Developing the heritage tourism product in multi-ethnic cities

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Abstract

This paper critically analyses policies designed to encourage a community focus in urban heritage tourism projects. The city of Birmingham, UK, is taken as a case study. There is an examination of an initiative aimed at increasing the potential of the city as a leisure tourism destination. A specific analysis is undertaken of the development of an industrial heritage attraction located in an inner city, multi-ethnic neighbourhood. Issues discussed are: how to develop a heritage tourism product which achieves a balance between economic and social goals; how to develop heritage tourism which is socially inclusive and recognises the needs of minority ethnic groups; how to develop industrial heritage within the post-industrial context and incorporate a new European identity. © 1999 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

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1. Introduction

In recent years many de-industrialising European and North American cities have sought to reverse their decline by tourism-related regeneration strategies. There is now an increasingly mature literature which examines tourism in these places, which has generally become known as ‘urban tourism’ (Haywood, 1992; Law, 1994, 1996; Page, 1995; Van den Berg et al., 1995; Hinch, 1996). Similarly, there has been an increasing focus on the contested area of heritage tourism (Hewison, 1987; Ashworth, 1992; Ashworth & Larkham, 1994; Hall, 1994; Swarbrooke, 1994; Boniface & Fowler, 1993). What emerges from the literature of both urban and heritage tourism is ambivalence about their value and increasing scepticism about the benefits which accompany them. This paper aims to synthesise some of the key concepts in the literature and to explore at a local level how they emerge in one specific urban heritage tourism project.

The paper discusses the challenges and opportunities associated with developing the heritage tourism product in multi-ethnic post-industrial cities, by examining a recently opened heritage attraction, Soho House, in the city of Birmingham, UK.

We first briefly consider the current debates regarding urban tourism, then set the context for the case study with an overview of recent tourism developments in Birmingham. There follows a description and analysis of the recent creation of an attraction at Soho House, home of the famous industrialist Matthew Boulton, located in Handsworth, Birmingham and the attempts to involve the multi-ethnic local community. The final section raises practical and policy issues which must be confronted in relation to the development and operation of attractions in urban environments.

2. Developing ‘urban tourism’ – the challenges

There is now a sophisticated understanding of the complexity of using tourism as a tool in city regeneration strategies. Much of the early literature about tourism development in declining industrial cities was largely descriptive and took the form of case studies, e.g. Buckley and Witt (1985, 1989). This work was helpful in that it set out the what, why and how of city strategies which used tourism as a tool for regeneration. From this base has developed a more substantial and analytical body of work. Such contributions have been more sceptical of the contribution that tourism can make to ailing post-industrial towns and cities. In particular the following issues appear to be problematical:

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is less dependent on a core business tourism market (Law, 1995).
- How to develop a critical mass of attractions which capitalise on the initial flagship tourism projects often largely funded by the public sector (Law, 1996; Lutz & Ryan, 1997).
- How to integrate attractions which lie outside the existing city centre cluster (Jansen Verbeke, 1992).
- How to escape the 'serial monotony' of identikit urban revitalisation schemes such as the ubiquitous revitalised waterfront scheme (Judd, 1995).
- How to work more sensitively with local communities and ensure that benefits reach the local people (Haywood, 1988; Loftman & Nevin, 1992).
- How to develop creative, responsive and democratically accountable tourism development and marketing partnerships (Bramwell & Rawding, 1994).
- How to transform negative, industrial images and construct vibrant new images of the city (Paddison, 1993).
- How to identify opportunity costs and make the connections between tourism and the other sectors of the urban economy, in particular retailing (Haywood, 1992).

