Routes and Itineraries as a Means of Contribution for Sustainable Tourism Development

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Abstract The study emerges from the idea that 2017 has been recognized as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (UNWTO 2016). The recognition underlines the potential of tourism to contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thus, it assesses the extraordinary opportunity to build a tourism sector that is more responsible and committed to global development goals. The author focuses on the potential of cultural and natural routes, and itineraries, in terms of inclusive and sustainable economic growth; social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction; resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change; cultural values, diversity and heritage; and mutual understanding, peace and security. Indeed, the paper aims to describe the routes and itineraries, most of which have survived from past centuries, and analyze their potential to boost the power of tourism as a solid contributing factor in order to make the world a better place. The methodology is qualitative and develops beginning with the selection and analysis of bibliographic sources through the identification of key words such as itineraries, cultural routes, historical routes, thematic routes, and so on. Besides these sources, the author will assess other relevant information collected from websites and social network pages related to itineraries and routes known at a European and international level. The sources collected have facilitated the classification of the itineraries and routes according to geographical, historical, thematic, and motivational criteria, and the results have been analyzed based on to their contribution to the SDGs. The conclusions, will also take account of some research limitations such as the problems arising from the analysis of the topic due to the considerably large amount of existing itineraries around the world, and the difficulty to distinguish between official itineraries accredited by entities like the Council of Europe, and those itineraries recognized by other relevant stakeholders, like local communities and travelers.

Keywords Itineraries · Routes · Sustainability · Tourism · Development

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1 Introduction

The modern concept of sustainability is strictly linked to the Bruntland Report which was issued in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED 1987). The report refers to sustainability not only to a state of harmony but rather to "dynamic process of changes", as pointed out by Liu (2003, p. 460).

In the last 25 years, the concept of sustainability became so widely accepted that its principles have been applied to other sectors and human activities like tourism, especially due to its negative impacts on local communities, and their cultural and natural resources.

From 1995, when the Charter for Sustainable Tourism was promulgated in Lanzarote (Spain), to the World Summit on Sustainable Tourism (ST + 20) celebrated in Vitoria-Spain in 2015, when the validity of the Charter was reiterated by UNWTO (2015a), sustainable tourism is widely recognised as a European and global priority. This recognition has been strengthened by the United Nations 70th General Assembly (A/RES/70/193) which has designated 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (UN 2016).

The declaration, which represents a further contribution of the tourism sector to the three pillars of sustainability, follows the recognition by global leaders at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20) that "well-designed and well-managed tourism" can contribute to the three dimensions of sustainable development, to job creation and to trade.

The main objective of this research is focused on the exploration of opportunities that sustainable tourism could bring to local destinations and communities, as a catalyst for positive change of policies, business practices and consumer behavior in in the context of the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Moreover, this research is directed to the analysis of the potential of routes and itineraries for building a tourism sector that is more responsible and committed to global development goals.

The study begins with a review of the literature of the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and their relation with tourism. Moreover, the literature explore the concept of cultural route and the classification of routes and itineraries developed at local, national, European and international level.

In the third heading the methodological path is described, starting from the literature review mentioned above, which allows to identify five areas of influence of tourism among the sustainable development goals and the Agenda for Sustainable Development. These areas of influence of tourism represent a link with the routes and itineraries as the main case study of this research. Indeed they are used as one of the criteria for the classification of the routes and itineraries already

existing around the world. Several criteria for the classification of routes and itineraries, and the identification of best practices for each criteria, are the core of the forth heading related to the research results. The amount of existing routes, and the criteria to classify them, show that routes and itineraries have an economic and social importance since they play an important role for the development of territories and communities.

The last paragraph concludes by providing recommendation for boosting the potential of cultural routes in terms of sustainable tourism development.

2 Literature Review

The literature review has been carried out by identifying two main strands. On one side, the author has explored the concept of sustainable development and its relation with tourism. On the other side, the concept of itineraries and routes, and their classification according to several criteria, has been explored.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), officially known as "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" is a set of 17 "Global Goals" which are included in the United Nations Resolution A/RES/70/1 of 25 September 2015 (United Nation Development Programme 2015; United Nations 2015). The Official Agenda for Sustainable adopted on 25 September 2015 has 92 paragraphs. Paragraph 54 outlines the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the associated 169 targets.

