also on a national one, since the church is oldest building of the capital city of the Netherlands. For the same reason, the building is capable to represent the community and has a strong significance, at least for the city history: it is the first settlement of Amsterdam population and it has been a trade hub for centuries and thus it is a relevant part of its heritage. However, probably, as for the current importance inside the city, the Oude Kerk has been eclipsed by the Nieuwe Kerk, which is situated in Amsterdam main square and hosts the royal ceremonies, and it is not generally mentioned among the main *things to do* or points of interest in the Amsterdam¹⁶².

Nevertheless, the church social value is high, since it always tries to get in contact with the community and to involve it in its cultural initiatives, through specific events addressed to residents and the donation programmes the *Vrienden van Oude Kerk* and the *Tien Gilden van de Oude Kerk*.¹⁶³

Despite the secularization characterizing modern life, the building can be capable to create an emotional connection with the visitors, both local and

¹⁶² From a research done on google.com writing "things to see/do in Amsterdam"

¹⁶³ see paragraph 3.4.5 *Orgware* and 3.4.6 *Orgware: Oude Kerk financial sources*

foreigners, thanks to the atmosphere and solemnity the venue communicates through the graveyards, the stained-glass windows and the art installations¹⁶⁴.

3.5.2 Market Appeal

Table 19 - Du Cros – McKercher Model: Market Appeal

MARKET APPEAL			
Experiential Values		Product Values	
Level of relevance of the site to non-locals	3,5	Opening to public	5
Level of interests of the tourist in the visit <i>Does this asset have the potential to offer interesting experiences to tourists?</i>	4	Pre-visit information quality <i>Is there sufficient information available about the site (e.g. magazine, website, etc.)?</i>	4,5
Level of engagement in tourist experience: <i>Is this asset capable of providing a participatory, engaging and/or entertaining experience?</i>	4	Accessibility (distance from tourism nodes) <i>Is it easily reachable (quality of connection & information)?</i>	4,5
Ability to meet tourist expectations: <i>Is this asset capable of meeting different tourists' expectations?</i>	3,5	Size-capacity to attract tourists: <i>Is the site big enough to attract and retain tourists for a long time?</i>	4
Quality of interpretation	5	Level of time – cost – effort in visiting the site <i>Is the effort required by tourists to get to it too high to make a visit worthwhile (time, cost, effort)?</i>	3,5
Level of authenticity in site presentation	5	Proximity to other attractions and amenities <i>Is it near other attractions (similar or different types)?</i>	4,5
Level of authenticity perceived by tourists <i>How authentic would general tourists perceive the experiences offered by the asset?</i>	4,5	Presence and quality of facilities	4
Complementarity with other activities	2		
Level of harmony of the experience with the ambiance and landscape	3		
<i>Average</i>	<i>3,8</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>4,2</i>

Source: Personal elaboration based on B. McKercher & P.S.Y. Ho, 2006

If the first variable focuses on the intrinsic values of the site, *Market Appeal* analyses its relationship with a tourist audience, in particular through its *experiential and product values*.

¹⁶⁴ see paragraph 3.4.5 *Software: experiencescape*

Oude Kerk *experiential values* sub-indicators obtained good grades, most of all thanks to the high quality of interpretation and presentation tools created on purpose and aiming at respecting the place authenticity. As a matter of fact, joining church heritage and contemporary exhibitions, the asset has the potential to offer an interesting and original visit to tourists. The audio guide and the brochures, as well as the general atmosphere of the church, can also provide an engaging visit to the tourist, who can be involved also simply reading the brochure to understand the meaning of the contemporary installations. Furthermore, the presentation tools are designed to support the visitor in understanding the history and the heritage of the place, who can perceive in this way the authenticity and the importance of the building for the community, besides the significance of contemporary art works in its interiors. For this same reason, it can also have a good relevance to non-locals in case they are keen to understand Amsterdam as a city with a history and a past at its backs. It can be relevant also for foreign people interested in discovering modern adaptive re-uses of architectures and spaces or contemporary art exhibitions in the city.

The analysis on Tripadvisor reviews¹⁶⁵ reveals that sometimes the venue does not meet tourists' expectations: probably, these profiles are most of all the ones who enter the church only because it is included in the I Amsterdam City Card and are disappointed because they expect another kind of building¹⁶⁶ and do not appreciate the integration of contemporary art and past. On the contrary, the visitors who are willing to pay are aware of the church vision or at least more interested in art and history. Thanks to its strong assets, mainly the stained glass windows and the tombs, the church is however capable to amaze also tourists coming there by chance.

¹⁶⁵ see also 3.4.4 *Software: tourist appeal*

¹⁶⁶ The Oude Kerk is not always appreciated by an audience coming from south Europe because its interiors are emptier than catholic churches ones.

Figure 52 - Some Tripadvisor reviews

“Bit of a let down”

●●●○○○ Reviewed 2 weeks ago

I visited the church in January. It was freezing outside, but even more so inside so because of this I didn't stay very long. I gained free entry as I had the I Amsterdam card. I'm kind of relieved as I would have been very disappointed to pay for the church. There was an art exhibition within the space which was quite underwhelming. I love churches and exploring the history, but this one was quite disappointing. Maybe on a warmer day it would have been better.