3. Tourism in Birmingham – achievements, challenges and responses

Birmingham, the UK’s second largest city, lies in the centre of the country and is its industrial and manufacturing heart (Fig. 1). The city’s population is ethnically diverse with 26 different nationalities and 24 languages spoken. In recent years it has suffered substantial industrial decline. In the 1970s and early 1980s the devastation to manufacturing in the city was such that numbers employed in the sector fell from 295,000 in 1971 to only 130,000 in 1984 (Lutz & Ryan, 1997). The city has nevertheless been a pioneer of urban tourism in the UK. The growth of the city’s tourism initiatives has been well documented, in particular its efforts and achievements in building innovative tourism partnerships, successful business and conference tourism and massive inner city tourism-related infrastructure projects (Loftman & Nevin, 1992; Bramwell & Rawding, 1994; Lutz & Ryan, 1997).

The impact of Birmingham’s inner city tourism projects has been significant and there appears to be much agreement that genuine physical regeneration and environmental improvement have rippled out from the major city centre tourism complex which includes the International Convention Centre (ICC), National Indoor Arena (NIA), the Brindleyplace mixed use development and the rejuvenated city centre canal-side. However, past investments and achievements are not viewed as being enough in themselves. Recent policy documents (Birmingham City Council, 1994; Birmingham City Pride, 1995; Birmingham Marketing Partnership, 1995a) reveal a city facing all the urban tourism development challenges noted above, particularly those relating to transforming image, spatial integration and broadening the product mix.

In recognition of the city’s continuing tourism development needs it recently won £1.7 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to strengthen and extend its product base and destination marketing (Birmingham Marketing Partnership, 1996). The bid contained a Leisure Tourism Campaign which included proposals to improve Birmingham as a heritage visitor destination. The bid noted that ‘with the opening of Soho House, the home of Matthew Boulton, there was now considerable potential to market Birmingham further afield as a centre for exploring the region’s significant role as birthplace of the Industrial Revolution’ (Birmingham Marketing Partnership, 1995b, p. 15). Thus the development and marketing of heritage is seen as central to the city’s tourism success. The strategic importance of linking existing and new tourism developments is noted in policy documents as is providing better accessibility to sites outside the city centre core. It is to the extending of the city’s tourism product mix in the form of a new heritage attraction and the issue of involving one such outlying area that the discussion now turns.

4. Handsworth

Urban tourism has in the past been euphemistically referred to as ‘tourism in difficult areas’ (Buckley & Witt, 1985, 1989). Using that classification Soho House can be
identified as a tourist attraction in a ‘difficult area within a difficult area’. The reasons are both spatial and socio-economic. Handsworth lies just over a mile from the city centre and is outside the emerging tourism complex of attractions and accommodation within the newly revitalised Central Business District (see Fig. 1). Linkages to these existing clusters are crucial and as yet have not been achieved satisfactorily. Tourist accessibility is therefore an issue still to be resolved.

Handsworth can appear, to the outsider, a blighted area and the city’s tourism managers face the very real problem of how to route the prospective tourist through a less than salubrious district. Cherry, one of the city’s most authoritative chroniclers, described Handsworth as lying within ‘a broad, crescentic swathe of deprivation – running across the north and east of the city centre – where several problems were manifest all at once: demographic and industrial decline, concentrated poverty and deprivation’ (Cherry, 1994, p. 205). The unemployment figures reveal a stark picture: 27% of Handsworth’s economically active population is out of work, with the profile for men rising to 36% (Nov. 1996). The area is home to many citizens who come from minority ethnic groups. Cherry describes how the housing policy in the city had by the early 1960s created a spatial concentration of immigrants due to ‘a process of discriminative segregation (which) compelled Coloured (sic) people to live in certain forms of accommodation and in certain parts of the city’ (p. 187). The legacy of the segregation continues to the present (see Table 1).

Soho House therefore lies in an area which exhibits strong evidence of post-industrial decline and an extensive set of ‘inner city problems’. Indeed Handsworth enjoyed national notoriety in 1981 and 1985 when riots broke out. Now, more than a decade later, Handsworth is still synonymous for much of the British population with racial problems and riots.

5. Soho House and Matthew Boulton

Soho House once stood in 300 acres of landscaped parkland of which only one acre remains as Handsworth has grown up around it. Matthew Boulton bought the house in 1766 and had it extended and remodelled to create an elegant neo-classical exterior. Boulton was at the forefront of new technologies and installed a variety of newly developed domestic appliances such as a warm air central heating system.