The proposal covers a broad range of sustainable development issues such as: End poverty in all its forms everywhere (SDG1); End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture (SDG2); Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (SDG3); Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (SDG4); Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (SDG5); Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG6); Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (SDG7); Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (SDG8); Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation (SDG9); Reduce income inequality within and among countries (SDG10); Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (SDG11); Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG 12); Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy (SDG 13); Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (SDG 14); Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss (SDG 15); Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective,

accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (SDG 16); and Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development (SDG 17) (UN 2014).

The Resolution, which was promulgated through a deliberative process involving its 193 Member States, as well as global civil society, is a broader intergovernmental agreement that follows the 2015 Development Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals (UN 2010).

In this study, a special focus will be dedicated to the relation between Sustainable Development Goals and tourism, and from this relation will emerge a further criteria to distinguish and classify itineraries and routes as tools to achieve sustainable development.

In line with new Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNWTO (2015a) has designated 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. This designation has a special value not only for the importance of the sector in itself, but also for increasing awareness of the several benefits it brings. Among them, one may consider the protection of cultural heritage and the appreciation of the inherent values of different cultures.

The International Year promotes tourism's role in five key areas such as: Inclusive and sustainable economic growth; Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction; Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change; Cultural values, diversity and heritage; and Mutual understanding, peace and security.

With regards to inclusive and sustainable growth, one may refer to some figures. Since 2009, the tourist arrival has increased 4% or more annually; the 7% of total world exports and the 30% of world services exports are related to tourism; in 2015 US$ 1.5 trillion in exports come from international tourism; and tourism represents 10% of world GDP.

With regards to Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction, one in every eleven jobs globally is in tourism which represents also the largest export category in many developing countries. By 2030 the 57% of the international tourist arrivals will be concentrated in emerging economies; and compare to other sectors, tourism employs almost twice as many women employers as other sectors.

With regards to Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change; tourism can be a vehicle for protecting and restoring biodiversity since it is committed to reducing its 5% of world CO_2 emissions.

With regards to Cultural values, diversity and heritage; tourism promotes cultural diversity and raise awareness of the value of heritage by reviving traditional activities and customs by empowering communities and nurtures pride within them.

With regards to Mutual understanding, peace and security, tourism provides opportunities for cross-cultural encounters that can build peace and generate soft diplomacy, and it is a resilient sector that recovers quickly from security threats, and it is able to break down barriers and builds bridges between visitors and hosts.

The aforementioned Resolution A/RES/70/1 refers directly to tourism. In particular, it refers to the promotion of sustainable tourism which is specifically mentioned in the paragraph 33.

Besides that, goal 8.9 recognises the need to "devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products".

In the goal 12.b, it has been pointed out the need of developing and implementing tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.

In the goal 14.7, it has identified tourism as one of the tools to increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries by 2030.

Sustainable Development Goals Background

The Intergovernmental negotiations on the Post 2015 Development Agenda (IGN) began in January 2015 and ended in August of the same year. As a result, a final document was adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit September 25–27, 2015 in New York, USA.

The SDGs build on the Principles agreed upon under Resolution A/RES/66/288, known as *The Future We Want*. (UN 2012) which is a document released as a result of the Rio + 20 Conference which took place in Rio de Janeiro-Brazil in 2012 (UN 2012a).

However, the history of the SDGs traced back to 1972 when governments met in Stockholm, Sweden, for considering the rights of the human family for a healthy and productive environment during the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UN 2015 ibidem).

In 1983 the United Nations decided to create the World Commission on Environment and Development which in 1987 has defined sustainable development as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

As a result, in 1992 the first United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro, and here the first agenda for Environment and Development, also known as *Agenda 21*, was developed and adopted.

The full implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Commitments to the Rio principles, were strongly reaffirmed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002.