Visited January 2017

“Stunning Archetecture”

●●●●●○ Reviewed 14 December 2016

Came across this famous church (circa 1300ad) by accident and my what a shame it would have been to miss it ,The carving of the pulpit and the light from the windows is mesmerising When we visited there was an exhibition on where large Glass mirrors had been laid on the floor and smashed the effect of the reflections of the ceiling in them was quite stunning. There was also a mobile lift to take visitors up into the roof space at no charge where you can see a completely different view of the church



[See all photos](#)

“Amazing exhibition”

●●●●●○ Reviewed 1 week ago

Another GREAT exhibition by Jacqueline Grandjean. Marinus Boezem's installations were amazing in this church. The reenactment of his flying man was an unexpected surprise. And the ongoing Misericordia program takes 'art' to a higher level. Thank you Ms Grandjean for thoughtful uses of this beautiful structure.

Source: www.tripadvisor.com, February 2017

As already mentioned, the context in which the site is located is contrasting because of the coexistence of Red Light District businesses and medieval traditional architecture of its alleys. This situation can create a certain disharmony of the tourist experience with the ambiance and landscape, also considering the non-complementarity with the activities of the district. As a matter of fact, generally, the tourists interested in the Red Light District are not the target which the Oude Kerk addresses towards. As a result, people coming for visiting the church are often floored for what the quarter offers them¹⁶⁷. However, this disharmony is softened

¹⁶⁷ Mainly prostitutes windows and coffee shops

thanks to the more nocturnal life of the Red Light businesses and the recent measures for the installation of alternative activities in the district¹⁶⁸. In addition, the assets and events interpretation provided by the church also aim at letting people deeper understand the relationship of the quarter with the prostitution phenomenon.

Market Appeal analysis ends with the measurement of site *Product Values*, which in this case are very high: the church, open every day¹⁶⁹, enjoys of a very good position since it is easily accessible¹⁷⁰ and near to other attractions and amenities of the city such as Dam Square and the whole surrounding canal cityscape of Amsterdam Centrum.

Its dimension makes it big enough to attract a big number of tourists. The time they spend at its interiors is variable and depends on the level of interest they have in the exhibition and the church itself. Overall, it does not take a lot of time to see both of them, but if they choose to use the presentation tools (the brochures and the audio-tour), this time lengthens.

The website contains complete and easily findable visitor information¹⁷¹ in English and in Dutch: location and transportation means, wheelchair accessibility, opening times, different entrance fees, the availability of audio guide, guided tours and children didactic activities. This page also provides a short description of church vision and history, particularly focusing on its being the oldest church of Amsterdam, and suggest a visit to the café in the former sacristy¹⁷². Besides this, the other facilities are restrooms and a small museum shop, but there is no visitor centre.

¹⁶⁸ See 3.4.1 *Hardware of the heritage site*

¹⁶⁹ Monday till Saturday 10:00 – 18:00; Sunday 13:00 – 17:30; plus the evenings/nights in occasion of special events

¹⁷⁰ See 3.4.1 *Hardware of the heritage site*


¹⁷¹ Visit-Oude Kerk, www.oudekerk.nl/en/visit

¹⁷² It provides the link of its Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/Koffieschenkerij

Figure 53 – Official website visit information

oude kerk visit programme about misericordia nl en

oude kerk in short



oldest building in amsterdam


The Oude Kerk is located in the heart of Amsterdam in the middle of the Red Light district. It is the oldest building in the city. A stone church, dedicated to St. Nicholas, was built around 1300. The church would eventually grow to become the impressive monument we know today.

museum with an international ambition

Oude Kerk is Amsterdam's newest museum, with a national presence and an international ambition. The oldest building in the city houses one of the Netherlands' youngest art institutions. [Read more](#) about the program.

Don't forget to pay a visit to de [Koffiecentrum](#) (Coffee Café), the former sacristy, for a coffee, cake or lunch. Or the terrace in the monastery garden you can enjoy a view on the [Oudezijde Voorburgwal](#), too.

address



oude kerk
oudekerkplein 23
1012 gc amsterdam
the netherlands


Tel: +31 20 625 82 84
E-mail: info@oudekerk.nl

Oude Kerk is situated on a minute walk from the Central Station. The area is hard to reach by car, which is why we recommend using public transport:

- walking from central station amsterdam
- public transport from central station amsterdam
- by car

The Oude Kerk is (nearly) accessible for people in wheelchairs or with crutches.

visitor information



opening hours

Monday till Saturday 10:00 – 18:00
Ticket desk closed at 17:45

Sunday 10:00 – 17:30
(ticket desk closed at 17:15)

24 December 10:00 – 15:00
31 December 10:00 – 16:00


Closed on: 27 April (Kingsday)

entrance prices
Dobt and credit cards only, no cash

buy your ticket

entrance	€10
vip	€7,5
student	€7,5

tours



soundwalk (audio tour)

The Soundwalk of Oude Kerk is available, both at the entrance desk and online. This accompanied walk with Dutch actress Hella Rijn introduces you to the church, its architecture and its history and the program with contemporary art. The tour also includes stories, interviews and music, shedding light on hidden histories that you might never have suspected.

The online version of the Soundwalk is available [here](#).

- guided tour
- self-visit

Source: www.oudekerk.nl/en/visit/, 2017

To conclude, the effort required by tourists to reach and visit the place is not high, considering it is located in main tourist paths, easily findable, and it does not require a big amount of time to visit it. However, what often makes the tourist decide not to enter the church is the price, which is often believed to be too high, making the visit not worthwhile.