Boulton, who died in 1809, was one of the world’s greatest industrialists and entrepreneurs. From relatively humble beginnings and with a limited education he rose to become a key member of the group of eminent scientists, inventors and thinkers based around Birmingham in the late eighteenth century. This group met in the beautiful dining room at Soho House and called themselves ‘The Lunar Society’. They debated everything from electricity to education and astronomy to political theory (Zuckerman & Eley, 1979).

Boulton was an inventor but also an entrepreneur and businessman. He was the first industrialist to introduce mass production techniques and built his Soho Manufactory (now demolished) nearby. This early factory employed over 800 workers using precision engineering techniques. Many important people from all over Europe visited Boulton to see both his house – the most technologically advanced of its time – and the manufactory itself.

5.1. The redevelopment of the house

Today other visitors are being encouraged. Birmingham City Council, in its 1987 Heritage Development Plan, identified the historical significance of the building and signalled its intention of acquiring and restoring it as a museum (Birmingham City Council, 1987). The Heritage Development Plan identified three main projects with which it hoped to boost the city’s economic development – the Gas Hall (which has been restored into an impressive art exhibition space), the Jewellery Quarter (where a visitor centre has been created in an old jewel-lery workshop) and Soho House. The first two projects were completed in the early 1990s. The available documentation on Soho House is scanty, for example the Heritage Development Plan contains no aims and objectives relating to the project. However it is clear that the Council saw it from the beginning as having a community development objective as well as a regeneration rationale. This was due to its location in Handsworth amidst a densely populated residential area with diverse social and economic problems. This is supported by the general objectives in the Heritage Development Plan of the City Council getting closer to its neighbourhoods by not only improving the geographical distribution of museum provision for city residents but also by enabling ‘a better understanding by local people of their history’ (Birmingham City Council, 1987, p. 4).

Funding for the project was more difficult to identify than for earlier projects and it was not until 1990 that the Council managed to purchase the building. The total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic type</th>
<th>Birmingham</th>
<th>Handsworth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(African/Caribbean/Other)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
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costs of restoring the house itself and building the separate visitor centre alongside were about £3.5 million and the project took 5 years to complete – finally opening to the public in October 1995. It is officially called Soho House with the sub-title ‘Historic House and Community Museum for Handsworth’. The original intention was to offer free admission but due to restricted finances a £2.00 charge is made for the house. Admission to the visitor centre and garden is free.

5.2. Community involvement

At an early stage the Council expressed its intent to involve the local community in the project; ‘There would be scope to incorporate an element of community use on the site.’ (Birmingham City Council, 1987, p. 20). It was decided, given the nature of the site, that the most appropriate way to do this was to establish a Community History Gallery within the visitor centre built beside the house. The visitor centre contains the reception, shop, cafe, and introductory exhibition plus the Gallery which is used for temporary exhibitions developed with the involvement of the local community and schools. This flexible facility represents a considerable commitment by the funding agencies to the community and has the potential to be a valuable resource.

However, the community were actively involved only in the last year of the five year development process and then mainly with the exhibitions to be staged in the Community History Gallery. Most aspects of the restoration of the house and introductory exhibition were already decided. Whilst this might appear to be only limited involvement the management were concerned about trying to sustain involvement and interest over the long development period without raising expectations too early.

Public meetings were held to discuss the redevelopment plans, and specific contacts were built up with Handsworth Cultural Centre and Handsworth Historical Society. The latter group helped organise a number of open days in 1995. The plans were generally greeted positively with concerns expressed only about car and coach parking.