Just before the celebration of the Rio + 20 Conference in 2012, a government retreat was held in Solo (Indonesia) and Colombia proposed the idea of the SDGs. As a result, a document including development goals and associated targets, was developed. In the aforementioned Rio + 20 Conference further discussion about the SDGs were undertaken, and they led to the production of another relevant document, mentioned above and entitled "The future we want".

This document refers to several themes such as poverty eradication, energy, water and sanitation, health, and human settlement, and it is linked to the Millennium Development Goals as stated in its paragraph no. 246: "We recognize that the development of goals could also be useful for pursuing focused and coherent action on sustainable development. The goals should address and

incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development (environment, economics, and society) and their interlinkages. The development of these goals should not divert focus or effort from the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals".

The Millennium Development Goals were adopted at the Millennium Summit in September 2000 (United Nation Development Programme 2000) where world leaders committed their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty, and set out a series of time-bound targets, with a deadline of 2015.

Among the targets for addressing extreme poverty, one may mention income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion-while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability, besides basic human rights such as the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter, and security.

Since the MDGs have 2015 has a temporal target, a further process was implemented starting from the United Nations System Task Team (UN 2015). The UN System Task Team was established by the UN Secretary-General to support system-wide preparations for the post-2015 UN development agenda, in consultation with all stakeholders, including Member States, civil society, academia and the private sector, and bringing together over 60 UN entities and agencies and international organizations. As a result of these consultations a first report known as "Realizing The Future We Want" was produced (UN 2012b).

The report identifies four dimensions as part of a global vision for sustainable development: Inclusive Social Development, Environmental Sustainability, Inclusive Economic Development, and Peace and Security.

Besides the UN System Task, a UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, was implemented and its report (UN 2013) was submitted to the Secretary General in 2013.

Interest for Routes and Itineraries: Definition, Elements, Criteria and Classification

We have reviewed the second strand of the literature by starting from the several definitions of itinerary and routes as proposed by the UNESCO Meeting of experts (1994), ICOMOS (2008), and Council of Europe (2010).

Besides that, we have taken into account the connections between the itineraries and routes developed and funded by organizations like UNESCO, Council of Europe, UNCTAD, UNAOC, and UNPD, and the most relevant conventions and resolutions promulgated at international and European level.

During the Meeting of Experts on Routes as a Part of our Cultural Heritage, which took place in Madrid on 24–25 November 1994, a definition of heritage route was promulgated: "A heritage route is composed of tangible elements of which the cultural significance comes from exchanges and a multi-dimensional dialogue across countries or regions, and that illustrate the interaction of movement, along the route, in space and time".

The Annex III of the report refers to three categories of criteria that could be used to delimit a route: spatial and temporal criteria to establish its exact material nature, and cultural criteria to define the effects and consequences arising from its

use. More specifically the spatial criteria refers to the route followed, its sites, monuments, constructions, buildings, ways, and area of influence; the temporal criteria may refer to its beginning, end, frequency of use; intensity of use and variations; and the cultural criteria is linked to the purpose of the route and its limits (spiritual or material purpose); its impact on mankind's memory or experience, and the volume and the nature of the exchanges (men, goods, technologies).

The International Scientific Committee on Cultural Routes (CIIC) Of ICOMOS has elaborated and revised the ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes (2008) which includes a more detailed definition of routes, their elements and some criteria to classify them.

Route is "Any route of communication, be it land, water, or some other type, which is physically delimited and is also characterized by having its own specific dynamic and historic functionality to serve a specific and well determined purpose, which must fulfill the following conditions:

(a) It must arise from and reflect interactive movements of people as well as multi-dimensional, continuous, and reciprocal exchanges of goods, ideas, knowledge and values between peoples, countries, regions or continents over significant periods of time;
(b) It must have thereby promoted a cross-fertilization of the affected cultures in space and time, as reflected both in their tangible and intangible heritage;
(c) It must have integrated into a dynamic system the historic relations and cultural properties associated with its existence"

The ICOMOS Charter refers also to the routes elements such as: context, content, cross-cultural significance as a whole, dynamic character, and setting.

Cultural Routes occur in a natural and/or cultural context, and must necessarily be supported by tangible elements that provide a physical confirmation of the cultural heritage, and intangible elements that give sense and meaning to the various elements that make up the whole.