3.5.3 McKercher-Du Cros Model application results

In order to provide a meaningful result for the previous analysis, the average of the scores given to every sub-indicators have been calculated, producing these outcomes:

Physical Values: 4,2

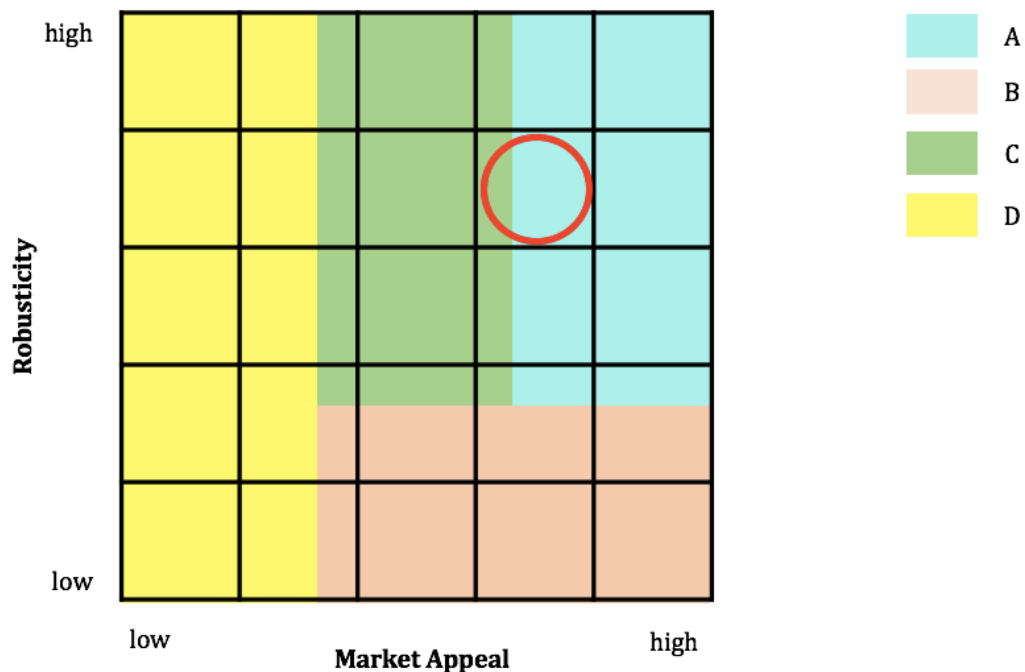
Cultural Values: 4,4

Experiential Values: 3,8

Product Values: 4,2

Therefore, the average score of *Robusticity* variable is 4,3, while *Market Appeal* one is 4. They have been plotted to position the asset in the following matrix, which was built by gathering the squares of the first version of the model¹⁷³ and the five grades of the second one¹⁷⁴.

Figure 54 - Du Cros – McKercher Model: Robusticity-Market Appeal Matrix



Source: Personal elaboration based on B. McKercher & P.S.Y. Ho, 2006

As shown by the matrix, the Oude Kerk falls into square A and on a minimum part in square C, since both *Robusticity* and *Market Appeal* obtained a moderate/high grade.

Thus, according to McKercher and Du Cros, this asset is ideally suited for significant tourism activity and does not need strong interventions to protect the cultural values from the impact of heavy tourist flows, neither to enhance visitors appeal. What slightly moves the Oude Kerk from this very good position mainly regards its *Market Appeal*. In particular, for both variables, the sub-indicators which obtained the lowest grades deal with two main aspects:

- the site setting tourist appeal and, directly connected, the level of harmony

¹⁷³ see figure 5

¹⁷⁴ see paragraph 1.3.7 An implementation of the model

of the experience with the ambiance and landscape

- the tourist expectations, also in relation to the entrance fee cost.

These two perspectives can be seen as site fatal flaws and are hypothetically related to the fact that the Oude Kerk is overall an attraction for a specific cultured tourist target inserted in a quarter characterized by mass tourism. This peculiar situation provokes:

- a sense of disharmony of the experience for “cultural tourist”, who are vexed by the behaviours and the main complementary activities characterizing the Red Light District;

- a sense of disappointment in the “mass or general tourist” who decide to visit the church for its being “iconic” as “the oldest building of Amsterdam” (and probably because it is inserted in the already purchased *I Amsterdam Card*) and does not (or does not want to) understand the importance of this kind of heritage site.

Table 20 - Results of Du Cros – McKercher Model application on the Oude Kerk

ROBUSTICITY		MARKET APPEAL		Overall Assessment	Fatal Flaws
Physical Value	Cultural Value	Experiential Value	Product Value		
moderate/ high	moderate/ high	moderate/ high	moderate/ high	moderate/ high ow	Disharmony experience-setting; some tourist expectations not respected (entrance cost- church emptiness)

Source: Personal elaboration based on B. McKercher & P.S.Y. Ho, 2006

While Van den Berg, Van der Borg, Van der Meer Urban Tourism model allows to deepen the dynamics at the basis of the overall tourism destination, Amsterdam, Jansen-Verbeke and McKercher-DuCros models give a clear picture of the different aspects characterizing the second case study, the Oude Kerk. In particular, the former permits to understand the relationships of the site with the territory and the dynamics of its organization, the latter relates the site conservation status as a tourism product, providing more precise results on its level of tourist attractiveness.

In the following chapter, the outcomes of the three of them will be analyzed and compared to the ones obtained in chapter two for the case study of the Scuola

Grande della Misericordia in Venice, in order to discuss about solutions and directions for heritage site management.