Soho House has developed links with local schools which has led to the first two temporary exhibitions in the visitor centre. The first focused on Soho Road, the main road through Handsworth. ‘Soho Road – the Place, the People’ studied the social and environmental changes that have taken place since Boulton’s time as seen through residents’ eyes (Sayle, 1995). The aims were to involve and interest local people in staging the exhibition and to give local people a reason to visit the site. Local personalities narrated a video and audio visual produced by a local black media company. Sayle reflected that the exhibition demonstrated ‘the richness of individual experience that makes up a local community’ and that it made the ‘site real for local people in a way that a project conceived and executed in isolation from the community never can’ (p. 13). More recently a video project on Handsworth has been developed by a local girls secondary school which has a high proportion of minority ethnic students.

5.3. Evaluating progress

Feedback from the community so far has been positive. The management are not aware of any objections raised locally other than to the level of investment in the project. No one appears to have questioned whether the project was worthwhile or executed in an appropriate way. The unusual mixture of elements within the project – Birmingham’s industrial history, an interesting historic house, arts and community development – ensured it cross party political support and a wide appeal.

Although we have yet to carry out a survey among the community, there is no obvious evidence of hostility towards the project. For instance there have been no graffiti, vandalism or break-ins since the house opened. This is quite an achievement in an inner city area where signs of urban decay and dereliction abound. However it would be interesting in further research to investigate the community response to the whole project and how involved they felt in the process.

The house attracted 13,000 paying visitors in its first year. The visitor profile is dominated by day visitors rather than holiday makers (as with visitors to Birmingham as a whole). Results from the pilot visitor survey (Birmingham City Council, 1996) reveal that the age profile has been younger than expected and that over half of visitors have come from outside Birmingham. There has been a reasonable number of overseas visitors, many being friends or relatives of local people.

How successful has the site been at achieving its aim of involving the local Handsworth community? Due to the long lead in period it would be fair to say that the community was only marginally involved in the development of the tourist attraction element of the project. However in terms of the exhibition space upstairs in the visitor centre there has been considerable participation in planning and staging exhibitions. Staff have tried various levels of participation from simple consultation to involvement on a partner basis. However they found that giving the community a ‘blank sheet’ to start from did not work – they needed the stimulation of draft ideas to respond to and develop. Perhaps it is too early to judge success. Nevertheless a good start has been made with the two community exhibitions and the continuing external links. The problem has been that the development of community relations is a lengthy and time consuming process and has not been given top priority by management. The restoration of the house, design of the exhibitions, and management issues have taken priority over
community work which is still in the early stages. Management were also hindered by the lack of information available about similar attractions or museums with community involvement programmes. As the Curator admitted, ‘We’re feeling our way as to what we should be doing’.

Now the house has been open a year more time may be devoted to developing stronger community links. However, the Community History Gallery does not yet appear to integrate well with the historic house and interpretation of the industrial revolution and Lunar Society in the rest of the visitor centre. If the management fail to make the most of the community facility available and establish links with today’s Handsworth and its multi-ethnic population then it may be viewed at best as an irrelevance and at worst with hostility.

6. Issues to be resolved

Each place is unique and has its own distinct set of challenges and opportunities. While recognising this, there are some issues and questions that are prompted by the Soho House case study which could be considered by other industrial cities that are embarking on heritage tourism development. The issues to be resolved are:

• How to develop a heritage tourism product which achieves a balance between economic and social goals.
• How to develop a heritage tourism which is socially inclusive and recognises the needs and wishes of minority ethnic groups.
• How to develop appropriate and effective mechanisms for community participation.
• How to develop industrial heritage within the post-industrial and post-colonial context and incorporate a new European identity.

6.1. How to develop a heritage tourism product which achieves a balance between economic and social goals

This is a key issue for all heritage projects but especially those which are significantly influenced by public sector managers. The case of Soho House certainly throws this problem into sharp relief. Birmingham has set itself dual aims of economic development and service to the community by deciding to develop the facilities in the way it has. The Director of Planning stated this explicitly:

The 1990s should be the decade in which big cities make a comeback as exciting and civilised places in which to live. But the biggest threat to them could be a growing disparity between rich and poor – and our greatest challenge is to promote social cohesion such that everyone shares the benefits of economic wealth. If we do not rise to the challenge our cities will be at best tense, dangerous and unpleasant places. We need to create a place in which everyone – whether resident or visitor – can lead more enriched and agreeable lives. (Sparks quoted in Loftman & Nevin, 1992, p. 67).