The concept of Cultural Route implies a value as a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts, and gives the Route its meaning.

The dynamic of a Cultural Route does not obey natural laws or casual phenomena, but rather exclusively human processes and interests.

The Cultural Route is closely linked to its setting, and it is an inseparable part of it. The setting shapes and provides a framework of the cultural route.

Besides the elements, ICOMOS Charter provides several criteria to classify the routes according to their:

- territorial scope: local, national, regional, continental, or intercontinental.
- cultural scope: within a given cultural region or extended across
- geographical areas that have shared or continue to share a process of reciprocal influences in the formation or evolution of cultural values.
- goal or function: social, economic, political, or cultural.

- duration in time: those that are no longer used versus those that continue to develop under the influence of socio-economic, political, and cultural exchanges.
- structural configuration: linear, circular, cruciform, radial or network.
- natural environment: land, aquatic, mixed, or other physical setting.

Another classification is provided by UNWTO (2015b) that in its global Report on cultural routes and itineraries classifies the routes according to the following variables:

- design and structure which includes two large cultural route models: the linear models which are based on one or several start points, and one end point, and those that have arisen based on an archipelago of points. An example of the linear model is the Camino de Santiago, which starts at various departure points but arrives at one destination, the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, Spain. In the Archipelago model, the route and its various elements form an archipelago of points but are not necessarily connected sequentially or physically. Some example of this model are represented by the European cemeteries route and the Phoenicians' route, since they do not have a start or an end in the strict sense of the terms.
- theme which encompasses two large groups and a multitude of intermediate situations. On the one hand, there are cultural routes that are articulated around a main theme and on the other, there are cultural routes which include several topics, with the route itself being the essential theme. The route of Cluniac locations (themed around on architecture) or the cave art route (themed around on prehistoric art) are mainly focused on a single theme. The Camino de Santiago and the Via Regia (Royal Highway) are examples of the several topics model which include a wide array of elements (e.g., landscape, art, religion, cultural traditions, and gastronomy).
- territory which includes four types of routes: local (e.g., Dry Stone Route in Mallorca, Spain); regional (e.g., Mudejar Route in Aragón, Spain), national (e.g., Vía de Plata Route, Spain) and transnational (e.g., Transromanica network, European itineraries of Jewish Heritage, the European route of thermal heritage and thermal cities).
- historic origin or their current reconfiguration in order to differentiate routes that derived from actual historic situations, from routes that are the result of associations made in the present based on a theme or a common narrative. The Camino de Santiago and the route of Saint Olaf are examples of routes where the historical element is evident while the European route of thermal heritage and thermal towns, the Routes of the Olive Tree, and the Transromanica network: itineraries of Romanesque art in Europe, are the result of an association with a strong historic basis that have been redesigned in the present.
- visitor infrastructure which consists in distinguishing routes based on the number and type of overnight stays necessary to visit them. In this way we have routes for which overnight stays are not necessary, routes that can be visited

with only one overnight stay, and, finally routes involving an overnight stay in several places, which inherently requires the visitor to plan and be constantly on the move.

The Council of Europe defines a cultural route as: "A cultural, educational heritage and tourism co-operation project aiming at the development and promotion of an itinerary or a series of itineraries based on a historic route, a cultural concept, figure or phenomenon with transnational importance and significance for the understanding and respect of common European values" (CoE 2010).

Cultural itineraries and routes and their connections with conventions and resolutions promulgated at international and European level

The charters and conventions analysed in this paragraph allow a better understanding of the cultural itineraries and routes in the interpretation and implementation of the European values through the daily activity of the routes.

From an international perspective, one may mention the UNESCO Convention (UNESCO 1972) concerning the protection of the world cultural and Natural Heritage, which was adopted on 1972 in Paris, and came into force on December 1975.

Indeed there are several heritage sites that are inscribed in the world heritage list and they are part of a Cultural route. The Santiago of Compostela way is one of the most relevant example. However, it is not the path that is has been declared part of the World Heritage List but rather its groups of monuments, both religious and secular, located in Spain (1993) as well as in France (1998).