CHAPTER 4 – A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO CASE STUDIES

This chapter aims at draw conclusions from the case studies analysis provided in chapter 2 and 3 through a comparison on the most relevant traits of the two destinations and the two heritage sites. In particular, the outcomes of both Jansen-Verbeke and McKercher-DuCros Model are gathered in order to highlight how the weaknesses of the Scuola Grande della Misericordia can be solved taking inspiration from Oude Kerk experience.

4.1 Comparison between Venice and Amsterdam

Venice and Amsterdam have been taken as case studies since they are considered *similar* realities. As the analysis of Van den Berg, Van der Borg, Van der Meer Urban Tourism Model has underlined, their primary product is based on a peculiar city structure, composed by water navigable canals and historical architecture, which make them worldwide-known urban and cultural tourism destinations.

The uniqueness of this landscape represents such a strong attractiveness factor that collocates the destinations in a long-lasting stagnation phase of its “tourism lifecycle” (Butler, 1980, 2006), in which the already high tourist arrivals keep growing year after year without stop. Such a situation, clearly characterized by a high tourism pressure and the exceeding of the carrying capacity, at least in certain zones of the cities, results in the so-called “vicious circle” (Russo, 2002). As a consequence of the evident overcrowding of the city center and of public means of transportation, accommodation and other tourist services prices increase. However, the high popularity of the destination causes tourists with a limited purchasing power to choose to visit it for shorter periods. The reduction of the tourist permanence brings to a “bite-and-run-away” tourism and, thus, to a decrease of the quality of the tourists’ experience. Not only: the vicious circle has negative effects also on the perception of residents’ life quality (Bertocchi, Van der Zee, Janusz, 2016).

This phenomenon affects both Venice and Amsterdam, and it is evident in the *tourismification* and *commodification* of mass tourist paths like Strada Nuova-Rialto-San Marco in Venice and Damrak-Kalverstraat-Leidseplein-Museum Area in

Amsterdam. As a matter of fact, the supply of these zones is completely visitor-oriented; this is observable in the substitution of residents' activities with tourism business, such as low quality souvenir shop and restaurants, the higher cost of housing, the increase of the number of beds in hotels and sharing economy accommodations. The visit experience is low-quality also because most tourists do not take into account the rich cultural supply both cities provide: they focus on the major interest points (Van Gogh-Rembrandt circuit in Amsterdam, San Marco Square in Venice), causing over-utilization of some attractions and under-utilization of others.

The negative effects of *tourismification* are also visible in a decline of the most overcrowded areas of the city: in Venice this situation is exacerbated by *excursionists*, who “use” the city only during the day, bringing to its *disneyfication*; while in Amsterdam the problem is related to the “sex and drug” image of the city, which produces downgrading, criminality, insecurity, noise and gender discrimination, particularly in the zone near the Red Light District.

The clash with the local population is strong in both cases; but in Venice it has gradually brought to a serious depopulation phenomenon¹⁷⁵. As a matter of fact, if in Venice the *tourism monoculture* is more exacerbated, Amsterdam keeps its vocation as a trade, production and business center, displacing to other zones of the city, as well as the residential function.

The situation of the former is due to the absence of residential policies for the city center and the deep zoning in the Municipality territory, which has moved the productive and residential functions in the “mainland” (Cavallo, 2014). However, it is undeniable that the particular morphology of the Venice Island makes this process more evident and emphasized, being the city center detached by the “mainland” and being the lagoon a too fragile environment to host big industries centers¹⁷⁶.

¹⁷⁵ Since 1950 Venice lost 2/3 of its residents: they decreased from 175.000 in 1950 to 54.688 (9th February 2017, www.dashboard.cityknowledge.net/#/venice)

¹⁷⁶ However, it is not excluded the possibility of new and alternative and low-scale productions in Venice Lagoon: fishing, traditional activities as Murano Glass, bio-agriculture are just some examples.

4.2 Comparison between Scuola Grande della Misericordia and Oude Kerk

4.2.1 *Scuola Grande della Misericordia and Oude Kerk's comparability*

As aforementioned, Venice and Amsterdam can count on a huge cultural tourism supply, composed of numerous famous and less known heritage sites. The Scuola Grande della Misericordia and the Oude Kerk belong to second category: they are not among the main tourist attractions of the two cities, but this does not mean they do not represent an important part of their heritage and their history.

The Scuola Grande della Misericordia is not a church, but this does not affect the possibility to compare it with the Oude Kerk. As a matter of fact, the Venetian site's origin is connected with religious functions and it could be easily confused with a church for its external appearance¹⁷⁷. During the XX Century both buildings went through a situation of decline and degradation situation, which has recently been solved thanks to huge restauration works, which have ensured structures' robustness and allowed their reopening and their public fruition - in 2013 for the Oude Kerk and in 2016 for the Scuola Grande della Misericordia. Besides the aim of preserving high value testimonies of the past, both sites have a vision towards the present and the future, since their purpose is being used for events and temporary exhibitions. In both cases, this function aims at giving a new cultural value to a building that was an important reference point for the community in the past. The Oude Kerk was the first settlement of Amsterdam people and an important trade hub during the Dutch Golden Age, while the Scuola Grande was the headquarter of a powerful confraternity during Venice Republic and more recently the gym of the most acclaimed and successful basketball team of the city. Furthermore, the function is also easily adaptable with the architectures' size, internal spatial structure and iconic features. As a matter of fact, both buildings have huge dimensions; despite the presence of naves (in the Oude Kerk) and floors (in the Scuola Grande), they have a compact structure, and are rather "empty". Furthermore, the church was disrobed during Protestantism and today is enriched only by stained glass windows, the

¹⁷⁷ It was the purpose of the architect himself: after its Roman experience, Sansovino comes to Venice in 1531 with the aim of setting in the lagoon an innovative antique style basilica (Morresi, 2016).

misericords of the choir and the wooden vault, while the Scuola is decorated with Corinthian capitals and Paolo Veronese's atelier frescos. However, in both cases, the iconic feature is the architecture itself too.