Soho House widens the city’s tourism product, still primarily focused on business and convention tourism. The project has restored an important building and opened it to public access. The attraction will spread tourism and leisure visits into a deprived area on the periphery of the city centre and has created a limited number of new job opportunities in Handsworth.

However a key challenge in deciding to develop peripheral sites like Soho House is how to resolve spatial linkages. There are specific problems of accessibility and marketing this type of dispersed industrial heritage. Law in his appraisal of four provincial cities drew attention to this common problem:

many ‘in situ’ industrial heritage sites are found at some distance from the city centre and are being exploited but cannot be easily linked in with the city centre attractions. (Law, 1996, p. 189)

He also noted that the economic viability of this particular type of heritage offering is probably tenuous:

While these cities have belatedly come to value their industrial heritage and now wish to preserve it for tourism, one problem that they face is that these types of museums are still lowly placed in the hierarchy of attractions. People will travel the world to see an art gallery but as yet not to see an early example of a cotton mill. (p. 190)

In terms of the Council’s community development objectives and, in contrast to certain other major cities, most of Birmingham’s arts and culture policy has been directed at its own residents (Lister, 1991). Soho House provides a new facility for Handsworth (although to what extent it is used casually by local residents is open to question) and is a significant environmental improvement. The temporary exhibitions have successfully involved the community and the developing outreach work has much potential. This programme will form one part of the City Council’s work to reduce divisions in the community and to help develop a sense of place and belonging amongst all ethnic groups. Certainly this development is not open to the same criticism of exclusion levelled at the earlier prestige projects in the city centre although the issue of the opportunity costs of the project and alternative ways the money could have been spent is still valid (Loftman & Nevin, 1992).

Soho House has two functions and serves two publics – the tourists and the local community. As Ashworth has identified this multi-selling of heritage places for political and economic objectives can cause problems,
particularly as different interpretations may be needed for each (Ashworth, 1992, p. 62). Indeed Law argued that tourism projects can be bound up with such a variety of differing objectives, including growth strategies, improving image and quality of life and increasing visitor numbers that inevitably they will have difficulty in achieving them all (1996, p. 615).

6.2. How to develop a heritage tourism which is inclusive and recognises the needs and wishes of minority ethnic groups

There are a number of debates around heritage and social exclusion. Hewison (1987) is well known for his critique of Britain’s ‘heritage industry’ in which he chastises heritage developments as trivialising and falsifying history. Hall (1994) gives this argument a wider airing in his powerful political analyses of urban heritage tourism developments in North America and Australia in which he argues that these types of development are essentially destructive and exclude the heritage of the powerless in society. Ashworth on a similar theme, terms this ‘disinheritance’ whereby non-participating social, ethnic and regional groups are written out of the script of history. He emphasises that ‘All heritage involves choice from a wide range of pasts, many of which will not be selected.’ (Ashworth, 1992, p. 65).

Stephens (1994) gives a specific example of such a situation in Moss Side, Manchester. Ashworth and Larkham (1994) also refer to ‘dissonant heritage’ which may be ‘caused by shifts in population groups that leave behind cultural and material relics that no longer reflect contemporary place symbolisms’ (see also Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996).

Tunbridge examined the political implications of culturally selective interpretation. He identified groupings of non-mainstream heritages in Europe including ‘recent strangers’, such as refugees and ‘guestarbeiter’, and ‘historical strangers’ including most of the current minority groups which migrated to Europe in the last century or were oppressed like the Jews (1994, p. 125). In an urban context Hughes notes that ‘tourism has contributed to the creation of city centres in the image of the white middle class’ (1995, p. 67).