Another relevant example is the Via Francigena path which includes heritage sites included in the world heritage list such as Canterbury Cathedral, Historic centre of San Gimignano, of Siena, and of Rome; Landscape of Val D'Orcia, and the Vatican City.

The Via Regia is another case which crosses several world heritage sites such as: Vilnius historic centre, Bialowieza Forest, Wieliczka Salt Mine, Centennial Hall in Wroclaw, Classical Weimar in Belvedere Castle; Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Former Abbey of Saint Remi and Palace of Tau, in Reims; the banks of the Seine in Paris; the Port of the Moon in Bordeaux; the Roman Walls of Lugo; and Las Médulas.

The relationship between the Cultural routes and the world Heritage list is strengthen by the spatial and thematic continuity across national borders provided by the Cultural routes programme and by the practical methods to manage monuments and sites along the routes, with cooperation between the countries, as furnished by the World Heritage List.

Another relevant convention is that one for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage which was adopted by UNESCO on 2003 in Paris, and came into force on 2006 (UNESCO 2003).

The intangible heritage value is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted from one generation to the other through the intangible heritage itself. The Cultural routes promotes themes traditions, knowledge, rituals, and tastes which are a fundamental asset of the European and local culture and identity.

One of the most relevant cultural routes which is linked to a declaration on intangible cultural heritage is the Routes of Olive Tree which have been involved starting by the inscription of the Mediterranean diet on the Representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010.

With regards to the Council of Europe, Cultural routes were created as a cultural programme with the aim to translate the principles expressed in the European Cultural Dimension into concrete actions by "promoting trans-border cultural co-operation among countries as a tool to go beyond political boundaries" (Berti 2015).

The programme is built upon the European Cultural Convention (Council of Europe, 1954) as one of the most fundamental text on cultural policy and co-operation among European countries with regards to the fields of culture, education, youth and sport. It has been signed in Paris in 1954 and it came into force on May 1955. The cultural Convention purpose is to develop, among others, mutual understanding among the European people and reciprocal appreciation and respect of their cultural diversity.

The Cultural Route programme is also linked to the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2000), better known as Florence Convention, which has been adopted in Florence in 2000 and it came into force on 2004. Indeed the cultural routes are suitable tools to increase the awareness of the different European landscapes by representing a good opportunity for collaborative research and projects in the field of landscape architecture.

The Cultural route programme has some connections with the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Council of Europe, 2005), better known as the Faro Convention, which was adopted on 2005 and came into force on 2011. Indeed both the programme and the convention are focused on the importance of the local people and their affinity with their region as a tool for rediscovering and understanding the cultural identity of the sites by encouraging the tourism sector in a sustainable way.

Besides that, the European Landscape Convention recognize the importance of putting into practice the principles of co-responsibility by sharing it between the residents and the visitors.

The later Cultural Route project started in 1987 and it was built upon the concept of medieval pilgrim routes such as Santiago de Compostela, and it has "highlighted international cultural connection embodied in works of cultural and natural heritage, with the visitor expected to do the travelling" (Berti, *ibidem*).

Other institutions such as the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) have recognised initiatives such as St James's Way and the Via Francigena, as routes to promote intercultural and religious dialogue. Besides UNAOC, even the United Nations Development Programme (UNPD) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have funded initiatives linked to cultural routes and itineraries, especially the Silk Road and the Caravan Route in North Africa.

In particular, the Investment Guide to the Silk Road 2014 developed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) identifies tourism as one of the eight investment priorities and opportunities for the Silk Road.

3 Methodological Path to Identify Best Practices Among Itineraries and Routes

Since the scope of this study is to explore the relationship between tourism and the 2030 Agenda for development and the Sustainable Development Goals, we have identified some best practices among the itineraries and routes developed at local, European and International level considering the opportunities that those brings to make tourism as a mean to contribute to a better world, and to sustainable development.

In order to do that, we begun the desk research by taking into consideration the definition, the elements and the criteria for classifying itineraries and routes. Once we have reviewed the literature, we have developed our own classification of routes by using the five areas of tourism as the criteria to classify them.