The site external accessibility is good in both cases, even though the context in which the structures are located is different. The Scuola della Misericordia is situated in a harmonious Venetian urban landscape, but off the most tourist beaten tracks; on the other hand, the Oude Kerk is in the Amsterdam city center but within a quarter known for another kind of tourism, the one related to sex and drugs, which thus can create a contrasting tourist experience.

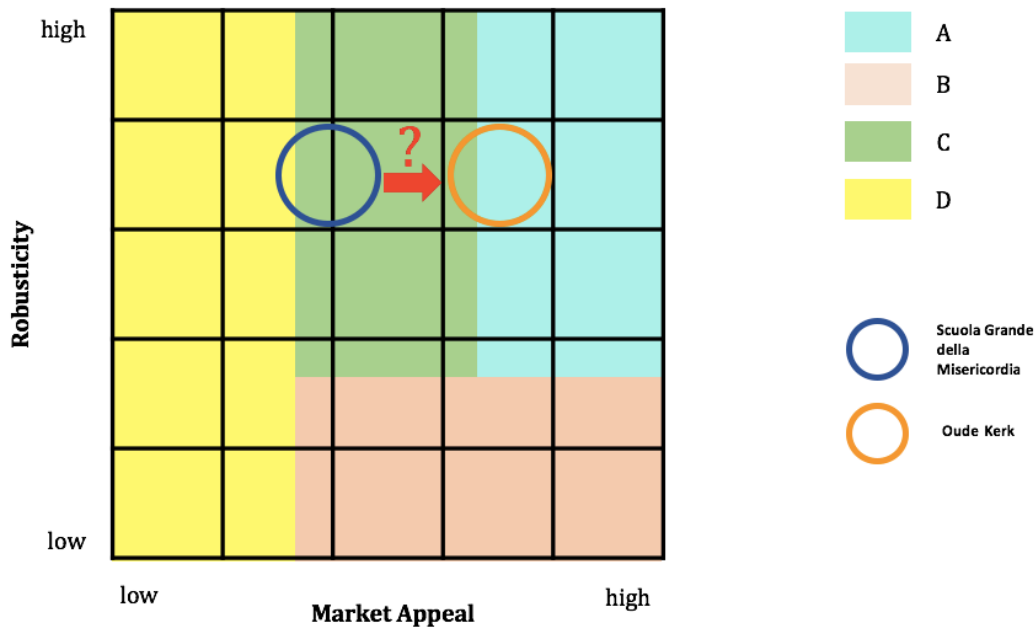
Starting from these premises, mostly linked to the *Hardware* of the two sites, the next paragraph will illustrate a comparison of their assessments according to *Robusticity - Market Appeal Model*¹⁷⁸, highlighting how the Oude Kerk can be seen as a *best practice* compared to the Scuola Grande della Misericordia in terms of *Software* and, consequently, *Orgware*¹⁷⁹.

¹⁷⁸ Du Cros – McKercher Model: for theory see paragraph 1.3 McKercher - Du Cros Model; for the single sites assessments see paragraph 2.5 Du Cros – McKercher Model applied to Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Misericordia and 3.5 Du Cros – McKercher Model applied to Oude Kerk

¹⁷⁹ *Hardware, Software, Orgware* refers, instead, to Jansen-Verbeke Model: for theory see paragraph 1.2 Jansen-Verbeke Model; for the single sites assessments see paragraph 2.4 Jansen-Verbeke model applied to *Scuola Grande della Misericordia* and 3.4 Jansen-Verbeke model applied to Oude Kerk

4.2.2 The Oude Kerk as a best practice compared to Scuola Grande della Misericordia

Figure 55 - Du Cros-McKercher Matrix: a comparison between Scuola Grande della Misericordia and Oude Kerk



Source: Personal elaboration based on B. McKercher & P.S.Y. Ho, 2006

In order to understand the weaknesses of the Scuola Grande della Misericordia, a comparison between the assessments of the Scuola and the Oude Kerk has been made, resulting from McKercher-Du Cros matrix. This “quantitative” evaluation becomes, thus, the starting point for a wider analysis of possible measures that the former’s managers could take into account for an implementation of the site attractiveness, following the *best practices* offered by the latter. This does not mean that the Oude Kerk does not have any flaws, but that it can be considered a source of inspiration an example to inspire to, in case the Scuola’s managers are willing to pursue a similar direction in the site management.

As figure 55 shows, the assessments of the two sites resulting from McKercher-Du Cros model highlight a deep gap in the *Market Appeal* variable, evaluated with a score of 2,5 for the Scuola Grande della Misericordia and a score of 4 for the Oude Kerk. Considering that the level of *Robusticity* is high in both cases (4,2 for the former and 4,3 for the latter), the sub-indicators to focus on are the *experiential* and *product values*, which, as aforementioned, are parallel to the Jansen-Verbeke’s definition of *Software*.