Another side to this argument is the extent to which minority groups may want to be included. Different cultures have different values and perceptions of heritage and may be indifferent or antagonistic to mainstream interpretations. As Lister (1991) noted history, arts and culture may be an irrelevance when individuals are struggling with day to day poverty and when education levels are below standard.

The museums’ literature notes the role of UK local authorities in trying to tackle this problem. Place stated that ‘a need exists to document the black heritage of Britain side by side with that which is traditionally seen to be the British identity, and to integrate the two.’ (1988, p. 8). Perks registered that

A crisis of confidence is reverberating through the Museum and Gallery world as curators ponder how to respond to an ethnic minority constituency which rarely enters museums at all and whose interests are frequently represented by only the embarrassing remnants of Imperial Victorian collecting policies. (1988, p. 14).

The literature is generally more pragmatic and optimistic and there is a range of accounts of experiments which have attempted to implement ‘inclusive strategies’ in a number of multi-cultural towns and cities such as Bradford, Liverpool, Leicester, Preston, Croydon and Hackney (Bott, 1990; Fussell, 1991; Nicholson, 1988). In most accounts museums are felt to have a responsibility to their communities. Karp for example states ‘museums have a fundamental obligation to take sides in the struggle over identity (and indeed cannot avoid it).’ (Karp, 1992, p. 15).

Arguably the central challenge is learning the processes by which often disconnected minority ethnic groups can be encouraged and enabled to become involved in developing programmes, exhibitions and attractions which reflect the aspects of their heritage which they wish to be interpreted. This is not easy. However many of these difficulties are not solely associated with minority ethnic groups but arise when working with any inexperienced or disempowered group (e.g. Coleman, 1995).

Handsworth has been changed dramatically by both industrialisation and migration, and yet Soho House does not explicitly link the two themes. Perhaps in time the facility will be used to mount exhibitions which explore more confrontational issues and the tense, darker moments in the history of community relations. That this can be done is evidenced by the experience described by Dickerson (1991) in her account of the ‘From Field to Factory: Black Migration 1915–1940’ exhibition in the United States which provides a positive illustration of how programmes can be successful in drawing in visitors and also effectively tackle the realities of racism. Similarly in the UK recent developments in Liverpool have begun to tackle the history of slavery in this country (Morris, 1995).

6.3. How to develop appropriate and effective mechanisms for community participation

The third issue is that of how and when to involve the community in decision-making in tourism planning. Much of the literature infers that this model of development has inherent social benefits and also contributes significantly to sustainable growth (Gunn, 1994; Inskeep, 1991; Murphy, 1985). Recent contributions have
questioned community tourism and state that it is a chimera creating illusory rather than genuine empowerment (Ryan & Montgomery, 1994; Taylor, 1995). Other commentators outline the constraints and pragmatic challenges which accompany attempts at community participation in tourism planning and urban regeneration (Haywood, 1988; Long & Glendinning, 1992; Marsh & Beazley, 1996).

The Soho House case is interesting in that it illustrates how at any one specific place different levels of involvement can be in operation. Thus if Arnstein's influential model the 'Ladder of Participation' (1971) is used to track the levels of participation in decision making, then it is clear that in the historic house element of the project only a basic level of information giving took place. In the Community History Gallery the involvement by local people was significantly higher up the ladder of participation.

The Soho House experience illustrates that work with the community must be given sufficient priority and time if it is to be successful. Other key points for management are those stressed by Duitz with regard to the Brooklyn Children's Museum, which are that it is vital to overcome 'the fear inherent in change and in sharing power' with a community and that serving communities 'is an ongoing activity which requires clear policy and sufficient resources' (1992, p. 242).