The first step of this study has been taken by identifying bibliographic sources and websites related to itineraries, cultural routes, historical routes, thematic routes, and so on.

The literature has literally followed two separate strands, one related to the sustainable development goals, and its background, and the other of the routes and cultural itineraries, their criteria and elements of distinction, and the classification.

Starting from existing classification, other criteria have been modified or added to the previous ones. In particular the contribution of the routes and itineraries to the sustainable development has been taken into account as one of the most relevant outcomes of this study. The criteria is built upon the connections between the five areas of tourism, on one side, and the elements, criteria and characteristics of the routes and itineraries, on the other.

These connections have allowed the author to identify another criteria of classifying routes starting from their contribution to one or more areas of tourism which are inclusive and sustainable economic growth; social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction; resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change; cultural values, diversity and heritage; and mutual understanding, peace and security.

Once the contribution of the routes for sustainable development has been pointed out, we have identified some best practices for each area of tourism among the inventory of routes and itineraries existing at local and international level.

4 A New Classification of Cultural Routes and Itineraries

Starting from the classification of routes as described in the ICOMOS Charter and UNWTO, we have developed a further set of criteria to classify the routes which are:

1. Route Motivation Purpose which includes four kind of routes:

   - Pilgrimages, Religious and Spiritual routes such as the Saint James way, the Francigena way, the San Benedetto route, the Assis Path, the Pilgrimage route to Palestine, the Buddhist Routes in South Asia, and the Route of Saint Olav Ways.
   - Trekking/sport/Adventure. Among them one may mention the cycle ways like the Sun Cycle way which crosses 12 regions, 414 Municipalities included between Brennero to Sardinia in Italy; Wind Cycle way from Venice to Turin/passing through 4 regions/120 Municipalities; and the Water Cycle way which is long 500 km and it crosses 68 Municipalities in the South of Italy
   - Cultural/Exploration other cultures/destinations which are divided in the tangible heritage, intangible heritage as indicated in the thematic criteria below
   - Commercial: Nowadays this purpose is not so relevant like in the past times. Commercial aspects became part of the tourism product (services provided, accommodations, hospitality, other complementary products) rather than being a trip purpose.

2. Thematic which is based on the use of natural and cultural resources.

   - The natural resources routes include, among others, Heritage of Mercury between Spain and Slovenia, the Route of Amber, the Route of Olive tree, the Pyrenean Iron Route, the Iter vitis, the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (Mexico), and the Camino a Santa Fe for finding gold.
   - The cultural resources are divided in two sub-categories: tangible and intangible heritage. The routes built upon the fruition of some tangible heritage, include, among others, The Cluniac sites in Europe; Transromanica —The Romanesque Routes Of European Heritage; the Cistercian abbeys and sites; the European Cemeteries; the Prehistoric Rock art; the Casadean Sites; the Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th century in Europe's Urban Memory; and the Route of the fortified towns of the Greater Region. The routes which set up is organized on intangible Heritage include, among other: the Hansa, the Jewish Heritage Route, the European Route of Ceramics, the Megalithic Routes, and the Réseau Art Nouveau Network.

3. Historical routes which are built around the existence of ancient civilizations like the Phoenicians Route, the Viking Route, the Trail of Hasburgs, El legado-andalusi, and the Huguenot and Waldensian trail; and historical figures such as Saint Martin of Tours route, In the footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson, Destination Napoleon, and the European routes of emperor Charles V.

4. Geographical which encompasses five types of routes such as:

   - Intraregional which includes, among others, Balearic Archaeosites (Spain), Love Way (Cinque Terre, Liguria)

- Cross-region: Way of Gods (Italy) which is the Etruscans path they built in order to develop their trade and extend their domain on the Po Valley for at least four centuries (VII-IV cent. BC).
- Intra-country: Via Francigena, Italy (Valle d'Aosta, Piedmont, Lombardy, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, and Latium). (The Francigena ways is built around a pilgrimage of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Sigerico, who visit Pope John V on 990 AD walking for 1600 km). Another example is the *Quebrada de Humahuaca* in the desert plateau of the High Andean lands Argentina which follows the line of a major cultural route, the Camino Inca which starts near the town of Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley and ends at Machu Picchu;
- Cross country which includes, among others the Great Himalaya Trail passing through Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, China; Qhapac Nan; and the Andean Road system which passes through Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru;
- Cross-continent. One of the most famous cross-continent route is the Silk Road from China to Europe passing through Central Asia, West Asia, and Africa. Besides that, one may mention the Incense Route as a network of trade routes extending over 2000 km to facilitate the transport of frankincense and myrrh from the Yemen and Oman in the Arabian Peninsula to the Mediterranean.