In particular, the major difference lies in the quality of interpretation and the connected engagement in tourist experience. As a matter of fact, the Scuola Grande della Misericordia lacks of interpretation, except for a weak connection with the *intangible heritage* represented by the past use of the venue as the city basketball team gym. No presentation is provided to make visitors aware of neither the present nor the past meaning of the place: there are no panels at the entrance nor in its interiors, no brochures or maps are available. As observable in the Oude Kerk, providing strong interpretation and presentation tools or creating a visitor center is not necessary: a peculiar “sketch” brochure and an interactive audio-guide are sufficient to lead visitors through the story and the significance of the building and the exhibition. They do not have physical impact on the structure’s authenticity and leave visitors free to walk and explore the church, reflecting by themselves on the works and the stories related to the building.

Furthermore, the Oude Kerk uses *interpretation* to link intangible occurrences with the site itself and its reputation: it is, for instance, the case of Saskia’s story. Besides for its being the city’s most ancient building, the Oude Kerk is famous in Amsterdam for hosting the tomb of Rembrandt’s wife: lots of tourists ask for it entering the church and find a response both in the audio-guide and in the brochure. Furthermore, every year, a specific event, *the Breakfast with Saskia*, is organized: as aforementioned¹⁸⁰, it consists in music, art history experts’ interventions besides a small breakfast in collaboration with the church café.

The Scuola Grande della Misericordia is famous in Venice not so much for the importance of the confraternity it originally hosted, but rather for its having been the gym of the Venetian basketball team when it was at its best. Even though weakly, Reyer Basket can currently represent an *interpretation* of the site based on a connection between a *tangible heritage*, the building itself, and an *intangible heritage*, the past glory of the team and the use of the building as a gym. Being still a strong memory in Venetian people, it would not be difficult to create a particular *theming* capable to attract both locals, who would love entering again the venue where their favourite team used to play, and tourists, intrigued by a such peculiar

¹⁸⁰ See paragraph 3.3. The *Oude Kerk*: the actual structure and use

past use for an ancient building. For instance, the Scuola could envisage a permanent exhibition of some meaningful historic photos at the entrance - or in another part of the structure, in order to not mine its compact vision and space -, and an explanation of this use in a brochure or on a panel. In addition, this kind of theming could be connected with the organization of specific events opened to citizenry, following the example of the inauguration one. The development of such an interpretation would also be in harmony with the Scuola management organization, SMV S.p.A., since it was born for UMANA's willingness, the society currently owning Reyer Basketball Team. The intention of maintaining this memory is evident in the plaque and bell at the side entrance¹⁸¹, in the topic of the building re-opening based on a documentary about the basketball team, and in the guided tours organized for today's Reyer basketball teams.

Hence, in order to maintain the cultural value of the building and valorise completely this heritage, an interpretation and a presentation capable of transmitting and describing also the original function of the Scuola is necessary. A *theming* about the Scuole Grandi in Venice can be thought, for instance, through the creation of a network and an itinerary including these other buildings, besides the production of informative materials (panels or brochures, for example).

Thus, as shown by the comparison between the Scuola Grande and the Oude Kerk, *soft* interventions are enough to offer an experience with a higher quality level, capable of engaging and educate not only tourists who have never entered the building but also local people interested in the story of their own city.

However, being the space "empty", good interpretation and presentation tools about the story of the place are not sufficient to attract a consistent number of people and keep them for a long time in its interiors. The Oude Kerk Foundation, aware of this limitation, has decided to set a precise programme composed of a temporary exhibition of contemporary art, lasting approximately 5 months, and a series of correlated events, ranging from workshops and artists meetings to dancing performances and concerts. Doing so, the church provides tourists with:

¹⁸¹ See figure 23 and 24 in chapter 2

- an interesting, durable and complete experience, thus rendering unique a simple visit to a church
- an always new way of discovering and interacting with the building, mainly for a local audience.

Although the new concept of the Scuola Grande della Misericordia focuses on its function as an expositive space and an event venue, Scuola Misericordia Venezia S.p.A. has never presented any similar programme by now. In this case too, following the example of the Oude Kerk could be useful for:

1. attracting tourists, in particular those interested in Venetian history, culture and contemporary art, mostly following the destination less beaten tracks
2. opening the Scuola also to citizens, through events that can be linked to the past and modern history of the city or to topical issues, as well as concerts and art performances. In this way, the intentions the municipality has had in giving into concession the building through the project financing would be respected, together with the declarations made by the major during its campaign¹⁸².

Hence, defining such a programme would help in clarifying the *positioning* of the site and its image in both residents and tourists.

Furthermore, such a use would avoid structure *commodification* risks, since it respects its authenticity, it is affine to city claim of public spaces and does not clash with the original function of the building. However, if the installation of a contemporary art exhibition aims at addressing to a huge public, both local and foreign, it has to provide an adequate interpretation and presentation, which has to go beyond the aforementioned one about the history of the building itself. As a matter of fact, contemporary art is not easy to convey, thus, visitors would need a further support in order to satisfy their expectations and obtaining a good quality experience.