6.4. How to develop industrial heritage within the post-industrial and post-colonial context and incorporate a new European identity

The fourth and perhaps most problematic issue related to developments like Soho House which attest to a rich industrial past and are intimately connected to multi-ethnic areas is how to sensitively manage them in a post-industrial era. Ashworth and Larkham (1994) have recently developed a specifically European strand of debate which is an extension of that begun by Tunbridge (1984). Their view is that, within the European Union, a new European identity is needed to complement or replace national identities and that this will largely be shaped by the construction of a new European heritage. They argue forcibly that all heritage tourism development by the very process of commodification requires that political choices are made and selective histories used. Larkham notes that in this context the issue of the heritage of recent immigrant groups is particularly problematic:

Europe requires a culturally and ethnically pluralistic perspective. This has been lacking for the most part in much of the continent. Little has been done to integrate the culture of recent immigrants from the Middle East, Africa and India in particular (1994, p. 269).

It appears that for social harmony to exist managers of heritage developments in places such as Handsworth should strive to develop inclusive strategies which allow minority histories to be respected and understood, not conveniently forgotten because they do not nicely fit the prevailing commercially successful heritage template. Tunbridge advocates an approach whereby 'reconciled heritage identities are to play their critical role in the bonding of a new Europe' (1994, p. 133). Perhaps it is ironic and significant that the United States, which gave Europe the early model for urban tourism, with its festival market places, flagship convention centres and glitzy waterfront redevelopments has now a new, more inclusive element in its product base. There has been a recent growth in the 'Peopling of America' exhibitions such as those to be found in Ellis Island, New York City and at the Balch Institute in Philadelphia.

There are risks however. Practical problems associated with opening up difficult areas include risks (real or perceived) to visitors' safety. It may be difficult to overcome tourists' reluctance to visit certain areas and market them successfully. It could be argued that in city marketing terms places such as Handsworth should be 'de-marketed' because of the potentially bad image of the city they convey to the tourist and inward investors. There are many problems associated with opening up 'difficult' areas to public scrutiny.

In the long term another danger has been raised by Chang et al. (1996) who warn against the globalisation or homogenisation of ethnicity. This may seem to be a futuristic perspective but it as well to be aware of the potential pitfalls, for example the placelessness that could occur if every urban area had identikit ethnic restaurant zones. A more positive outlook would be to consider the vast range of opportunities that multi-cultural destinations can offer. Chang et al discuss the examples of Montreal and Singapore, both of which have marketed their 'rich past' and have made a deliberate attempt to celebrate the diversity of races within the cities.

7. Conclusion

This paper set out to highlight some of the issues related to the management of the heritage tourism product in multi-ethnic cities. Through the case study of Soho House in Handsworth a range of complex issues has been examined. There are the physical problems of incorporating a site in a 'marginal' district of a city into the range of tourism attractions a city offers. 'Marginality' has two dimensions: spatially, in relation to the city centre, and in social and economic terms, with a deprived population and run down environment. The problems inherent in attracting visitors to these areas require further study.
The dilemma over how to achieve effective participation with communities whose existing culture and heritage are very distant from the heritage being displayed, gives an added dimension to the issue of community involvement in tourism projects. There is a choice to be made between, on the one hand, making interpretation of sites as relevant as possible and trying to give the current diverse community ownership of this distant heritage and, on the other hand, a more detached approach. In this case managers might avoid creating linkages directly but would allow the community to decide for themselves the relevance of the juxtaposition of cultures.

The experience of Soho House shows that heritage tourism developments need not necessarily be socially divisive or exclusive and that communities can derive benefits from them. The challenge for many European cities pursuing urban policies which include heritage tourism regeneration strategies will be to integrate the heritage of all ethnic groups, not merely the dominant groups who have power. Surely it is at their peril that heritage tourism developments need not necessarily be socially divisive or exclusive and that communities can derive benefits from them. The challenge for many European cities pursuing urban policies which include heritage tourism regeneration strategies will be to integrate the heritage of all ethnic groups, not merely the dominant groups who have power. Surely it is at their peril that communities can derive benefits from them.

Important to acknowledge both types of destination and work and contribute to economic wealth in times when cities continue to be destinations for two groups of people. Not only for tourists and visitors but more permanent destinations to which strangers have migrated in order to find work and contribute to economic wealth in times when their labour was needed and actively recruited. It is important to acknowledge both types of destination and both audiences.

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