5. Legal Status or recognition. This criterion consists in distinguishing those routes that are officially recognized by a European or international Institution, from those that are not official routes.

- Among the former, one may mention the routes awarded by the Council of Europe which, currently, are 32 while there are other three that they obtained the status of candidates and they are awaiting for their full recognition (Impressionism; Longobard and Chocolate ways). Besides that, the UNWTO has also recognized some routes like, among others, Qhapaq Ñan, Quebrada de Humahuaca, Incense Route of Israel, Roman Ways (Spain), and Slave Route as part of the world heritage list. The International Committee on Cultural Routes of ICOMOS has patronized some wine and the vine routes in the Mediterranean Cultural Heritage, and the Hispano-Portuguese Bastioned Fortifications Across Five Continents.
- Among the non-official ones, one may mention those routes recognized by local communities and tourists such as Guoliang, the hand-made road built in 1972 to connect the village to the provinces of Huixian and Xinxiang, where the community has dug a tunnel of 1300 m, 5 m height and 4 m depth in the rock. Besides that, there are also private businesses such as tour operators or travel agency like Yukon which organizes road trips to see the aurora borealis, to see the Midnight Sun, to follow the Klondike Gold Rush, and so on.

The contribution of routes and itineraries to the sustainable development and best practices

A further criteria to classify the routes has been developed and it derives from the need of combining cultural routes with their contribution to the sustainable development goals. Starting from the benefits and main characteristics of the routes emerged from the literature review, then we have identified keywords that are extrapolated from the five areas of tourism, namely: inclusive and sustainable economic growth; social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction; resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change; cultural values, diversity and heritage; and mutual understanding, peace and security.

As a first step we have identified connections between these five areas of tourism and the routes and itineraries.

As a result, we can affirm that the routes and itineraries represent an immense opportunities for the economic growth and inclusive development, and they foster creation of employment and small business ventures in line with the inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Among the best practices, one may mention the growth of tourism along the Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor which plays an important role in facilitating regional development, economic growth, job creation and professional development for communities. Stretching 5000 km through China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor is the first Silk Road Heritage Corridor to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor linked multiple civilisations and facilitated the trade of goods, silk, culture, religious beliefs, arts, science and technology between two of the great power centres of the Silk Roads trade until the 16th century.

Another interesting best practice is the Amber Road, which was an ancient trade route for the transfer of amber, known as "the gold of the north", from coastal areas of the North Sea and the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean Sea (Navarro 1925). Nowadays this route has developed collaborative actions on how to use tourism as a tool for socio-economic growth, development and job creation in the involved countries in Central and Northern Europe such as Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, Belgium; and in the Southern France and Spain.

The routes support the distribution of tourism's socio-economic benefits throughout multiple value chains which is also in line with the second area of tourism, namely social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction which is also linked to the fact that he routes may encourage the close participation and engagement of local communities (SITI 2016).

Among the best practices that may support social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction one may mention "Cammini e Percorsi" which is an ongoing project developed by the Agency of the State property, promoted by the Italian Ministry of Culture and tourism (MIBACT). The initiative is directed to the requalification and reuse of the public real estate located alongside cycle ways and historical-religious itineraries. The idea consists in allocating buildings and sites and leased them for free to entrepreneurs under 40 years old, and associations through a call for tender. The aim of this initiative is to create and boost a network

of infrastructure and services alongside those ways and itineraries to develop a more responsible tourism that respects the territory and the environment.

In line with the third area of tourism, namely resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change, the routes may revitalizes existing destinations and allow the discovery of new destinations.