¹⁸² see paragraph 2.2.5 *A new idea for the Scuola Grande della Misericordia*

For the same reasons, the interpretation, the presentation and the staging of a more precise programme of events and exhibitions have to be integrated with other interventions, in order to implement the *Market Appeal* of the Scuola Grande della Misericordia. As a matter of fact, the Scuola should be considered as a real *tourist product*, provided with its own specific promotion, online and in loco, and its integration within city cultural clusters, partnerships and other similar initiatives. The first steps towards the achievement of this aim could be:

1. its insertion in the *Venezia Unica City Pass*¹⁸³, in order to push tourists visiting the Scuola without any particular effort in terms of cost and information availability;
2. its appearing in the Tripadvisor section “things to do in Venice”, in order to shape a (possibly positive) reputation in tourists using this website;
3. the installation of adequate tourist information signs indicating the directions and the presence itself of the Scuola;
4. the already mentioned creation of an itinerary based on a *theming* about *Scuole Grandi* in Venice, since they are majestic historic buildings, representing an important heritage for the city, which are however not known by most visitors;
5. the improving of the website, adding more meaningful information for tourists, for instance openings time, entrance fees, accessibility
6. the improving of the social media presence through publishing more interactive contents for the web-audience, for example Facebook events, real-time posts, articles and links also promoting complementary activities, in order to acquire more followers and, consequently, to make citizenry aware of its activities¹⁸⁴.

¹⁸³ see paragraph 2.1.3 *Local government and tourist industry strategies*

¹⁸⁴ Facebook events are one of the most useful promotion instrument for a (relatively) young visitor target, at least on a local level

4.2.3 A brief comparison in the *Orgware*: The Scuola della Misericordia Venezia S.p.A. and the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam Foundation

While the first paragraph of this chapter highlighted the similarities in the *Hardware* of the two sites, confirming the similar assessment of their *Robusticity*, the second one deepens the reasons behind the gap between the Scuola and the church as far as the *Market Appeal* and, thus, the *Software*, are concerned.

However, according to Jansen-Verbeke (2013), the positive result of the development of sustainable and competitive *tourismscapes* depends, also and in particular, on the *Orgware*, which, as aforementioned, coincides with the site aspects related to the organization, the management, the policies and the involved stakeholders. Nevertheless, the *Orgware* is the most difficult aspect to evaluate, since it implies dynamics which are often hidden or understandable only being involved in the organization itself¹⁸⁵.

Both sites are managed on a local level by a private institution, the Scuola Misericordia di Venezia S.p.A. for the former and the Oude Kerk Foundation for the latter. One of the main differences between the two organizations lies in the way they perceive the role of tourism in the site and in the linked aspect of the revenue funds for conservation. The Oude Kerk relies mainly on tourism and donors¹⁸⁶ to provide funds, while the Scuola della Misericordia S.p.A. earns its revenues especially by renting the structure for private events, in this way amortising so the expenses held for the restauration, as the instrument of the project financing forecasts. Thus, in this case, the role of tourism¹⁸⁷ does not seem to be primary, since an entrance fee is not required¹⁸⁸ and the Scuola has been opened mainly for private corporate events. Hypothetically, this choice is part of a precise company strategy,

¹⁸⁵ As aforementioned This made the acquisition of information about *Orgware* particularly difficult, since numerous details are part of the S.p.A. corporate strategy and cannot be revealed (Christian Vio, Scuola della Misericordia di Venezia S.p.A., 2016).

¹⁸⁶ Besides occasional gifts, the Oude Kerk has elaborated two specific donation programs which offer specific treatments and activities in return: the Vrienden van Oude Kerk for lovers of heritage, art and music and the Tien Gilden van de Oude Kerk for organizations and companies. For more details see paragraph 3.4.6 *Oude Kerk Financial Resources*

¹⁸⁷ here tourism is meant as the public opening of the heritage site both for local and foreign people

¹⁸⁸ it has always been free till the last (current) exhibition

which, however, does not exactly coincide with the building's vocation claimed by the S.p.A. itself¹⁸⁹.

On the contrary, the Oude Kerk Foundation is a cultural enterprise *pur sang*, with a transparent organization, the operations of which are based on a national code shaped on purpose for cultural entities¹⁹⁰. As its website underlines, the Foundation was established with the aim of conserving the building and opening it up to a broad public in a meaningful manner. Such a vocation is evident in the constant opening to public through exhibitions and events, as well as in the consultations of the donors and the community for issues related to the church use and programme staging.

Therefore, the analysis of the two sites' *Orgware* lets suppose that the role given to tourism is ancillary if compared to the one of the Oude Kerk because of the difference in the two types of organization. The former is probably more business-oriented and does not have that willingness and that interest in opening to a tourist public, which instead are clearly visible in the latter's, a "cultural enterprise *pur sang*".

However, the latest re-opening of the Scuola should be taken into account too: the Oude Kerk inaugurated in 2013 and has had more time to set a specific vision and programme. The aforementioned Scuola's situation is related to the current time: this does not mean it will not change in a – near or far – future perspective.

¹⁸⁹ Its vocation is cultural: exhibitions, events with opening to the city (Pamela Cauz, Scuola della Misericordia di Venezia S.p.A., 2017); plus refer to the press review in paragraph 2.2.5 A new idea for the Scuola Grande della Misericordia

¹⁹⁰ Cultural Governance Code, see paragraph 3.4.5 *Orgware: Organization, Stakeholders, Management & Policy*

Conclusions

The models usefulness for the development of network competitive and sustainable strategy for the tourism destination

Tourism has been seeing as a strategic sector for local development for many years by an increasing number of cities. In particular, European cities can find unique social and economic development opportunities in cultural heritage, taking into account the huge variety of outstanding tangible and intangible assets whose they are endowed with in their territory.