A good example of resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change, is that one of EUROVELO, the European cycle route network, which is a project managed by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) in cooperation with national and regional partners. It currently consists of well over 45,000 km of bike paths divided in 15 Routes developed in 43 European Countries. Since biking and walking are two sustainable alternatives of transportation, and biking and walking tourism, is increasing in a lot of countries, this network encourage even more the development of sustainable transportation and tourism. Besides that the international status of the routes helps with garnering funds and political support for their continuing construction.

Furthermore routes and itineraries contribute to the fourth and fifth area of tourism, namely cultural values, diversity and heritage; and to mutual understanding, peace and security respectively. Indeed the routes are built upon a unique local heritage and traditions which enriches the cultural identity and heritage of destinations and stimulate cultural exchanges that build the sense of place in the world, instill local pride, and enhance the visitor experiences alongside the different regions and foster closer ties between visitors and host communities.

With regards to the cultural values, diversity and heritage, we have identify in the Great Himalaya Trail a best practice. The Great Himalaya Trail targets five districts in Nepal (Humla, Dolpo, Gorkha -including Manaslu-, lower Solukhumbu and Taplejung), and it includes some of the most remote mountain villages and communities in the world. This area is characterized by a significant cultural diversity and a high and special biodiversity for flora and fauna. Tourism is one of few sectors where Nepal has a comparative advantage and growth potential and trekking has the strongest potential to directly benefit the poor in relatively remote parts of the country. However, the incidence of poverty and gender inequality is very high, especially in the Western Hills.

Among the most relevant best practices for promoting mutual understanding, peace and security, one may mention the "Lights and Sounds" Project which allows the recovery of the Mission of Trinidad as a cultural and historical journey that could tell the story of the Guarani and the Jesuits lifestyle in Paraguay. The project aims to better understand the encounter of two civilizations.

More in general, and according to the Baku Declaration on the Council of Europe Cultural Routes: cultural tourism for intercultural dialogue and social stability, cultural routes provide educational tools for understanding past conflicts and for alleviating tensions and promoting peaceful cohabitation.

5   Conclusion

The study shows that there is an increasing prominence of the itineraries and routes in the recent years. In particular the idea behind this study is finding connections between routes and itineraries and their contribution to boost the role of tourism for sustainable development in the specific 5 areas (inclusive and sustainable economic growth; social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction; resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change; cultural values, diversity and heritage; mutual understanding, peace and security).

Despite this opportunities, there are also some limitation such as the lack of an exhaustive inventory of cultural routes due to a huge variety of itineraries and routes existing from local to international level; the difficulty to monitor the routes since there are the "official" recognized by several entities (CoE, UNWTO, ICOMOS) and the "unofficial" but well recognized by communities, tourists, and tourism providers (tour operators, guides, travel agencies).

The complexity of the routes makes difficult to classify them since a lot of routes can fall under several criteria at the same time, and it is also difficult to collect and analyze data with regards to the number of pilgrims and tourist who undertake an itinerary. A lack of data makes difficult to proper manage those itineraries.

Recommendations
Having said that, we would strong suggest the destinations to explore further cultural routes and itineraries and manage the existing ones in a sustainable way. In order to do that, destinations makers need the support of researchers in order to find past and traditional ties upon which it is possible to build new routes and itineraries (not invented/artificial routes) in order to be implemented by governments, businesses and other associations. The local communities should have an active role in the promotion of their territory and in the conservation (time/space) of their heritage, traditions, and resources. In order to do that, the local communities need to be educated and be aware of the common cultural heritage. Some businesses are directed to failure since they compete each other rather that implement models of mutual assistance with other SMEs. In order to provide a better product and service and un unforgettable experience for the visitor, it occur that businesses work together and collaborate with all the other stakeholders. The idea of collaborating and generating synergies is applicable to regions and countries as well as to small businesses, authorities and all the relevant stakeholders and it may serve as a bridge to social, economic and human development.

Nowadays undertaken an itinerary is becoming a trend considering the statistics. However, the idea existing behind an itinerary is not that one of making it as a phenomenon, directed to failure by time, but rather make people more aware of the benefits of the itineraries for sustainable development.

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