Some of them have become “icons” in the imaginary of million tourists, a “must see” which is capable to attract high tourist flows. If this phenomenon can be seen as an important source of economic value on one side, on the other hand the high tourism pressure can represent a huge risk not only for the heritage assets themselves, but also for its deep social and environmental impacts. This issue is exacerbated in those cities which represent, with their *urbanscape* and architecture, an attraction by themselves. In this cases, tourism threatens the overall functioning of the city and can flows into a *monoculture*. The necessity of avoiding these kinds of phenomenon, together with the structural shortage of public resources currently characterizing many municipalities, imposes the governments to orientate their policies towards tourism strategic management for a sustainable and competitive future development.

The purpose of this thesis has been the analysis of the usefulness of some practical tools in supporting policy makers for the outlining of a cultural tourism strategy at a destination level and for the selection of the resources to allocate in this perspective.

Destination managers should be aware that, if strategically managed, cultural heritage can have a direct positive impact on the territory, contributing to its competitiveness and sustainability. In order to fulfil this aim, cultural heritage has to be considered as a “portfolio” composed by a series of different kinds of assets, which have to be implemented not only on the single asset level, but also as a *system*. As a matter of fact, a heritage site can be relevant for both its intrinsic characteristics

and the synergies it can have with other sites in the context whose it is part. For this same reason, it can create economic value for itself (individual value), but also for its territory (shared value), if stakeholders are inclined towards collaboration (Caroli, 2016).

In this perspective, giving a clear scenario and evaluation of the heritage assets features and collocation in the territory, Jansen-Verbeke and McKercher & Du Cros Models should be applied at a destination level, to the different sites composing the cultural supply of the territory. In this way, the results of this assessment will highlight:

1. the compatibility between sites tourist use and conservation: it could result that some heritage sites are not suitable for tourism visitations and thus they should be put aside from the future strategies (McKercher & Du Cros one);
2. the main sites weaknesses, where to address particular investments and measures for their improvement (through McKercher & Du Cros matrix in particular, but also with Jansen-Verbeke's *Hardware* and *Software* analysis);
3. the attitudes and the characteristic of private and public stakeholders involved in the single assets management (Jansen-Verbeke's *Orgware*).

This approach constitutes an overall evaluation of the relevance of the cultural heritage for the territory development, which can result especially useful according to the aforementioned *systemic* vision of the destination and its cultural heritage.

Besides on its *network* configuration, the impact of the cultural heritage on the competitive development of its territory depends on the way it is integrated in the tourism destination supply, as suggested by Van den Berg, Van der Borg, Van der Meer Urban Tourism Model, and on the way it is inserted and connected in the tourism overall economics of the destination. Therefore, the presence of a *network* structure is fundamental for the competitiveness of both the asset itself and the territory.

As noticed while comparing Venice and Amsterdam, the territory has to find a balance between living, working and visiting functions. If pointing only on tourism, the destination risks to flow into the aforementioned *tourism monoculture*, which determines that series of negative impacts underlined by Russo in his “vicious circle” theory (2002).

In order to prevent (or to solve) such a situation and, thus, to make the territory competitive, Caroli (2016) states cultural heritage has to be seen as a supply system which has to take into account the value it creates for the demand. This latter is composed by various segments whose characteristics and needs have to be interpreted in order to fulfil this aim: not only the tourists, towards whom the supply has to be differentiated according to the various targets, but also the residents. As a matter of fact, cultural heritage in the local territory is the first reference citizens look at to satisfy their needs regarding good life quality, sense of community belonging, social cohesion and urban quality. Furthermore, a good and competitive cultural heritage management should be able to attract potential residents too, since it is a determiner in evaluation the life quality when choosing a new place to live.

Social fruition, together with current and future integrity maintenance and besides revenue generation, make the use of cultural heritage *sustainable*: it occurs just when its benefits are shared among the greatest part of people, contributing to the improvement of every member the community.

Besides individuals, cultural heritage demand is also constituted by public institutions, enterprises and financing entities. The last two can coincide and their financial support to the cultural valorisation can derive from the willingness to match their name to the cultural heritage itself, strengthening in this way its image. Such a situation has been observed in the case study of the Scuola Grande della Misericordia, being the financer a private enterprise connected with the candidate mayor at the time of its re-opening. Leaving aside the question about interest conflict, which does not regard the research topic of this thesis, the current situation sees the presence of a private enterprise, the Scuola della Misericordia S.p.A., whose main role is managing the site and acquire from it economic value in return of the investment for its restoration, in accordance to the concession contract stipulated

with the Municipality. In this case the public-private partnership has been fundamental for the realization the interventions the Scuola needed for its securing, restoration and new opening. The risk which now can be taken is the use of the building exclusively for its revenue maximization. Such a situation would represent an unexploited potential for the territorial development, considering that the site is also able to generate a public value since Venetian community is emotionally attached to the building and the meaning it represented some decades ago. This is especially important in a period in which locals are seeking public spaces for themselves and the future generations in a city which currently risks to become an only tourists-oriented theme-park.

Hence, to enhance this potential, besides implementing its *Market Appeal*, as underlined by the comparison done with the *best practice* offered by the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam, the Scuola Grande della Misericordia should be integrated in a *network* of cultural heritage, whose Venice is extremely rich, towards a perspective of value creation both for residents and tourists. The former would have a multi-functional venue for satisfying their social needs, while the latter could discover a new space in a zone of the city which they would have never directed towards.

Therefore, the creation of such a network of heritage sites would be the first measure of a hypothetical *Venice Culture Policy* to be integrated in a *Sustainable Tourism Policy* able to control tourist overcrowding through tourist flows management and a valorisation of rich city's unknown heritage and, at the same time, capable to interpret the residents' needs and the demand of cultural spaces for future generations.

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